



Judicial Council of California · Administrative Office of the Courts

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

www.courtinfo.ca.gov

REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

For business meeting on: June 24, 2011

Title

Judicial Council Resolution: Recognizing the Service of African American Justices in the California Courts

Agenda Item Type

Action Required

Effective Date

June 24, 2011

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

June 24, 2011

Recommended by

Curtis L. Child, Director
Office of Governmental Affairs
Administrative Office of the Courts

Contact

Dia Poole, 916-323-3121
dia.poole@jud.ca.gov

Executive Summary

The Administrative Office of the Courts recommends that the Judicial Council commend the significant achievements of the African-American justices who have served, or are serving, on the California Supreme Court and California Courts of Appeal. Recognizing their achievements this year is especially significant since 2011 marks the 70th anniversary year of the appointment of California's first African-American judge and the 50th anniversary year of the appointment of California's first African-American justice.

Recommendation

The Administrative Office of the Courts recommends that the Judicial Council approve the attached resolution. The resolution commends the leadership and achievements of the African-American justices who have served, or are serving, on the California Supreme Court and California Courts of Appeal. The resolution also calls upon the judicial, legal, and justice communities to acknowledge the occasion of the 50th and 70th historic anniversary milestones and participate in statewide and local celebrations to educate the public and pursue opportunities to discuss enhancing diversity within the branch.

Previous Council Action

From time to time, the Judicial Council approves resolutions related to judicial branch matters.

Rationale for Recommendation

African-American men and women have served the judicial branch with distinction, inspiring the trust and confidence of Californians from all walks of life. Their service brings into fruition the Judicial Council of California's strategic goal to ensure that the makeup of California's judicial branch reflects the diversity of the state's residents.

Recognizing their achievements this year is especially significant since 2011 marks the 70th anniversary year of the appointment of California's first African-American judge and the 50th anniversary year of the appointment of California's first African-American justice. The California Legislative Black Caucus, in collaboration with the Administrative Office of the Courts, has sponsored a photographic exhibit honoring the service of California's African-American justices and has adopted resolutions asking that all Californians highlight the contributions of the justices of the California Supreme Court and the California Courts of Appeal.

Comments, Alternatives Considered, and Policy Implications

This proposal was not circulated for comment. No alternatives were considered. There are no policy implications with this proposal.

Implementation Requirements, Costs, and Operational Impacts

The proposal does not involve any implementation efforts. There are no costs or operational impacts from the approval of this proposal.

Attachments

1. Judicial Council Resolution Relative to the 50th and 70th Anniversaries of Service by African American Justices in the California Courts, at page 3



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

Resolution

Whereas the Judicial Council of California notes that the year 2011 marks the 70th anniversary year of the appointment of California's first African-American judge and the 50th anniversary year of the appointment of California's first African-American justice; and

Whereas the Judicial Council of California recognizes the significant achievements of the 14 African-American justices who have served—6 of whom still serve—on the California Courts of Appeal, the 2 African-American justices who have served on the California Supreme Court, and the 1 African-American justice who has served on both high courts, all having heard and decided landmark legal cases and set legal precedents that remain in force today; and

Whereas, 50 years ago, Associate Justice Edwin L. Jefferson, a native of Mississippi and a graduate of the University of Southern California, Gould School of Law, when appointed by Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Sr., became the first African American to serve on the California Court of Appeal, where he served with distinction in Division Four of the Second Appellate District from October 1, 1961, to May 20, 1975; and

Whereas, 70 years ago, Justice Jefferson was first appointed to the Los Angeles Municipal Court by Governor Culbert Olson in 1941, becoming California's first African-American judge—and the first African-American judge west of the Mississippi—in which position he served honorably until his elevation to the Los Angeles Superior Court by Governor Earl Warren in 1949; and

Whereas Justice Jefferson opened the door for other historic appointments of African-American judicial pioneers to the California Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal, including Wiley W. Manuel, who became the first African-American justice of the California Supreme Court, serving with distinction from 1977 to 1981; Clinton White, who became the first African-American to serve as presiding justice of a California Court of Appeal, heading Division Three of the First Appellate District from 1978 to 1994; and Arleigh Maddox Woods, who became the first African-American woman appointed to the California Court of Appeal, serving as an associate justice in Division Four of the Second Appellate District from 1980 to 1982 and as presiding justice of that court from 1982 to 1995; and

Whereas these men and women are among the thousands of justices, judges, and subordinate judicial officers who serve with distinction each day in courts throughout the state of California, whose service inspires the trust and confidence of Californians from all walks of life, and who share a common goal of ensuring that all persons have equal access to the courts and court proceedings and programs; and

Whereas the California Legislative Black Caucus has authored resolutions passed by the California State Senate and Assembly asking all Californians to participate in educational and outreach activities recognizing the work of the justices of the California Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal and has collaborated with the Administrative Office of the Courts to sponsor a photographic exhibit in the Capitol rotunda honoring the service of California's African-American justices;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Judicial Council of California calls upon the leadership of the judicial, legal, and justice community—including courts, bar associations, universities, law schools, legal aid providers, and others—to recognize and celebrate the occasion of these 50th and 70th anniversary historic milestones and to pursue opportunities to continue the dialogue on the need for ongoing efforts to enhance diversity within the judiciary; and that the secretary of the council transmit copies of this resolution to the California Appellate Court Legacy Project, the California Supreme Court Historical Society, and the greater judicial branch community for inclusion in historical and educational activities, publications, and resources.

In witness whereof
I have hereunto set my hand this 24th day of June, 2011

Attest:

TANI CANTIL-SAKAUYE
Chief Justice of California and
Chair of the Judicial Council of California

WILLIAM C. VICKREY
Administrative Director of the Courts