

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2017

**THE DELAWARE JUDICIARY ANNOUNCES A NEW
MASTER IN CHANCERY**

The Delaware Judiciary is pleased to announce the appointment of Patricia W. Griffin as a Master in Chancery. The Masters in Chancery adjudicate cases assigned to them by the Court of Chancery, with a particular focus on guardianship issues, property disputes, and trust and estate matters.

“It has been one of the personal highlights of my professional career to work with Pat Griffin, who I have known and counted on as a friend and colleague for almost a quarter century,” said Delaware Supreme Court Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr. From her time as Chief Magistrate to her tenure as the Director of the AOC, Pat has been someone I and everyone else could rely upon for wisdom, common sense, and follow-through. She is a rock and a rock star, and it is wonderful that she can return to the day-to-day work of judging that she loves, and in the county in which she lives. An institution that I love, our Court of Chancery, will be even stronger with Pat on board.”

Ms. Griffin comes to the Court of Chancery from her position as State Court Administrator for the Delaware Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), where she has worked since 2005. During her tenure at the AOC, Ms. Griffin focused on enhancing the services provided by the AOC to the Courts and others. As State Court Administrator, she has played a key role in helping to advance the goals set by the Judiciary to improve the justice system. Efforts include work with the Delaware Supreme Court Task Force on Criminal Justice and Mental Health which developed ways to improve outcomes for people with mental illnesses engaged with the criminal justice system; and the Fairness for All initiative which examined the perceptions of fairness in the Delaware courts. She was recognized for her leadership role in the language access area and has implemented many initiatives to service Limited English Proficient (LEP) litigants.

Building on her foundational work on the Fairness for All initiative, Ms. Griffin has recently helped guide the AOC as it embarked on a series of exciting new initiatives to service the citizens of Delaware, as the Judicial Branch undergoes a systemic evaluation of its current operations and procedures, as well as future planning to meet the needs of our changing society. Her efforts have supported the

ambitious work of the Delaware Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission and its committees. The Commission's report will be released in the near term and outlines recommendations to improve access to the courts by those who cannot afford counsel or appear *pro se*. She has supported the work of the Committee on Fairness in the Criminal Justice System as it develops reforms to make our criminal justice system more equitable and improve public safety. She assisted the Criminal Justice Council of the Judiciary (CJCJ) which recently released a report outlining recommendations for reform following an extensive substantive review of each problem-solving court throughout the State. Grant funds obtained through her efforts from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and in collaboration with the National Center for State Courts and the Delaware Criminal Justice Council, will be critical to support the implementation of the CJCJ's recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these courts. Under Ms. Griffin's direction, AOC staff assisted with the study conducted by the American College of Trial Lawyers and the Delaware State Bar Association focusing on improving court operations statewide. She has guided the Branch's initiative to launch a unified e-filing system across all of the Delaware Courts and the ten-year process improvement initiative the Judicial Branch is conducting in cooperation with the University of Delaware's Alfred Lerner College of Business and Economics.

Despite the State's serious fiscal challenges, Ms. Griffin has worked to find ways to support judicial branch employees through innovative training opportunities to meet Judicial staff needs. She and her staff significantly expanded the court's Community outreach efforts including broadening civics educational opportunities in Delaware schools; created the Summer Youth Volunteer Program which offers participants (including children in foster care) invaluable work experience and new skills that they can apply to school and everyday life; and continues to support the annual Delaware State High School Mock Trial Competition in the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center.

On the national level, Ms. Griffin served as president of the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) and vice-chair of the Board of Directors for the National Center for State Courts (2015–2016), on the COSCA Board of Directors (2009–2012), and as co-chair of the Access, Fairness, and Public Trust Joint Committee of the Conference of Chief Justices and COSCA, and as chair of COSCA's Language Access Advisory Committee. Through these national associations, she has garnered extensive resources to support the Delaware Judiciary's efforts to improve the justice system. She has worked tirelessly to foster strong relationships with partners both within and outside of the judicial system to address critical issues facing the judicial branch.

Before joining the AOC, Ms. Griffin served as the Chief Magistrate for the Justice of the Peace Court. In that position, she established the Truancy Court, which received several national awards, including the 2003 Program of the Year and the 2004 Crystal Star Award from the National Center for Truancy and Dropout Prevention. She also focused on enhancing the professionalism of the Justice of the Peace Court system by creating a formal legal education program for justices of the peace, among other initiatives.

Ms. Griffin received her Juris Doctor from Washington and Lee University and earned her Bachelor's degree from Duke University.

The AOC is grateful to Pat for her leadership and will miss her compassion, patience and friendship. The AOC staff wishes her good luck in her new role as Master in Chancery.

“Ms. Griffin’s innate sense of fairness and superb work ethic will be reflected in her enthusiasm and dedication to the docket. She is the consummate professional who will enhance the reputation of the distinguished Court of Chancery,” said former Delaware Supreme Court Chief Justice Myron T. Steele.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Sean O’Sullivan

Administrative Office of the Courts

302-255-0093

or

Karlis Johnson

Court of Chancery

302-255-0550