



## Robert F. Orr

Retired N.C. Supreme Court Justice Bob Orr entered the 2008 race for Governor as the only Republican candidate to have run – and won – a statewide election. In 1988, two years after having been appointed to the N.C. Court of Appeals by Governor Jim Martin, Orr shocked the political establishment by winning election that year. In doing so, he became the first Republican ever to be elected to the Court of Appeals and the first Republican since 1896 to win a statewide appellate judgeship.

In 1992 in an effort to repress Republican efforts to win judicial races, Orr was aggressively challenged for reelection. Still, he won, becoming the first Republican in the history of the state to win two statewide judicial elections.

With no Republicans having won a seat on the N.C. Supreme Court in the 20th century, Orr along with I. Beverly Lake, Jr. successfully won election to our state's highest court in 1994. Orr was easily reelected in 2002, making a total of 4 statewide election victories in his career, second only to retired U.S. Senator Jesse Helms among N.C. Republicans.

After a distinguished 18 year career as an appellate judge, Orr retired in July 2004 to head up the newly formed N.C. Institute for Constitutional Law where he has advocated for adherence to state constitutional principles through litigation and public education.

Orr grew up in Hendersonville, N.C. and received both his undergraduate and law degrees from U.N.C. – Chapel Hill. He also served 3 years in the U.S. Army. After law school, Orr moved to Asheville, N.C. to practice law. During the eleven year period there he served two years as the District Administrative Assistant for Congressman Bill Hendon; GOP County Chairman; and coordinated the 11th Congressional District Campaign for then Congressman Jim Martin's Gubernatorial Campaign. Governor Martin appointed him to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission in 1985 and then to the Court of Appeals in 1986.

Justice Orr has served over the years on numerous professional boards and commissions including member and chairman of the Secretary of the Interior's National Park System Advisory Board, Vice President of the N.C. Bar Association, Chair of the Southeastern Conference on Genetics in the Courtroom, and as a member of the Governor's Crime Commission and the Chief Justice's Innocence Commission. He has also been involved in many civic activities including the Board of Directors for the Wake County 1st Tee program, the Central YMCA Board of Directors, as a Vestry member of his church, and as a mentor through the public school system.

Over the years, Justice Orr has also taught appellate advocacy and state constitutional law at area law schools. He currently serves on the Board of Visitors at N.C. Central School of Law.

He is married with 4 children and 2 grandchildren.