



news

Colorado Judicial Branch
Nancy E. Rice, Chief Justice
Gerald Marroney, State Court Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 14, 2014

Contact: Robert McCallum or Jon Sarché
720-625-5815
720-625-5811
robert.mccallum@judicial.state.co.us
jon.sarche@judicial.state.co.us

General Assembly lauds former Chief Justice Bender

DENVER – Members of the Colorado Senate and House of Representatives from both sides of the aisle gave former Chief Justice Michael L. Bender praise and accolades today as they wished him well in his retirement.

In presenting Bender with a plaque and a Colorado flag from both chambers of the General Assembly, Sen. Lucia Guzman said she had noted that all the awards, honors and articles about him said he exemplified dedication, integrity and service to the community.

“His is a remarkable record of service and accomplishment,” she said.

In separate ceremonies in each chamber, members of the Senate and House said they appreciated Bender’s commitment to listening to Judicial Branch staff, to members of the other branches of government and especially to the people of Colorado. Many also commented on his initiatives designed to improve the public’s access to the courts.

“Nobody has been more determined to provide leadership in the Judicial Branch that ensures that ordinary people, people without means, benefit from the great leveler, the judicial system,” said Rep. Daniel Kagan.

Also noted was Bender’s commitment to openness and transparency in government.

“The American Bar has been a pretty insular institution, and that is a problem throughout the United States,” said Rep. Bob Gardner. “While we have an open system, making the judiciary more open and hospitable to the people has been a hallmark of Chief Justice Bender’s work. Under his leadership, Colorado has become a state whose judiciary is the most open to criticism from the outside and to improving the way it does business for ordinary citizens.”

In brief remarks to the Senate, Bender said he was humbled by the recognition and said it has been a privilege to have served the state during his 17 years as a Supreme Court justice, the last three of which he served as Chief Justice.

“I wish the very best for all of you and of course I wish the best for the state,” he said, and then added a final request.

“Do not forget the serious plight of the judiciary and court system, which forms the fundamental guarantee of our constitutional democracy and preserves the American way of life,” Bender said.

Bender retired from the court on Jan. 7, his 72nd birthday. The Colorado Constitution requires that all judicial officers retire at age 72. Succeeding him as Chief Justice is Nancy E. Rice.