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Chief Justice Names Judge Michael J. Blee to Lead Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner announced today that Superior Court Judge Michael J. Blee will lead the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage, effective March 1.

Judge Blee will succeed Judge Julio L. Mendez, who will retire after more than 10 years as assignment judge, capping 20 years on the Superior Court bench.

“From his leadership in municipal court reform, to his efforts to connect recovery court graduates with jobs, and so much more, Judge Mendez leaves a legacy of innovation in pursuit of justice,” Chief Justice Rabner said. “The Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage will remain in capable hands under the leadership of Judge Blee, a talented and fair-minded jurist with a wide range of legal experience.”

Judge Blee has served more than four years as presiding judge of the vicinage’s chancery division. Beginning his career on the bench in 2012, Judge Blee spent more than three years in the vicinage’s family division before he was appointed to the criminal division in 2015. A municipal court judge for eight months before joining the bench, Judge Blee was in private practice for 24 years.

Born and raised in Atlantic County, Judge Blee practiced law primarily in Atlantic and Cape May counties. In private practice from 1988 to 2012, Judge Blee had extensive jury trial experience in state and federal courts and engaged extensively in municipal court practice. He served as an assistant prosecutor for Northfield from 1990 to 1992, labor relations counsel for Egg Harbor Township from 1996 to 1997, special prosecutor for Brigantine from 1997 to 1999, and prosecutor for Absecon from 1993 to 1996 and from 1998-1999.

Judge Blee was a public defender for Brigantine and Margate until 2011 and the solicitor for the Somers Point Planning Board from 2009 to 2012. He served as a municipal court judge for Linwood and Northfield from October 2011 to June 2012. From 2004 to 2012, he served as solicitor for Galloway Township. He also served as solicitor for Absecon from 1996 to 1998 and from 2000 to 2012.

“I am grateful to Chief Justice Rabner for his confidence in my ability to lead this vicinage. I’m very excited about this new challenge of continuing the exemplary work of Judge Mendez,” Judge Blee said.

A graduate of Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA., Judge Blee earned his law degree from Rutgers Law School – Camden.

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