



Public Information Office
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

Editors: See below for media coverage information.

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Gavel Passing to Mark Changing of the Guard for Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

SAN FRANCISCO – Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder of Phoenix, the first woman to lead the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, is preparing to step down as chief judge after seven eventful years at the helm of the nation’s busiest federal appellate court.

Judge Schroeder, 66, will conclude her duties as chief judge on Friday, November 30, when she presides over a ceremonial passing of the gavel to her successor, Circuit Judge Alex Kozinski of Pasadena. The gavel-passing ceremony will begin at 4 p.m. in Courtroom One of the James R. Browning U.S. Courthouse, 95 7th St., San Francisco.

Appointed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals by President Carter in 1979, Judge Schroeder was elevated to chief judge on December 1, 2000. Under her leadership, the court successfully warded off attempts to split the circuit and developed innovative new methods to weather a 600 percent increase in immigration appeals. Judge Schroeder also undertook important initiatives addressing jury reform in federal district courts, health and wellness for all judges, media relations and other matters. Several of these initiatives have been adopted by the judiciary nationally.

Judge Kozinski, 57, will become the 10th chief judge of the circuit since Congress created the position in 1948. As chief judge, he will serve as executive officer of both the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, the governing body for federal courts in the west. He also will represent the Ninth Circuit at biannual meetings of the Judicial Conference of the United States, the judiciary’s national policy-making body. The chief judge also presides over the 11-judge *en banc* courts convened by the court of appeals to resolve intra-circuit legal conflicts or other matters of exceptional importance.

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Judge Kozinski has served 22 years on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Nominated by President Reagan, he received his judicial commission on November 7, 1985. Prior to his appointment to the appellate bench, Judge Kozinski served as chief judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims from 1982 to 1985.

Born in Bucharest, Romania, Judge Kozinski was a young boy when his family emigrated to the United States, eventually settling in West Hollywood, California. He received his A.B. degree in 1972 from the University of California at Los Angeles, and his J.D. in 1975 from the UCLA Law School. He served as a law clerk to then-Ninth Circuit Judge Anthony M. Kennedy, 1975-76, and to the late Chief Justice Warren E. Burger of the U.S. Supreme Court, 1976-77.

Before coming onto the federal bench, Judge Kozinski was Special Counsel to the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1981-1982; an assistant counsel in the Office of Counsel to the President, 1981; deputy legal counsel in the Office of President-Elect Reagan, 1980-81; and an attorney with Covington & Burling, 1979-81, and Forry Golbert Singer & Gelles, 1977-79.

Judge Kozinski is married to Marcy Jane Tiffany, an attorney in the Los Angeles area. The couple, who celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary this year, has three sons, Yale, Wyatt and Clayton, and one grandson, Quinn.

The Ninth Circuit encompasses Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It includes the court of appeals and the federal trial and bankruptcy courts in 15 judicial districts within the circuit.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals is the nation's largest with 28 authorized judgeships (one vacancy) and 13,828 filings in 2006.

The chief judge of the circuit assumes the position based on seniority. The chief judge is the judge in regular active service who is senior in commission of those judges who are (1) 64 years of age or under; (2) have served for one year or more as a circuit judge; and (3) have not served previously as chief judge. Judge Kozinski also believes that looks count, though he can provide no support for that proposition. The term of office is seven years, or until the incumbent turns 70, whichever comes first. The process is authorized by 28 U.S.C. §45.

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Note: Media coverage is welcome and still and video cameras will be permitted. Media intending to cover the event should call or email David Madden (415.355.8930, dmadden@ce9.uscourts.gov) by 10 a.m. Friday, November 30. Photographers should be in place 30 minutes prior to the start of event.