

The Constitution of 1851 divided the State into four judicial districts. Voters of each district elected a judge to the Court of Appeals for a ten-year term. The Court became responsible solely for appellate duties and sat only at Annapolis (Art. IV, secs. 2, 4). Five judges each elected from one of five judicial districts were prescribed by the Constitution of 1864 (Art. IV, sec. 17).

The Constitution of 1867 returned to the older form of requiring Court of Appeals judges to assume trial court and appellate duties. In seven judicial circuits, the Governor, with Senate advice and consent, designated a chief judge. In the eighth judicial circuit (Baltimore City), the voters elected the chief judge. These eight chief judges then constituted the Court of Appeals (Art. IV, sec. 14).

Judicial reorganization in 1943 provided for a five-member Court of Appeals elected for terms of fifteen years (Chapter 772, Acts of 1943, ratified Nov. 1944). The five judges included two from Baltimore City; one each from: the 1st Appellate Judicial Circuit (Eastern Shore—Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset counties); the 2nd Appellate Judicial Circuit (Central and Southern Maryland—Harford, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's counties); and the 3rd Appellate Judicial Circuit (North and Western Maryland—Carroll, Howard, Montgomery, Frederick, Washington, Allegany and Garrett counties). In 1960, the number of judges was increased to seven (Chapter 11, Acts of 1960, ratified Nov. 1960).

The Court of Appeals hears cases almost exclusively by way of *certiorari* (i.e., on review). The Court may review a case decided by the Court of Special Appeals or may bring up for review cases filed in that court before they are decided there. The Court of Appeals also may review certain decisions rendered by the Circuit Court if that court acted in an appellate capacity with respect to an appeal from the District Court. The Court may adopt rules of judicial administration, practice, and procedure which have the force of law. It also reviews recommendations of the State Board of Law Examiners and conducts disciplinary proceedings involving members of the bench and bar.

Throughout the year, the Court of Appeals holds hearings on the adoption or amendment of rules of practice and procedure. It also supervises the Attorney Grievance Commission and admits persons to the practice of law (Code Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, secs. 12-301 through 12-307). The term of the Court begins the second Monday of September.

The Court is composed of seven members, one from each of the first five Appellate Judicial Circuits and two from the Sixth Appellate Judicial Circuit (Baltimore City).

*1st Appellate Judicial Circuit:* Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset Counties.

*2nd Appellate Judicial Circuit:* Baltimore County and Harford County.

*3rd Appellate Judicial Circuit:* Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, Montgomery and Washington Counties.

*4th Appellate Judicial Circuit:* Prince George's, Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties.

*5th Appellate Judicial Circuit:* Anne Arundel, Carroll and Howard Counties.

*6th Appellate Judicial Circuit:* Baltimore City.

After initial appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Senate, members of the Court run for office on their records without opposition. If the voters reject the retention in office of a judge, or the vote is tied, the office becomes vacant. Otherwise, the incumbent judge is retained in office for a ten-year term. The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, designated by the Governor, is the constitutional administrative head of the Maryland judicial system (Const., Art. IV, secs. 5A, 18(b)).

The clerk of the Court of Appeals is appointed by the Court. The clerk maintains the docket, receives briefs and transcripts of cases filed with the Court, and maintains official custody of Court decisions, Acts of the General Assembly, and other records required to be filed with the Court (Const., Art. IV, sec. 17).