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Supreme Court appoints new chief judges from Waukesha, Winnebago counties

Madison, Wis. (May 19, 2017) – The Wisconsin Supreme Court has appointed circuit court judges from Waukesha and Winnebago counties as the new chief judges of their respective judicial administrative districts, effective Aug. 1. The Court also re-appointed circuit court judges from Milwaukee, Rock, Grant, and St. Croix counties to continue serving as administrative chief judges.

Deputy Chief Judge Jennifer R. Dorow, Waukesha County Circuit Court, will become chief judge in the Third Judicial Administrative District. She replaces Chief Judge Randy R. Koschnick, Jefferson County Circuit Court, who has been appointed Director of State Courts as of Aug. 1.

Dorow was appointed to the Waukesha County bench in 2011 and elected in 2012. She was previously an assistant district attorney for Waukesha County and worked 12 years as an attorney in private practice. Dorow is a graduate of Marquette University and Regent University Law School. District Three consists of Jefferson, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha counties.

Deputy Chief Judge Barbara Hart Key, Winnebago County Circuit Court, will become the new chief judge of the Fourth Judicial Administrative District. She replaces Chief Judge Robert J. Wirtz, Fond du Lac County Circuit Court, who has served the maximum three consecutive two-year terms as a chief judge.

Key was first elected to the Winnebago County bench in 1998 and has been re-elected three times. She previously served as a circuit court commissioner in Winnebago County, as an assistant district attorney in Winnebago and Wood counties and as an attorney in private practice. Key is a graduate of UW-Madison and the UW Law School. District Four consists of Calumet, Fond du Lac, Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Winnebago counties.

Wirtz will continue serving on the Fond du Lac County bench, to which he was first elected in 1999. He was re-elected in 2005 and 2011.

The Supreme Court previously announced the appointment of Judge Jason A. Rossell as chief judge of the Second Judicial Administrative District. Rossell replaced retiring Chief Judge Allan “Pat” Torhorst, Racine County Circuit Court, on May 8. The Second District includes Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties.

The Supreme Court also re-appointed four circuit court judges to continue serving as chief judges of their respective administrative districts.

- District One: Chief Judge Maxine A. White, Milwaukee County Circuit Court (District One consists of Milwaukee County)
- District Five: Chief Judge James P. Daley, Rock County Circuit Court (District Five consists of Dane, Green, Lafayette and Rock counties)
- District Seven: Chief Judge Robert P. VanDeHey, Grant County Circuit Court (District Seven consists of Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Iowa, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon counties)
- District Ten: Chief Judge Scott R. Needham, St. Croix County Circuit Court (District Ten consists of Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk, Rusk, St. Croix, Sawyer, and Washburn counties)

Circuit court judges who continue their terms as chief administrative judge:

- District Six: Chief Judge Gregory J. Potter, Wood County Circuit Court (District six consists of Adams, Clark, Columbia, Dodge, Green Lake, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Sauk, Waushara, and Wood counties)
- District Eight: Chief Judge James A. Morrison, Marinette County Circuit Court (District Eight consists of Brown, Door, Kewaunee, Marinette, Oconto, Outagamie and Waupaca counties)
- District Nine: Chief Judge Gregory B. Huber, Marathon County Circuit Court (District Nine consists of Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Menominee, Oneida, Price, Shawano, Taylor and Vilas counties)

Working as a team with a deputy chief judge and a professional court administrator, a chief judge manages the flow of cases and meets several times a year with other chief judges as a committee to work on administrative issues of statewide interest. With the exception of the First Judicial Administrative District, where the chief judge is a full-time administrator, chief judges maintain court calendars, in addition to handling administrative duties.

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