



Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

News

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Justice Walker Announces Retirement Effective June 27

For release Monday, April 21, 2025

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Justice Beth Walker today announced her intent to retire from the office of Justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia on June 27.

“While serving the people of West Virginia has been the greatest honor of my life, I now do my part to usher in a new generation of leadership while spending more time with my family, friends, and pursuing other interests,” Justice Walker said.

Justice Walker is currently the longest-tenured justice on the Supreme Court. Elected in 2016 in the first nonpartisan Supreme Court race, Walker began serving as justice on Jan. 1, 2017. She served as Chief Justice in 2019 and 2023.

“I am grateful to the people of this state who elected me,” Justice Walker said. “During my tenure, we have achieved significant success in their name. We have restored public trust in the judicial branch of government by increasing transparency, accountability, and impartiality while returning the focus of the judiciary to the rule of law. We have established a cooperative functioning relationship with both the legislative and executive branches, which I hope endures for years to come.”

The four other Supreme Court justices praised Justice Walker for her leadership and wisdom, as well as her efforts to improve transparency, accessibility and civility across the judicial branch.

“Justice Walker has been an outstanding member of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia,” said Chief Justice William R. “Bill” Wooton. “Regardless of who is Chief – and that role is currently mine – Beth Walker has been a leader on this Court. This is in part due to her institutional knowledge, being our longest-serving justice, but the real foundation of her leadership is her judicial temperament and intellect.

“In some appellate courts in other jurisdictions – and in this Court at different times – the internal deliberations have been caustic and acrimonious,” Chief Justice Wooton said. “That has never happened in our Court because Justice Walker has been a force insisting on collegiality and civility among our members. Her leadership in this area has been a

real strength of our Court. While I would like to persuade Beth to remain on the Court, I will respect her judgment. Nonetheless, I sincerely regret that Justice Elizabeth Walker will very shortly cease to be a member of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia.”

“Justice Walker has worked to instill a high degree of civility and openness across the judiciary by working to build public trust and make our courts more transparent and accessible,” said Justice Tim Armstead. “Her depth of knowledge and work to promote cooperation helped to make our Court function fairly and efficiently. We will certainly miss her and appreciate her friendship and dedication during her years of public service.”

“Justice Walker is an invaluable mentor and a true friend,” said Justice C. Haley Bunn. “When I was first appointed in 2022, she went above and beyond to welcome me and help me settle in to the Court. In addition to her unwavering commitment to improving West Virginia’s court system through transparency and sound legal judgment, Justice Walker truly cares about all the people who serve in our branch and is a nationally recognized advocate for the implementation of legal health and wellness programs which help judges and lawyers manage the rigors of our high-stress, high-intensity jobs. I will truly miss serving alongside her on the Court, but wish Beth and her husband Mike all the best in her upcoming retirement.”

“It would be impossible to overstate Justice Walker’s enormous contributions to the Supreme Court and to the entirety of the judiciary in West Virginia,” said Justice Charles S. Trump IV. “Justice Walker’s leadership has been instrumental in guiding the Supreme Court forward and restoring trust in it with the citizens of this State. Her fairness and integrity have set standards to which we must all aspire. She has earned the admiration and respect of the people of West Virginia, including the bench, the bar, and all of our citizens. She has been West Virginia’s best-known ambassador to other judicial officials throughout America, and more than any other person, she has worked to develop respect for West Virginia’s judiciary throughout the nation. I wish Justice Walker every happiness in her retirement, but I will miss her greatly as a colleague on the Supreme Court.”

Justice Walker submitted a notice of her intent to retire to Chief Justice Wooton and Gov. Patrick Morrisey over the weekend. The Judicial Vacancy Advisory Commission will collect applications, conduct interviews and make recommendations to the Governor, who will appoint a replacement.

A copy of Justice Walker’s letter is attached below.

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SUPREME COURT OF APPEALS
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

ELIZABETH D. WALKER
JUSTICE

April 19, 2025

The Honorable William R. Wooton
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Chief Justice Wooton,

I will retire from the office of Justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia effective June 27, 2025. While serving the people of West Virginia has been the greatest honor of my life, I now do my part to usher in a new generation of leadership while spending more time with my family, friends, and pursuing other interests.

I am grateful to the people of this state who elected me. During my tenure we have achieved significant success in their name. We have restored public trust in the judicial branch of government by increasing transparency, accountability, and impartiality while returning the focus of the judiciary to the rule of law. We have established a cooperative and functioning relationship with both the legislative and executive branches, which I hope endures for years to come.

Further, we instituted and maintain financial, human resources, technology, and procurement policies that did not exist. The creation of these policies was not only good for the administration of the justice system, it also was the right thing to do for the people of our state. Together, we adopted a strategic plan for the judiciary that will provide stability, transparency and efficiency for many years. And we opened a Judicial Learning Center at the Court where students and other visitors can learn about the judicial branch of government and hopefully younger generations are inspired to become West Virginia's attorneys and judges of tomorrow.

I thank God, the people of West Virginia, and my colleagues for the privilege of serving on this great Court. I wish you, our fellow justices, and the entire judicial branch of our state continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Beth Walker", written in a cursive style.

cc: Justice Tim Armstead
Justice Haley Bunn
Justice Charles Trump
Governor Patrick Morrisey