



**MEDIA ADVISORY**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 4, 2012

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## **Retired Justice Margaret Morris Dies After Historic Career on State Court of Appeal**

RIVERSIDE—Retired Presiding Justice Margaret Morris, the first woman to serve as an associate justice and later as a presiding justice of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, has died at the age of 89 after a 10-month illness. A private family memorial is being planned.

“As the first female presiding justice in the Fourth Appellate District, Margaret Morris was a historic figure and a trailblazing pioneer for women’s rights,” stated Presiding Justice Manuel A. Ramirez. Recalling comments from former colleagues, Presiding Justice Ramirez also noted that she was an extremely effective and efficient administrator of Division Two at the time it was located in San Bernardino.

“Presiding Justice Morris was dedicated, hard-working and blessed with remarkable legal skills and a keen and analytical legal mind,” he noted. “She was gracious, charming and held in the highest regard by all who knew her.”

A former high school English teacher, Presiding Justice Morris attended Northwestern University School of Law, graduating Order of the Coif in 1948. There she met her husband, Robert S. Morris, who would practice law in Southern California for many years. They moved from Chicago to San Bernardino in 1949, where she joined the Office of the County Counsel, eventually becoming Chief Deputy.

Justice Morris began her judicial career in 1963 when she was appointed to the San Bernardino Municipal Court by Governor Edmund G. “Pat” Brown. She was elevated to the Superior Court shortly after that. In 1976 she was appointed Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division Two, and was named Presiding Justice of that court in 1982 by Governor Edmund G. “Jerry” Brown, Jr.

After her retirement in 1986, Presiding Justice Morris resided in Laguna Beach, California, where she devoted herself to painting and enjoyed her four grandchildren. Throughout her retirement, and particularly in her last weeks, Presiding Justice Morris recalled with great fondness the collegiality she had enjoyed with judicial colleagues, court attorneys and staff at the Court of Appeal.

Vigorous and lively throughout all but the last year of her life, Justice Morris passed away peacefully at Royal Oaks Manor in Bradbury, California on April 16, 2012. She is survived by her attorney son and daughter-in-law, Stephen and Christine Morris of San Marino, California; her granddaughter and husband Katherine and Benoit Boivin of Montreal, Canada; grandsons Benjamin and Tobias Morris and granddaughter Rebecca Morris. She was predeceased by her son David Morris and, in December 2011, by her husband of 63 years, Robert Morris.

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