



news

Colorado Judicial Branch
Michael L. Bender, Chief Justice
Gerald Marroney, State Court Administrator

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Justice Nancy E. Rice named Chief Justice-designate of the Colorado Supreme Court, Chief Justice Bender to retire in January 2014

DENVER – The Colorado Supreme Court announced today that Justice Nancy E. Rice will serve as Chief Justice-designate in concert with Chief Justice Michael L. Bender until he retires as Chief Justice and from the Court on his 72nd birthday, January 7, 2014.

“The role and responsibilities of the Chief Justice are vast and varied and I look forward to working with Chief Justice-designate Rice over the next seven months so that she can most effectively take over as Chief Justice,” Chief Justice Bender said. “I am pleased the Court decided to make this appointment now so that we can work together on our shared vision for continued excellence in the judiciary.”

Chief Justice-designate Rice was selected by the other members of the Colorado Supreme Court and will work hand-in-hand with Chief Justice Bender to ensure an efficient transition in leadership for the Court and Colorado Judicial Branch. Under the Colorado Constitution, state justices and judges must retire by age 72. A formal announcement on Chief Justice Bender’s retirement will be made in the future.

“I am honored to be entrusted by my colleagues on the Court with this opportunity,” said Chief Justice-designate Rice. “During his tenure, Chief Justice Bender has placed a high importance on leadership and learning for everyone in the Judicial Branch and has encouraged others to seek ways to be better leaders in their courthouses and communities. I look forward to working with him, learning from his experiences as Chief Justice and carrying our mission forward.”

Chief Justice-designate Rice was appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court in 1998. Before that she served as a District Court Judge in the Second Judicial District (Denver) from

1987 to 1998. Before taking the bench, Chief Justice-designate Rice served in the U.S. Attorney's Office as an Assistant U.S. Attorney from 1977 to 1987 and as the Deputy Chief of the Civil Division from 1985 to 1987. She also served as a Deputy State Public Defender in the appellate division from 1975 to 1976. Chief Justice-designate Rice received her B.A. from Tufts University in 1972 and her J.D. from the University of Utah College of Law in 1975. She is an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Colorado Law School and the University of Denver Sturm College of Law.

The Colorado Supreme Court is the state's court of last resort. Its decisions are binding on all other Colorado state courts. The Court is composed of seven justices who serve ten-year terms. The Chief Justice serves as the executive head of the Colorado Judicial System and is the ex-officio chair of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission. The Chief Justice appoints the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the Chief Judge of each of the state's 22 judicial districts. Additionally, the Chief Justice is responsible for maintaining the Judicial Branch's relationships with the Executive and Legislative Branches and administering the budget for the Judicial Branch.

The Colorado Judicial Branch is the state's largest unified criminal justice agency and includes the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, as well as the state's district and county trial courts. The branch is also home to the Department of Probation Services, which employs more than 1,100 people including approximately 900 probation supervisors and officers. The department's officers are responsible for supervising more than 80,000 adult and juvenile offenders.

With the probation department, the Judicial Branch employs approximately 3,600 employees, which includes 393 justices, judges and magistrates. Last fiscal year, 777,000 cases of all types came through the state court system.