



News Release

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Judge Lisa P. Thornton Named Monmouth Vicinage Assignment Judge

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner has announced that Superior Court Judge Lisa P. Thornton will lead the Monmouth Vicinage as assignment judge, effective Sept. 1, 2014. She will succeed Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson, who is retiring after serving on the bench since 1987 and as assignment judge since May 1993.

“Judge Thornton has a proven record as a judge and an innovative manager, and has tackled administrative problems with inventive solutions,” Chief Justice Rabner said. “With her strong background as a trial attorney and her experience on the bench, including in municipal court, she is exceptionally well-qualified to lead the Monmouth Vicinage.”

Judge Thornton was appointed to the bench in January 2008 by Gov. Jon S. Corzine. Since then, she has served in the civil and criminal divisions as well as the family division, where she is currently the presiding judge. As presiding judge, she developed a “Law Clerk Bootcamp” to enrich the experience of recent law school graduates who are training for their legal careers.

Judge Thornton began her career at Prudential Financial in December 1986 and earned her law degree while employed there, where she rose to senior trial attorney. She simultaneously sat in Neptune Township Municipal Court from January 1999 until December 2001. She was named special deputy commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance in April 2002, and in January 2006 left the department to become senior associate counsel in the Office of the Governor. In September 2006 Judge Thornton joined the state Attorney General’s office as chief of staff. She served until her appointment to the bench in January 2008.

She serves on the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Extrajudicial Activities. She recently served in the Rutgers-Camden School of Law “Diversity Pipeline” Program, designed to encourage minority students to develop skills that could apply to judicial positions. Judge Thornton is the first female African-American assignment judge in the history of the modern court.

“I am humbled and delighted to be named by Chief Justice Rabner to lead this outstanding body of judges and staff in Monmouth County,” Judge Thornton said. “It is a great honor to succeed Judge Lawson into the chambers of the assignment judge, and I will strive to maintain and advance the successes of his tenure.”

Judge Thornton received her law degree from Rutgers School of Law-Newark in 1992 and her bachelor’s degree from Rutgers University, Douglass College in 1986. She lives in Neptune.

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