

Sir David Bate, KBE, Chief Judge, Benue and Plateau States, Nigeria, 1975-77, was born on March 3, 1916. He died on June 4, 2011, aged 95.

After Marlborough College and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was a scholar, David Bate was called to the Bar shortly before the start of the war. At the start of hostilities he was commissioned in the Royal Horse Artillery and took part in the British Expeditionary Force to France. He left the army in 1946 with the rank of battery commander and joined the Colonial Legal Service.

He was posted to Lagos, Nigeria, where he was a Crown Counsel, rising to Senior Crown Counsel, Solicitor General, High Court Judge and eventually senior Puisne Judge of Northern Nigeria and Chief Justice of Benue-Plateau State. He also served as an appeal court Judge and in hearing appeals from the Sharia Courts.

His work involved holding travelling assize courts all over Northern Nigeria and he became a fluent Hausa speaker. He also had to deal with the problems of the Biafran war. Relations between him and General Ojukwu were strained. He retired in 1977, 17 years after independence.

His chief enthusiasms were horses, fishing and shooting. He was a licensed jockey both in England and Nigeria. In retirement he settled in Vancouver Island for over twenty years and then moved to Kwa Zulu Natal where he continued to ride, shoot and fish until he was well past 90.

He was made a CBE in 1968 and KBE in 1978.

(c) Times: Wednesday 22nd June 2011 (with permission)

Original page: <https://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/show.php?dowid=1273>