

Supreme Court of Colorado

2 East 14th Avenue
Denver, CO 80203
(720) 625-5410

SUPREME COURT OF COLORADO

April 1, 2021

Colorado's legal community has again suffered an enormous loss with the passing of former Justice Gregory Kellam Scott, a pioneer who leaves an important legacy. The Colorado Supreme Court learned of Justice Scott's death mere hours after it began to absorb the news of the loss of former Chief Justice Mary J. Mullarkey.

Justice Scott was the first Black person appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court and remains the only Black person to have served as a justice in Colorado. He was inducted into the Blacks in Colorado Hall of Fame and the Rutgers University Hall of Distinguished Alumni. He was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Denver.

"He felt, I think, an obligation to make sure that the experiences that he had had in life were voiced in the conversations where they would enrich the thought process," said former Justice Rebecca Love Kourlis, who served on the Supreme Court with Justice Scott in the 1990s. "I think the Court and the law in Colorado, as well as the appearance of a representative judiciary, was much better for Greg's contributions and his presence."

He was devoted to encouraging and helping people of color succeed both inside and outside the legal profession.

"He was so personable in addition to being so brilliant," said Patty Powell, adjunct faculty at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, who took corporate law and securities classes from Justice Scott when he was a professor before his appointment to the Court. "He was really well-loved among students of all colors; he clearly cared a lot about all of us and invested a lot of time and energy in our success."

Recently retired Denver County Court Judge Gary Jackson, a longtime friend, said Justice Scott dedicated significant time and effort to organizations including the NAACP, Urban League and Sam Cary Bar Association to improve diversity and inclusion throughout society.

"At DU, he became a role model for hundreds of diverse law students and especially opening up the door and urging and suggesting that these law students become involved in legal work in corporations, businesses, in securities law," Judge Jackson said. "It's a major loss for us here in Colorado."

Justice Scott was an attorney for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission before he was appointed to the Supreme Court in late 1992. Upon leaving the Court in 2000, he served as vice president and general counsel of Kaiser-Hill L.L.C. During his time on the Supreme Court, Justice Scott authored numerous opinions including a concurrence in the landmark case *Evans v. Romer*, which invalidated Amendment 2, a voter initiative that prevented local governments from enacting ordinances prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Justice Scott earned his undergraduate degree from Rutgers University and graduated with honors from the Indiana University Law School. He and his wife Carolyn returned to Indiana following their time in Colorado, and he was appointed executive director of the Indiana Civil Rights Commission in 2005.