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# Drew Edmondson

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**William Andrew "Drew" Edmondson** (born October 12, 1946), is an [American lawyer](#) and [politician](#) from [Oklahoma](#). A member of the [Democratic Party](#), Edmondson served as the 16th [Attorney General of Oklahoma](#) from 1995 to 2011. Prior to serving as Attorney General, Edmondson served as District Attorney for [Muskogee County, Oklahoma](#), from 1983 until his election as Attorney General in 1995.

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## Early life

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Drew Edmondson was born in [Washington, D.C.](#), and is the son of former U.S. Congressman [Ed Edmondson](#) and June Edmondson. He is also a nephew of former Governor [J. Howard Edmondson](#). His brother, [James E. Edmondson](#) is a Justice on the [Oklahoma Supreme Court](#). As a child, he grew up in [Muskogee, Oklahoma](#) and Washington, D.C. and graduated from [Muskogee High School](#) in 1964. In 1968, he earned a B.A. in speech education from [Northeastern State University](#), where he was a member of Phi Sigma Epsilon Fraternity which merged with [Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity](#)  in 1985. While a college student, he married Linda Larason of [Fargo, Oklahoma](#). The couple has two children.

## Early career

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From 1968 to 1972, he served in the United States Navy including a year of duty in Vietnam.<sup>[1]</sup> From 1974 to 1976, he served one term in the [Oklahoma House of Representatives](#). He graduated from the [University of Tulsa Law School](#) in 1978. That same year, he joined the [Muskogee County](#) District Attorney's Office as an intern and became an Assistant District Attorney the following year. While with the Office, Edmondson worked under District Attorney [Mike Turpen](#).

Following a brief stint in private practice with his brother, when

**William Andrew 'Drew' Edmondson**



Attorney General Drew Edmondson (right) and his wife Linda.

### Attorney General of Oklahoma

#### In office

January 9, 1995 – January 10, 2011

**Governor** [Frank Keating](#) (1995-2003)  
[Brad Henry](#) (2003-2011)

**Preceded by** [Susan B. Loving](#)

**Succeeded by** [Scott Pruitt](#)

### Personal details

**Born** October 12, 1946 (age 65)  
[Washington, D.C.](#)

**Political party** [Democratic](#)

**Spouse(s)** [Linda Larason Edmondson](#)

**Children** 2 children

**Website** [Edmondson 2010](#)

### Military service

**Service/branch** [United States Navy](#)

**Years of service** 1968-1972

**Battles/wars** [Vietnam War](#)

**Oklahoma**



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incumbent DA Mike Turpen stepped down to run for [Attorney General of Oklahoma](#), Edmondson was elected as Muskogee County [District Attorney](#) in 1982. He was subsequently reelected without opposition in 1986 and 1990. As District Attorney, he personally prosecuted cases ranging from [DUI](#) to [death penalty](#). He resigned in 1992, half way through his third term and reentered private practice.

## Attorney general

[[edit](#)]

Edmondson was elected as Oklahoma Attorney General in 1994. During his first term, he joined other state attorneys general in filing suit against the [tobacco industry](#), successfully advocated for reform of the death penalty appeals process, and created a victim assistance unit. In 1998, he became the second Oklahoma Attorney General to win reelection unopposed. He was elected to a third term in 2002, defeating state Corporation Commissioner [Denise Bode](#). During 2002-2003, he served as President of the [National Association of Attorneys General](#). Notable cases investigated during his tenure as Attorney General have included the August, 2003 indictment of [WorldCom](#) and its former CEO [Bernard Ebbers](#) on charges of violating state [securities](#) laws although the charges were later dropped following Ebbers's federal sentencing. Furthermore, he conducted a [corruption](#) investigation against now-former State Insurance Commissioner [Carroll Fisher](#), which resulted in Fisher's [impeachment](#), resignation, and indictment on charges including [embezzlement](#), [tax evasion](#), [perjury](#), and [bribery](#).

In 2001, Edmondson became involved in a legal dispute with then-Governor [Frank Keating](#) over the Governor's restructuring of his [Cabinet](#), winning a state Supreme Court ruling that Keating had no authority to restructure his Cabinet without legislative approval in the case of [Keating v. Edmondson](#).

Following the 2002 federal appeals court decision declaring the [Pledge of Allegiance](#) unconstitutional, he joined several other state attorneys general in urging the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) to review the decision. Drew Edmondson's legal activities have not been limited to Oklahoma - they have reached as far away as New Jersey. He decided to support a New Jersey lawsuit in 2000 against the Boy Scouts of America, in an attempt to require the Boy Scouts to accept homosexual scout leaders.<sup>[2]</sup> The Supreme Court ruled against Edmondson's position,<sup>[3]</sup> ruling that the Boys Scouts of America had the authority to set the criteria for leadership within their organization.

In October 2007, Edmondson indicted term limits and initiative rights activist [Paul Jacob](#) and two others on the grounds that they had illegally used out-of-state petitioners to collect signatures on a ballot initiative.<sup>[4]</sup> On December 18, 2008 the [Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals](#) struck down the underlying Oklahoma law that barred out of state petition circulators, noting that it was in violation of the [First Amendment](#). Edmondson appealed the decision on behalf of Secretary of State [Susan Savage](#). On January 21, 2009 the Tenth Circuit court denied the state's appeal, effectively ending the case.<sup>[5]</sup> The Attorney General's office dismissed the charges against Jacob and the other defendants, with Edmondson saying "The statute under which these defendants were charged has been declared unconstitutional, and the appellate process is complete...The statute is no longer enforceable."<sup>[6]</sup> on January 22, 2009. The indictment of Jacob drew criticism for being politically motivated. 2008 independent presidential candidate [Ralph Nader](#) referred to the laws such as the one

Jacob was charged with breaking as "Jim Crow laws," adding, "We've seen this before against African Americans.<sup>[7]</sup> The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized against the prosecution twice, calling it "bizarre",<sup>[8][9]</sup> and **Steve Forbes** asked the question "Has North Korea Annexed Oklahoma?".<sup>[10]</sup>

Edmondson was elected to a fourth term in the 2006 election, running against Republican James Dunn in the general election.

## 2010 Governor's Election

[[edit](#)]

Edmonson announced on June 10, 2009 that he is a candidate for Governor of Oklahoma in the 2010 election cycle.

On July 27, 2010 Lieutenant Governor **Jari Askins** "edged Attorney General Drew Edmondson in the Democratic primary by fewer than six-tenths of 1 percent — about 1,500 votes — with all but three of the state's 2,244 precincts reporting unofficial results." "Edmondson threw his support to Askins in a concession speech that resolved a tightly run contest.

In the speech, Edmondson stated, "To her credit and mine, this primary has been one on the issues, on the record, clean, positive, straightforward. ... I think it will be written down in the history books as a testament to both Jari Askins and Drew Edmondson that the Democratic Party comes out of this primary united and unfractured and ready to win this state."<sup>[11]</sup>

## Awards and honors

[[edit](#)]

On March 6, 2009 Edmondson was honored by his alma mater **Northeastern State University** with a 100 Centurion award. This award was given to 100 individuals that have had a positive impact on the NSU community in the last 100 years.

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[[edit](#)]

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Political offices		
Preceded by	<b>Oklahoma State Representative</b> 1975 - 1977	Succeeded by
Preceded by <b>Mike Turpen</b>	<b>District Attorney for Muskogee County, Oklahoma</b> 1983 - 1995	Succeeded by <b>John David Luton</b>
Preceded by <b>Susan B. Loving</b>	<b>Attorney General of Oklahoma</b> 1995 - 2011	Succeeded by <b>Scott Pruitt</b>
Party political offices		
	<b>Democratic nominee for Attorney</b>	

Preceded by <b>Robert Harlan Henry</b>	<b>General of Oklahoma</b> 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006	Succeeded by <b>Jim Priest</b>
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**Attorneys General of Oklahoma**

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