



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge**

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Chief Judge Wilson Announces Appointment of Hon. Shirley Troutman as Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission Co-Chair

NEW YORK—Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson today announced the reappointment of Hon. Shirley Troutman as co-chair of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, which works to promote equal participation and equal justice for employees and litigants of color, advising court leaders on enhancing racial and ethnic fairness, diversity, and meaningful inclusion in the courts and justice system. Judge Troutman, who co-chaired the Commission from 2018 to 2022, is filling a vacancy left by Hon. Richard Rivera, who served as the Commission’s co-chair since February 2022, and was recently named to the newly created position of Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Court Matters.

“I am delighted that my Court of Appeals colleague, trailblazing Associate Judge Shirley Troutman, who so ably co-chaired the Commission for four years, has enthusiastically agreed to again take the helm, along with Commission co-chair and Appellate Division, First Department Associate Justice Troy K. Webber, moving the Commission forward on the path to equal justice,” said Chief Judge Wilson. “Judge Troutman and Justice Webber have a spectacular record working together as co-chairs of the Commission. I can think of no one more committed to, or more qualified for, this important work than Judge Troutman, and look forward to the Commission’s important work under her renewed co-leadership.”

“I appreciate Chief Judge Wilson’s reappointment of me as co-chair of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission and look forward to reestablishing a productive partnership with Justice Webber. The Commission is an answer to the clarion call of Ambassador Williams to persevere in the struggle to rid this nation of racism. I relish the opportunity to help the Commission continue to fulfill its mission,” said Judge Troutman.

“I would like to thank Chief Judge Wilson for the reappointment of Judge Troutman as co-chair of the Williams Commission. I look forward to working with her again to achieve the goals of the Commission. I would be remiss in not thanking Judge Richard Rivera for his co-leadership during these past years and wish him continued success,” said Justice Webber.

Judge Troutman was born in Fort Valley, Georgia and raised in Buffalo, New York, where she attended public schools. She is a graduate of the State University of New York at Buffalo and Albany Law School.

She began her legal career as an Assistant District Attorney in Erie County, then served as an Assistant Attorney General and as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, representing the State of New York and the United States in civil litigation. She has also served as an adjunct professor at the University at Buffalo School of Law.

In 1994, she was appointed by Mayor Anthony Masiello to serve as a judge for the Buffalo City Court and was elected to a full ten-year term that same year. In 2002, she was elected to County Court in Erie County, where she served until her election to New York State Supreme Court in 2009. In 2016, she was designated by Governor Andrew Cuomo to serve on the Rochester-based Appellate Division, Fourth Department. In 2021, she was nominated by Governor Kathy Hochul to serve on the New York State Court of Appeals, becoming the second African-American woman to sit on New York’s highest court. In addition to her previous service as co-chair of the Franklin H. Williams Commission, she is a past president of the National Association of Women Judges-New York Chapter, and has served as a member of both the New York State court system’s Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics and Ethics Commission.

In tribute to outgoing Commission co-chair Hon. Richard Rivera, Chief Judge Wilson said, “I am grateful for Judge Rivera’s dedicated stewardship of the Commission as co-chair over the past 20 months. His new role as our first Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Court Matters will be all-consuming, and we are relying on his expertise, sensitivity, and tireless dedication in promoting access to equal justice for children and families who appear in our State’s family courts. Those courts disproportionately involve low-income New Yorkers and people of color, and our efforts to improve the lives of distressed families in New York will benefit immeasurably from Judge Rivera’s intimate familiarity with operational and other issues impacting the family courts discussed in a recent report issued by the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission.”

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