

SYMBOLS OF THE JUDICIARY – OATH, ROBE AND INSIGNIA OF OFFICE

After the restoration of Latvia's independence, firstly, by a decision of the Plenary Session of the Supreme Court and then by the law On Judicial Power it was established that the independence of the judiciary shall be symbolised by a judicial oath, a robe and an insignia of office.

The text of the oath was written by the then President of the Supreme Court, Gvido Zemrībo, stating that the judge swears to always find out the truth. Zemrībo recalled that many people did not like this wording at the time and later it was written into the law that 'the judge should always try to find out the truth'.

On 8 April 1991, judges of the Supreme Court, dressed in their new robes, went to the Supreme Council for the swearing-in ceremony. There was no State President in restored Latvia, the oaths of office were taken before the President of the Supreme Council.



Supreme Court judges after taking the oath of office

The oath of judicial office

The restored judicial insignia of office was similar to the insignia of office worn by judges in the first period of the independent Latvian state. The 24 small links of the chain with the small coats of arms of the Republic of Latvia in metalwork remained the same as in the first period, but instead of the central element – the fasces, an ancient Roman symbol for authority and power, – a large coat of arms of the Republic of Latvia was placed. The fasces were abandoned because of similarity with the coat of arms of France.



The robe was also restored, based on the judicial attire from the first period of the independent Latvian state, yet of different colours depending on a court instance. The Supreme Court judge's robe was made of carmine-red fabric. In the interwar period, the difference among court instances was reflected in the hat trimming, however the hats were abandoned in the restored judicial attire.