

NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

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SAN FRANCISCO SUPERIOR COURT BENCH ELECTS NEW ASSISTANT PRESIDING JUDGE

SAN FRANCISCO -- Presiding Judge James J. McBride today announced the unanimous selection of Judge Cynthia Ming-mei Lee as the incoming Assistant Presiding Judge of the San Francisco Superior Court.

"I consider it a great honor to be elected by my colleagues as Assistant Presiding Judge," said Judge Lee, a veteran jurist and former prosecutor who has presided over high-profile trials. "I am enthusiastic about assuming my new responsibilities and I am wholeheartedly committed to assisting and working in partnership with our Presiding Judge-Elect Katherine Feinstein as we serve this Court at a time of great change and financial uncertainty."

Judge Lee, whose 2-year term begins on January 1, 2011, said she is looking forward to working with the civil and criminal bar, judicial colleagues and Court staff in her new role as Assistant Presiding Judge.

"Collaborating with my colleagues will be essential to find solutions to the issues that we face. I also am eager to handle civil trials in addition to my administrative and policymaking duties in partnership with Judge Feinstein."

Appointed to the Bench on June 2, 1998 by Gov. Pete Wilson, Judge Lee has presided over

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2-2-2-2

criminal matters at the Hall of Justice for 13 years while serving in leadership roles with the Court. She currently is the Supervising Judge for the Preliminary Hearing Courts, and also has presided over felony and misdemeanor trials, preliminary hearings and Domestic Violence Court during her tenure on the San Francisco Bench. As a member of the Court's policy-making Executive Committee and as Chair of the Personnel Committee, Judge Lee has gained valuable knowledge of all facets of the Court's operations.

Presiding Judge McBride, whose 2-year term ends December 31, 2010, praised Judge Lee for her hard work, dedication and commitment to the Court. "Judge Lee worked hard during my term and I appreciate the long hours and creativity that she demonstrated repeatedly. After the hiring freeze took effect in April 2009, Judge Lee had the unenviable task as Chair of the Personnel Committee of devising a plan to staff Judges with legal researchers – even if it meant that they had to work for the Court for free. It was a win-win for all involved and a creative solution that required a great deal of leg work. Judge Feinstein and Judge Lee are strong, experienced leaders who will serve this Court and the public well in the next two years."

Judge Feinstein congratulated Judge Lee, and said she was looking forward to working together as the Court's top judicial leaders.

"I have known Judge Lee for more than 25 years and had the pleasure of working with her in different capacities," said Presiding Judge-Elect Feinstein. "She is an accomplished leader, and I look forward to working with her in another productive partnership, as we each assume new duties with the Court."

During her time on the San Francisco Bench, Judge Lee also has served on the Court's Adult Probation Oversight, Bail and Jury Improvement committees.

Prior to her judicial appointment, Judge Lee was a highly experienced veteran prosecutor and leader in the San Francisco District Attorney's Office from 1977 to 1998. She served as Head Attorney for the Felony Charging Unit, as well as the Preliminary Hearing, Juvenile and Misdemeanor Trial divisions. Judge Lee also had extensive trial and management experience

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SFSC/JUDGE LEE
3-3-3-3

in the DA's office in various divisions.

Judge Lee received her J.D. from Golden Gate University School of Law and a bachelor's from Mount Holyoke College. She received an honorary Masters of Law from Golden Gate University School of Law. She was an Adjunct Professor of Trial Advocacy for Golden Gate University School of Law.

Judge Lee is a member of the California Judges Association, and in 2004-2005, she served on the Judicial Council Criminal Law Advisory Committee.

The San Francisco Superior Court Bench is comprised of 52 Judges and 12 Commissioners.

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