

Honorable John W. Potter (Class 53-43)

The Honorable John William Potter was a United States district judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, October 25, 1918 Potter received a Bachelor of Philosophy from the University of Toledo in 1940. His study of law was interrupted in 1942, when he entered the United States Army. As a member of the 180th Field Artillery Battalion, 26th Infantry Division, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge as part of the breakthrough relief column under Gen. George Patton. He returned home in 1945 as a captain, receiving the Bronze Star and four battle stars.

He returned to law school at Michigan, where he graduated in 1946 after being the senior editor of its law review.

He joined the United States Army Reserve, serving from 1946 to 1951 and achieving the rank of captain. Potter was in private practice in Toledo from 1947 to 1969.

He was Mayor of Toledo from 1961 to 1967. As Mayor, he was instrumental in Toledo downtown redevelopment, which reactivated the dormant Vistula Downtown renewal project and initiated Riverview Downtown renewal project, including Levis Square and Promenade Park. It also reactivated and instituted many neighborhood renewal projects, tree planting and open space.

He was an assistant state attorney general of Ohio from 1968 to 1969 and was then a judge on the Ohio Sixth District Courts of Appeals until 1982.

On May 5, 1982, President Ronald Reagan nominated Judge Potter to a seat on the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio. He was confirmed by the United States Senate on June 18, 1982, and received his commission on June 21, 1982. He assumed senior status on August 1, 1992, serving in that status until his death on October 3, 2013.