

Judge Richard Gergel

Richard Mark Gergel is a South Carolina lawyer who was appointed by President Obama to the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina in 2009. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Duke University in 1975 and a Juris Doctor from Duke University School of Law in 1979.

Judge Gergel was the presiding judge on the trial of Dylann Roof, who was convicted of 33 federal charges relating to the 2015 Charleston church shooting. Roof was convicted on all charges and controversially represented himself during the sentencing phase despite Gergel warning Roof it was not in his best interests to do so. On January 11, 2017, Gergel sentenced Dylann Roof to death after the jury recommended the death penalty the previous day.

Judge Gergel is the author of a book, *Unexampled Courage*, that details the impact of a southern sheriff blinding of a decorated African American soldier coming home from World War II. This brutal, unprovoked attack led to the racial awakening of President Truman and the integration of the U.S. military. Later, an all-white jury's refusal to convict the sheriff led to the changing of America's civil rights history and eventually to the U. S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

