

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCT. 2, 2015

**Justices take part in ceremony for historical
marker at Eden Hill Farm**

Two Delaware Supreme Court Justices, one former and one current, were on hand to witness the unveiling of a historical marker at the Eden Hill Farm in Dover on Sept. 29, a site that has historical significance for both the state and the legal system in Delaware.

The home on the property was built by Nicholas Ridgely in 1749, who was a justice of what was then the provincial Supreme Court of the three lower counties of the Pennsylvania colony, an area that later became the state of Delaware.

Ridgely was also the legal guardian for a young Caesar Rodney, after the teen's parents died, and before Caesar Rodney went on to play a significant role in both the history of the state and the nation, as a founding father and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

In 2004 the historic home was purchased by the State of Delaware and in 2010 it became the chambers for the Kent County-based Justice for the Delaware Supreme Court, who at the time was Justice Henry duPont Ridgely, the great, great, great, great, great, great grandson of Justice Nicholas Ridgely.

When the home was bought by the state, Justice Henry Ridgely had no direct connection to the property, which had been taken over by other relatives several generations earlier, though he was aware of the property's historic significance and its connection with his family.

Justice Henry Ridgely retired from the bench in January 2015 and the office at Eden Hill Farm is now used by Justice James T. Vaughn Jr. who attended the historical marker ceremony along with Justice Henry Ridgely and several members of the extended Ridgely family related to another Delaware Supreme Court Justice -- Henry Ridgely Horsey.

The renovated building, that still maintains much of its historic character, also houses staff members and law clerks for Justice Vaughn.

At the ceremony, Justice Henry Ridgely said he has often wondered about the conversations that must have taken place between his ancestor and a young Caesar Rodney that set Rodney off on his historic path in life.

On hand for the unveiling were also Richard B. Carter the chair of the Delaware Heritage Commission, Stephen Marz State Archivist and Director of Delaware Public Archives, and Rep. Sean Lynn of Dover, who along with State Sen. Brian Bushweller, arranged funding for the historical marker.

Carter said that the history of the home that started with its construction by one Justice Ridgely followed six generations later by second Justice Ridgely moving in to ensure its preservation by making it a part of the Delaware Judiciary “makes for a nice circle.”

Justice Henry Ridgely said one of his last acts before he retired from the bench was to inquire about a historical marker for the site and he is pleased to have been a part of preserving the building for future generations. He said during his time at Eden Hill, he found it to be a “great place for quiet reflection and contemplation and a most appropriate location for judicial chambers.”

**For more information, please contact
Sean O’Sullivan, Chief of Community Relations
(302) 255-0093
Sean O’Sullivan@state.de.us**