



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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**Hon. A. Gail Prudenti
Chief Administrative Judge**

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New Administrative Judges Named in New York City, Nassau County and the Third Judicial District

NEW YORK – Chief Administrative Judge A. Gail Prudenti today announced the appointments of five new administrative judges in New York City, Nassau County and the Third Judicial District: Hon. Douglas McKeon as Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters, Bronx County Supreme Court; Hon. Lawrence Knipel as Administrative Judge for Civil Matters, Kings County Supreme Court; Hon. Joseph Zayas as Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters, Queens County Supreme Court; Hon. Thomas Adams as Administrative Judge for the Nassau County Courts; and Hon. Thomas Mercure as Acting Administrative Judge for the Third Judicial District, which comprises Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Sullivan and Ulster counties. The appointments were made with the approval of Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman and in consultation with the Presiding Justices of the Appellate Divisions in their respective judicial departments.

In announcing the appointments, Judge Prudenti said, “These are extraordinarily challenging times for the court system, and we are most fortunate to have five candidates with outstanding credentials to fill these critical positions. In assuming their new leadership responsibilities, they will play an integral part in Chief Judge Lippman’s and my efforts to seek

novel ways to improve trial court operations and enhance the administration of justice as we continue to navigate a very difficult fiscal landscape. I am so pleased that they have agreed to take on these key assignments and look forward to working with them in their new roles.”

Judge McKeon replaces Hon. Efrain Alvarado, who has decided to return to the trial bench full-time; Judge Knipel fills a vacancy arising from the appointment of Hon. Sylvia Hinds Radix to the Appellate Division, Second Department; Judge Zayas replaces Hon. Fernando Camacho, who returned to his home county of Suffolk to serve on the trial bench; Judge Adams succeeds Hon. Anthony Marano, who has reached mandatory retirement age and will return to the trial court bench as a certificated Supreme Court Justice; and Judge Thomas Mercure replaces Hon. George Ceresia, who has resigned and will return to the trial bench full-time.

Judge Prudenti added, “I am sincerely grateful to Judges Alvarado, Hinds-Radix and Camacho for their exemplary service as Administrative Judges in New York City and want to thank them for overseeing the operations of their respective courts, each of which handles formidable caseloads. I also want to express my enormous appreciation to and respect for Justices Marano and Ceresia for their dedicated service as Administrative Judges. Additionally, I want to thank all five of these esteemed jurists for their efforts in helping to better serve the public.”

Hon. Douglas E. McKeon joined the court system in 1988, upon his appointment to the New York City Civil Court bench. He was first elected to the Supreme Court in Bronx County in 1990, and in 2006 was appointed Presiding Justice of the Appellate Term of the Supreme Court for the First Judicial Department. In 2011, he was named Administrative Judge for Civil Matters in Bronx County Supreme Court, a role he will continue to fulfill along with his new duties as Administrative Judge of the county’s Supreme Court-Criminal Term. Prior to his ascension to the bench, Judge McKeon was in the private practice of law, with a specialization in trial and appellate practice, and served as Associate Counsel to the Speaker of the New York State Assembly as well as a member of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. A graduate of New York University School of Law, he is the recipient of numerous honors for his judicial excellence.

Judge Lawrence Knipel has served on the Kings County Supreme Court bench since 1998. Previously, he sat on the New York City Civil Court bench (1991 to 1997), initially serving the state court system as a law clerk, first in New York City Civil Court and then in

Kings County Supreme Court. Prior to joining the court system, he was an associate in the law firm of Vanginkei and Benjamin. He is a graduate of New York University School of Law.

Hon. Joseph A. Zayas, an Acting Supreme Court Justice in Queens County since 2010, was first appointed to New York City Criminal Court in 2003. He served as a principal court attorney in State Supreme Court from 1998 until his judicial appointment. Formerly, he was a staff attorney for The Legal Aid Society who over the course of his tenure served in the Society's Criminal Appeals Bureau, Criminal Defense Division and Capital Defense Unit. A Columbia University School of Law alumnus, Judge Zayas is a member of numerous professional organizations and committees, including the Criminal Courts Committee of the New York City Bar Association, the court system's Committee on the Future of Criminal Indigent Defense Services, the Puerto Rican Bar Association and the Association of Judges of Hispanic Heritage.

Hon. Thomas A. Adams has served the Unified Court System in a judicial capacity for the past 25 years, initially sitting on the Nassau County District Court bench, where he served from 1988 until his election to Nassau County Supreme Court. He was appointed to the Appellate Division, Second Department, in February 2001, serving there until his appointment to the Court of Claims in December 2006. Justice Adams was re-elected to the Nassau County Supreme Court bench in November 2011. He first joined the court system in 1981 as a law secretary to a County Court judge, and prior to that was as an assistant district attorney in Nassau County. A graduate of New England School of Law, he is active in numerous organizations, including the Nassau County Bar Association and the Columbian Lawyers' Association of Nassau County.

Justice Thomas E. Mercure has served on the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Third Judicial Department, since 1988, including as Acting Presiding Justice of the Third Department from 2011 to 2012. First elected to the Supreme Court bench in 1981, he was temporarily designated to sit on the Court of Appeals in 1994 and 2011. Before becoming a Unified Court System judge, he served as Washington County First Assistant District Attorney (1974 to 1977) and District Attorney (1977 to 1981). He is a member of the court system's Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics and the Federal-State Judicial Council, and also participated on the court system's Ethics Commission 1989 to 2003, acting as its chair from 1996 to 2003. He earned his law degree from Georgetown University Law Center, and began his legal

career as a sole practitioner and then a partner in the law firm Corbett & Mercure, specializing in real estate, tax and Family Court matters.

Judge Mercure will remain in his capacity as Acting Administrative Judge until the fulfillment of his duties at the Appellate Division, Third Department.

The appointments are effective immediately. The current annual salary for Administrative Judges is \$165,700.

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