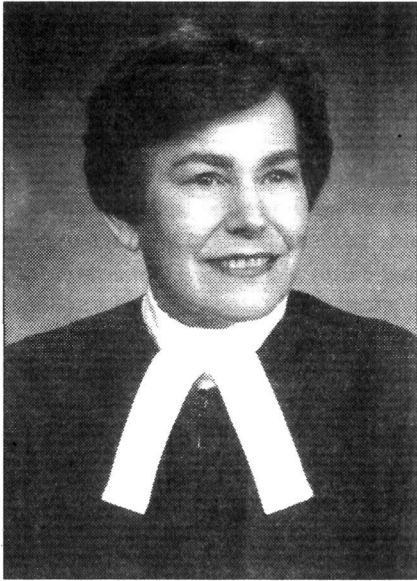


# Hon. Irma S. Raker, Court of Appeals of Maryland



## PROFILE

**Name:** Hon. Irma S. Raker

**Court:** Court of Appeals of Maryland

**Law School:** American University,  
Washington College of Law

**Region:** Suburban Maryland

**County:** Montgomery County

MARYLAND  
**LEADERSHIP in LAW**  
A W A R D

Ten years out of college, with three small children and a very supportive husband, Irma S. Raker headed off to American University's Washington College of Law.

Since graduating in 1972, the Court of Appeals judge has crafted an impressive career as Montgomery County's first female assistant state's attorney, a partner at the law firm Sachs, Greenebaum & Tayler, a trial judge for the Circuit Court of Montgomery County and for the District Court of Maryland and, most recently, as a judge on the state's highest court.

"I'm very proud that I was the first female state's attorney, and of what quickly followed — more women attorneys were hired and subsequently more women sheriffs. Suddenly, criminal law really opened up for women," she says.

But that was hardly her only achievement of note. When asked about her contributions to the profession, Raker points to her work in the early 1980s with the Maryland State Bar Association.

"I worked on the Committee on Pattern Jury Instructions, which were subsequently written and published to be used in criminal and civil cases," she said. "The instructions have really changed the way judges explain the law to juries . . . They are well-crafted, well-balanced, legally correct and fair, and they have also saved everyone a considerable amount of time."

Raker's involvement with bar associations — and not just the state association, but the Montgomery County Bar Association, Maryland Women's Bar Association and the American Bar Association — is considerable. She has been very active in the ABA, where she was elected to the Criminal Justice Section and served as chair for the Criminal

Justice Standards Committee. "That committee resulted in a series of books on the conduct of trials, which includes everything from criminal discovery to plea bargaining," according to Raker.

Additionally, she has worked to secure crime victims' rights, to establish Montgomery County's first rape crisis center, to develop a standardized rape evidence kit, and to establish task forces for battered spouses and abused children.

Furthermore, Raker worked on drafting sexual offense legislation, which was adopted in 1976 by the General Assembly.

She also has served on the board of directors of the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington and is an adjunct faculty member in trial practice at her law school alma mater.

Another important aspect of Raker's career is her mentoring efforts. "I try to give young people in middle and high schools the benefit of my experience and perspective," she says. "One young woman in an inner-city elementary school told me that I had inspired her to try to become a judge."

Indeed, Raker has received a certificate of appreciation from the Montgomery County Bar Association for her mentoring work with schoolchildren, as well as with the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland.

At the end of the day, Raker is most proud of acting as a role model. "That is the most important thing for me personally," she says. "As, of course, is a commitment to the higher ideals of the legal profession — both sharing them with others and living them."

*Mary E. Medland*

**"I try to give young people in middle and high schools the benefit of my experience and perspective."**