



Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

News

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Justice Bunn to Serve as Chief Justice Through June 2027

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia today announced Justice C. Haley Bunn has been designated to serve as chief justice for 18 months beginning on Jan. 1, 2026, and continuing through June 30, 2027, as the Court transitions the chief justice’s rotation from a calendar year to fiscal year basis.

“I am honored to have been entrusted by my colleagues to serve as chief justice and lead the judicial branch over the next year and a half,” Justice Bunn said.

Appointed in 2022 and elected to a full 12-year term that began Jan. 1, 2025, this will be Justice Bunn’s first time serving as the Court’s chief justice. She succeeds current Chief Justice William R. “Bill” Wooton, who concludes his first tenure as chief justice on Dec. 31.

“This was a year of significant transition across the West Virginia judiciary, with the legislatively mandated judicial realignment that took effect at the beginning of the year as well as the turnover on the Supreme Court with the retirement of Justice Beth Walker and unfortunate passing of Justice Tim Armstead,” Chief Justice Wooton said. “In spite of all the changes, our branch of government continued to operate seamlessly – a testament to the dedicated people we have working across the entire judicial branch. It has been a true honor to serve as chief justice this past year and I know Justice Bunn will continue our Court’s steadfast commitment to administering the judicial branch in a manner that promotes a fair, transparent and accessible justice system for the people of West Virginia.”

“I applaud Chief Justice Wooton for his steady leadership over the past year as we navigated significant changes across the judiciary,” Justice Bunn said. “Looking forward, I hope to build upon the efforts of my predecessors to modernize public access to the judicial branch and further efforts to educate citizens about the functions of West Virginia’s court system.”

West Virginia is unique in that it rotates the chief justice of its Supreme Court every year. Earlier this year, justices voted to realign that service from a calendar year basis to the state’s fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

“Under our unified judicial system, justices of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia not only make decisions on matters of law, but they also serve as a board of directors to

administer the operations of our state's entire judicial branch, with the chief justice functioning essentially as a chairman of the board," Justice Bunn said. "Aligning the service of the chief justice to the state's July 1 to June 30 fiscal year calendar will help us better plan and work with leaders in the executive and legislative branches to secure the Court's budget and ensure efficient access to justice for all citizens. We hope this will afford each chief justice going forward the ability to approach the administrative, budget and legislative processes with a more collaborative and deliberate approach than we were previously able given that the new chief would assume the role on January 1, just days before the start of a legislative session and the spring term of Court."

Justice Bunn will serve an initial 18-month term as chief justice while the transition to the fiscal year rotation takes effect, and then a new chief justice will take over each July 1 beginning in 2027.

Additionally, Justice Charles S. Trump IV has been designated to serve as acting chief justice any time Chief Justice Bunn is unavailable during her tenure.

"I'm extremely humbled and grateful for this opportunity and look forward to working with Chief Justice Bunn over the coming year and a half to serve the people of West Virginia on our Court," Justice Trump said.

Full biographies of each justice are available on the Court's website:

<https://www.courtsv.gov/appellate-courts/supreme-court-of-appeals/justices-staff>.

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