

# *Edwin Kosik, Firm Judge in ‘Kids for Cash’ Case, Dies at 94*

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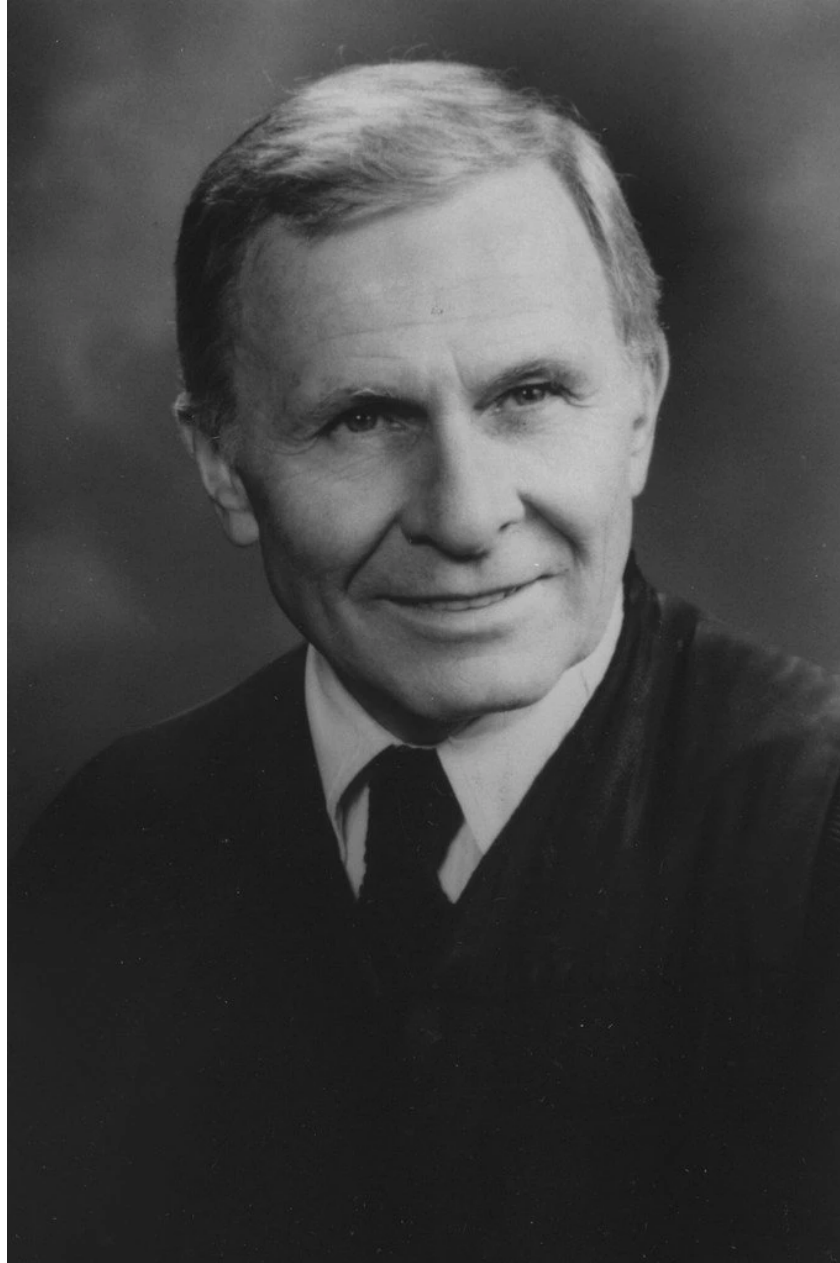
Edwin Kosik, a federal judge who sentenced two corrupt judges to lengthy prison terms for their role in a notorious Pennsylvania juvenile justice scandal, died on Thursday at a care facility outside of Wilkes-Barre, Pa. He was 94.

The death was confirmed by his son, Michael Kosik.

Judge Kosik, who served on the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, ruled in a 2009 case that many national news outlets called “kids for cash.”

In the case, two judges in Luzerne County, Pa. — Michael Conahan and Mark Ciavarella Jr. — were charged with taking more than \$2.6 million in kickbacks from the developer of a pair of for-profit youth detention centers in exchange for imposing unduly harsh sentences on juvenile offenders so that the centers could remain well occupied.

Judges Conahan and Ciavarella improperly sentenced thousands of juveniles after hearings that sometimes lasted only a few minutes. One teenager received three months in juvenile detention for creating a MySpace page that mocked an assistant principal at her school.



Judge Kosik in an undated photo. In a case involving judicial corruption, he wrote of judges, "Integrity is their lot and proper virtue." Times-Tribune

The judges pleaded guilty to fraud charges in a deal with prosecutors that called for a sentence of more than seven years in prison. But Judge Kosik rejected the plea bargain, saying the judges had not fully accepted responsibility for the crimes.

"We paraphrase what has been written about judges, that, above all things, integrity is their lot and proper virtue, the landmark, and he that removes it, corrupts the fountain," he wrote in a court order at the end of July 2009. "In this case, the fountain from which the public drinks is confidence in the judicial system — a fountain which may be corrupted for a time well after this case."

The scandal led the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to dismiss thousands of juvenile convictions.

After the initial plea bargains were rejected, Judge Conahan pleaded guilty to racketeering and conspiracy, and Judge Ciavarella went to trial. He was convicted of racketeering and other charges. Judge Kosik sentenced Judge Conahan to 17½ years in prison and Judge Ciavarella to 28 years.

Edwin Michael Kosik was born on May 5, 1925, in Dupont, Pa., to Mary (Mayhoff), a homemaker, and Michael Kosik, a United Mine Workers official. In the Army, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II, earned a bachelor's degree in 1949 from Wilkes College (now Wilkes University) in Wilkes-Barre and a law degree in 1951 from Dickinson School of Law (now part of Pennsylvania State University).

He married Lois Bistline after graduating from law school. She died in 2012.

President Ronald Reagan appointed him to the federal bench in 1986. He became a senior judge in 1996 and heard cases into his early 90s.

In addition to his son, he is survived by a daughter, Carol Kosik; and three grandchildren.

The Associated Press contributed reporting.

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