



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### **Justice Margaret L. Workman to be Chief Justice in 2015**

For immediate release

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Margaret L. Workman will be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia beginning January 1, 2015.

At the Court's last administrative conference, Justice Workman was unanimously approved as Chief by her colleagues on the Court. The Court also voted unanimously for Justice Menis Ketchum to serve as Chief Justice if Justice Workman is unable to serve.

Justice Workman was elected to the Supreme Court of Appeals in November 2008. She previously was elected to the Court in November 1988, when she became the first woman elected to the Court and the first woman elected to statewide office in West Virginia. She previously served as Chief Justice in 1993, 1997, and 2011.

Justice Workman was born in Charleston, the daughter of Mary Emma Thomas Workman and Frank Eugene Workman, a coal miner whose ancestors were among the first settlers of Boone County. Justice Workman attended Kanawha County public schools and was the first in her family to go to college. She attended West Virginia University and the West Virginia University College of Law. After she received her law degree in 1974, she served as assistant counsel to the majority of the U.S. Senate Public Works Committee, the chairman of which was Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia. She returned to West Virginia to work as a law clerk to the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit (Kanawha County). In 1976, she served as an advance person in the Carter Presidential Campaign, and she later worked on the campaign staff of then-Governor Jay Rockefeller. She then opened her own law office in Charleston.

In 1981, Justice Workman became the youngest circuit court judge in the state when then-Governor Jay Rockefeller appointed her to the Kanawha County Circuit Court. She ran for the unexpired term in 1982 and the full term in 1984. As a circuit judge, Justice Workman inherited West Virginia's largest backlog of cases, and during her tenure on the court reduced it to the lowest level in the judicial circuit. She held more jury trials than any other circuit judge in the state during the same period. She also visited every prison and secure juvenile correctional facility in West Virginia.

During her first term on the Supreme Court, she fostered a close working relationship between the court system and domestic violence programs, and she visited many shelters to learn how the court system could be more effective in addressing domestic violence. Also as Chief Justice, she created the Task Force on Gender Fairness in the Courts and the Task Force on the Future of the Judiciary. She formed the

Broadwater Committee, which made reforms in the court system's response to children's issues and spearheaded the development of rules governing child abuse and neglect cases.

In her tenure as Chief Justice in 2011, she focused on improving rehabilitation services for juveniles and established the Adjudicated Juveniles Rehabilitation Commission, now the Juvenile Justice Commission, which monitors juvenile justice facilities and works to improve rehabilitative services.

Justice Workman has been active in church and community activities, and she is the mother of Lindsay, Chris, and Ted Gardner, and the grandmother of Lilly Elizabeth Gardner.

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