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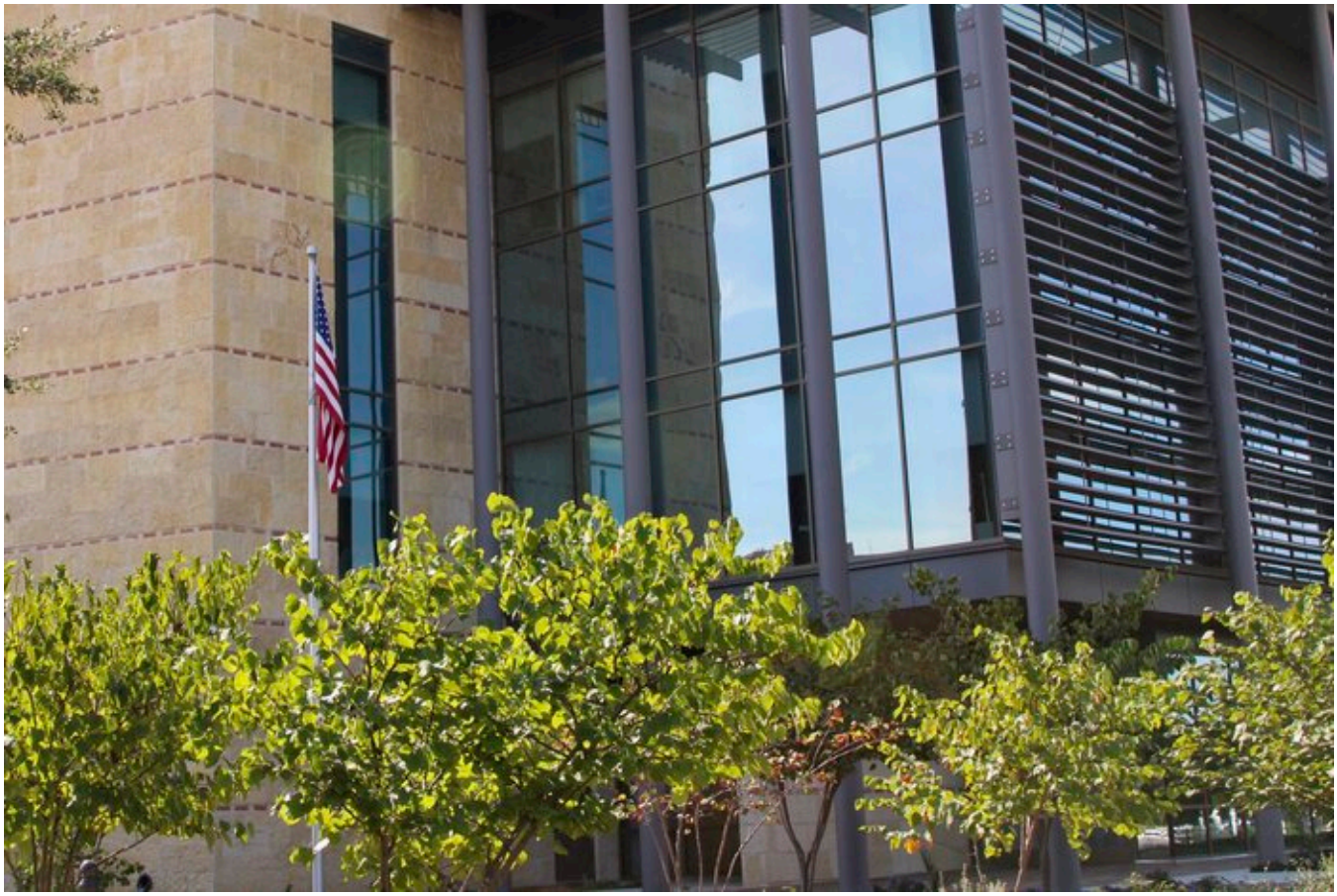
WDTX Judge Albright Stepping Down At End Of Summer

By **Dani Kass**

Law360 (April 21, 2026, 6:40 PM EDT) -- U.S. District Judge Alan Albright is resigning after nearly eight years presiding over cases in the Western District of Texas, Law360 confirmed Tuesday.



The Western District of Texas' U.S. District Judge Alan Albright is planning to rejoin private practice as a patent litigator after he retires from the bench in August. (Sipa via AP Images/Carlos Kosienski)

The judge will stay on through August and is looking to rejoin private practice as a patent litigator, Law360 has learned from someone close to the process. He was appointed to the bench by President Donald Trump in 2018.

Judge Albright was originally seated in Waco, Texas, where at one point he drew **a quarter** of the country's new patent cases, but later moved to Austin. New judges have been named in both divisions, with the U.S. Senate confirming **Andrew Davis** for Austin on Monday and **Christopher Wolfe** for Waco on April 14.

The outgoing judge's resume includes partnerships at Bracewell LLP, Eversheds Sutherland predecessor Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP, Fish & Richardson PC, DLA Piper predecessor Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich LLP and Thompson & Knight LLP.

He was no stranger to the Western District of Texas before his appointment. Between 1992 and 1999, he was a magistrate judge at the court, and he'd previously clerked for now-Senior U.S. District Judge James R. Nowlin in Austin.

Judge Albright earned his law degree at the University of Texas School of Law and his undergraduate degree from Trinity University.

In his early years as a district judge, Judge Albright became notorious in the patent community for encouraging litigators to file patent infringement suits in Waco. Since he was the only district judge in the division, all cases would go to him.

His docket built up enough to eclipse the state's Eastern District, which sits alongside Delaware as the nation's busiest patent venues. The Judicial Conference of the United States granted Waco a **second magistrate judge** to deal with the workload.

Judge Albright was, controversially, reluctant to transfer cases to other courts, citing his knowledge of the subject matter and intent to move quickly. That led to those accused of infringing seeking intervention from the Federal Circuit.

In October and November 2021, the Federal Circuit granted 10 mandamus petitions ordering him to transfer cases. The Federal Circuit had **more writs of mandamus** over those two months than any other circuit had issued during the entirety of 2019, 2020 and 2021 combined. Judge Albright's tight hold on patent cases raised allegations of judge shopping that **caught the attention** of Congress and Chief Justice John Roberts, who named **patent venue** as one of the most pressing issues in the judiciary in 2022.

The Western District of Texas' then-chief judge **evened the playing field** in July 2022, saying all patent cases filed in Waco would be distributed among judges in all divisions. Afterward, the controversy over his workload quieted.

In 2023, the Eastern District of Texas **reclaimed its title** of top patent court.

During his time on the bench, Judge Albright oversaw around 50 patent trials.

His nonpatent work included issuing a **preliminary injunction** in August stopping the enforcement of a Texas law that requires proxy advisory firms to disclose when their advice stems from factors such as diversity and inclusion, citing First Amendment concerns.

In July 2024, he issued another **preliminary injunction**, blocking the National Labor Relations Board's suit accusing SpaceX of suppressing workers' rights. The board later **dropped its case**.

Judge Albright is **currently overseeing litigation** where a former employee of Texas law firm Stone Hilton PLLC — founded by former top attorneys for Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton — is alleging sexual harassment and a race-based hostile work environment.

--Additional reporting by Spencer Brewer, Braden Campbell and Lynn LaRowe. Editing by Dave Trumbore.

Update: This story has been updated with additional information about Judge Albright's background.

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