



## United States District Court District of Montana

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF MONTANA  
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May 19, 2025

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### COURT ANNOUNCEMENT

The United States District Court family is saddened to announce that United States Magistrate Judge Robert M. Holter passed away on May 11, 2025, at the age of 98. Judge Holter served the federal bench in the District of Montana with distinction from 1988 until his retirement in 2002. He was recalled to service the following year, with his recall extended annually through 2019. He departed the bench January 9, 2019—just shy of his 92nd birthday.

A graduate of the University of Montana School of Law in 1954 and a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Judge Holter began his legal career in Bozeman, where he practiced for 22 years. He was appointed Montana State District Judge in Libby in 1978, becoming the first to serve in that role, before being named U.S. Magistrate Judge in Great Falls.

Judge Holter's service extended beyond the courtroom. He served as president of Montana Legal Services and the Montana Judges Association, chaired the Sentence Review Division, and led commissions on criminal jury instructions and child support enforcement. He also served as the "water judge" for western Montana and taught at the National Judicial College in Reno.

In 1953, while still a law student, Judge Holter served as a smokejumper during one of the most active seasons on record. While apprehensive on his first few jumps, he went on to complete 23—a record that stood for many years.

Known for his fairness, humility, and intellect, Judge Holter was deeply respected by his colleagues and the legal community. He walked to the courthouse well into his later years and golfed until the age of 87. A lifelong Rotarian, he embraced the motto "Service Above Self," and was active in numerous civic and historical organizations. He was also known for making jam and for his extensive collection of antique firearms—more, as some joked, than anyone they knew.

The judges and staff of the District of Montana deeply appreciate Judge Holter's contributions to the administration of justice and will remember him with respect and gratitude.