

Chief District Court Judge Mitchell "Mitch" McLean of Wilkesboro and the 23rd Judicial District died Wednesday while trying to save a woman being pulled under the waves at Sunset Beach. Both died on a day or three deaths in Brunswick County in the strong rip currents. McLean was pronounced dead after being pulled from the ocean and rushed to a near-by hospital, as was the woman he was trying to save, 55-year old Mary Anne Galway, according to WECT-TV in Wilmington. Another person who was with Galway made it to safety, according to the TV station, who said McLean and Edward Galway, 59, swam into the ocean when Galway's wife and an unnamed person indicated that they needed help. But the helpers soon needed help in the strong current, and emergency crews had to help McLean and the Galways. WECT reports that McLean and Mrs. Galway were rushed to Brunswick Novant Medical Center in Bolivia. McLean was pronounced there and Mrs. Galway died from cardiac arrest after she was flown from Brunswick to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington. The Galways listed a Waxhaw address.

McLean was chief district court judge for the 23rd Judicial District, which includes Ashe, Alleghany, Wilkes and Yadkin counties. Under state statutes, the governor will appoint someone to fill the unexpired, choosing from three nominees submitted by the district bar for the judicial district. Nominees must be residents of the judicial district with the vacancy and be authorized to practice law there. Then, the chief justice of the N.C. Supreme Court designates chief district court judge. Funeral arrangement for Judge McLean are listed as 'incomplete' by Miller Funeral Home of North Wilkesboro. The Wilkes Journal-Patriot says McLean is survived by his wife, Beth McLean, their sons, Jackson McLean and Patrick Fincannon McLean; and his mother, Pauline McLean of Wilkesboro.