

THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF SEATTLE



NEWS ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Judge Judith Hightower To Retire From Seattle Municipal Court Bench After 25 Years

After 25 years of service on the Seattle Municipal Court Bench, Judge Judith Hightower will be retiring effective Wednesday, October 5, 2016. Judge Hightower is the 2nd elected and longest serving African American female judge in the State of Washington.

First elected to the bench in 1991 as a write-in candidate, Judge Hightower chose to stay at the Municipal Court level because she believed this is where she could best serve her community. Judge Hightower served as the Court's Presiding Judge in 1996 and was a member of the Executive Committee for a number of years. A native Seattleite, Judge Hightower earned her B.A. at the University of Washington and her Juris Doctorate degree from Seattle University.

Judge Hightower has actively served the Washington Judiciary by participating on a number of boards and committees. She served on the Board of the District and Municipal Court Judges' Association and several Association committees including the Education Committee and was founding chair of the Diversity Committee. Judge Hightower chaired the Washington State Judicial College Trustees Committee and served a number of years as a committee member. She has served on a number of statewide judicial conference planning and education committees.

Judge Hightower has a passion for access to justice issues and was awarded the 2006 Seattle University School of Law Access to Justice Institute's Award of Distinction for Public Service and the 2009 Washington State Bar Association's Access to Justice Board Judge of the Year award. In 2008, Judge Hightower received the National Black Prosecutor's Association Thurgood Marshall Justice Award. This award is presented to individuals who demonstrate outstanding achievement in service to the national and international community in the pioneering spirit of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall through social activism and concern for human and civil rights.

Prior to her election to the bench, Judge Hightower worked as a criminal defense attorney representing indigent defendants in misdemeanor and felony cases, practicing in Seattle Municipal Court, King County Juvenile and Superior Courts.

Judge Hightower has served on a number of boards including The Matt Talbot Center, Park Lake Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts Totem Council, Farestart, and the Seattle University Law Alumni Board. She has participated in the Judges in the Classroom Program, the Urban Peoples Law School and regularly speaks in the schools and community about the law and legal profession.

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Judge Hightower sings with the Jubilation and Judahsong Choirs and is married with two adult children and two grandchildren.

A judicial vacancy process, established by City of Seattle Ordinance 121698, has been initiated by Mayor Ed Murray.

About Seattle Municipal Court

The Seattle Municipal Court provides a forum to resolve alleged violations of the law in a respectful, independent and impartial manner. Seattle Municipal Court processes more cases than any other municipal court in the State of Washington with seven elected Judges and five appointed Magistrates. The Court adjudicates misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor crimes, infractions, and civil violations authorized under the Seattle Municipal Code and certain Revised Code of Washington statutes. For more information visit: www.seattle.gov/courts.