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Justice Sawant, former SC judge, passes away

'He was dedicated to social causes'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

TH 16/11/20

Justice P.B. Sawant

Former Supreme Court judge P.B. Sawant passed away at his Pune residence on Monday. He was 90.
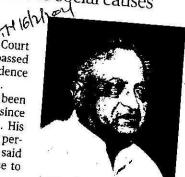
Justice Sawant had been active in public affairs since his retirement in 1995. His last rites would be performed on Tuesday, said sources who were close to him.

He was in the news in recent years for being one of the chief organisers, along with his close friend and former Bombay High Court judge B.G. Kolse-Patil, of the original and controversial Elgaar Parishad held in December 2017 at Shaniwar Wada here.

Justice Sawant has also served as chairman of the Press Council of India.

Justice Kolse-Patil told The Hindu that Justice Sawant was a towering personality whose intense dedication to social justice was legendary.

"He was exemplar of how one human being ought to behave towards another. In his long career, his court decisions not only aimed at ensuring political and social justice for the victims but economic justice as well. His energy towards social caus-es was unflagging, and he remained active and tireless to the very end. His strict sense of justice and conduct of public affairs was inspirational and an example to all of us," he said.

Justice Sawant, who started practising in the Bombay High Court in 1973, was appointed judge in the Supreme Court in 1989.

In 2002, he, along with retired Bombay High Court Judge Hosbet Suresh, served on an Indian People's Tribunal headed by Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer to investigate the 2002 Gujarat riots.

In 2003, Justice Sawant chaired a commission formed to investigate corruption charges against four Ministers in the then Congress-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) government in Maharashtra.