

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Court Administrator Gayle P. Lafferty to retire in February

Delaware State Court Administrator Gayle P. Lafferty announced she will be retiring from her position with the Delaware Judiciary effective Feb. 6, 2026, capping a career of more than 30 years of service to the courts.

“Gayle Lafferty has dedicated a large part of her judicial career to public service,” said Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr. “As State Court Administrator, Gayle led us through many novel projects and reforms, including the Delaware Bench and Bar Diversity Project. Perhaps her proudest accomplishment was seeing the judicial branch through the COVID-19 pandemic. She is a true access to justice champion, having implemented many reforms in the way we treat Delawareans involved with the justice system. The judicial branch will miss her steady hand and quiet leadership. I will miss her wise counsel on the many important administrative matters that come across my desk every day.”

Lafferty, a proud graduate of the University of Delaware and Penn State Dickinson Law School, started her work with the Delaware Judiciary in 1991-92 when she clerked for Justice Randy Holland. After a brief time in private practice as an Associate Attorney at Potter Anderson & Corroon LLP, she returned to the courts in 1994 as the very first Supreme Court Staff Attorney. Five years later, as that office grew, she was elevated to Chief Staff Attorney and in 2017 was named the Judicial Branch Employee of the Year in recognition for her innovation, dedication and years of service. She retired from the courts in Dec. 2018 to join the non-profit law firm, Legal Services Corp. of Delaware, as staff attorney working to assist low-income Delawareans. In January 2020, newly appointed Chief Justice Seitz convinced her to return to the Delaware Courts as State Court Administrator.

“I have loved this job and am so proud to have dedicated most of my legal career in service to the Delaware Judicial Branch. It has been the greatest privilege and honor to work alongside Chief Justice Seitz, the Justices of the Supreme Court, and the Presiding Judges of our amazing trial courts. I truly believe we have one of the best, most principled and collaborative state courts systems in the country because of our courts’ wise and discerning leadership,” said Lafferty in a farewell message.

During her tenure, Lafferty was most proud of the Courts’ work to remove barriers to justice – for pro-se litigants and others – and expand court outreach to students at all levels in the state interested in the legal profession and work in the court system. Under Lafferty’s leadership the

Delaware Courts also worked to write off millions in unfair and uncollectable debts and reform fees and fines that presented an undue burden for some struggling to move forward with their lives.

In February, after Lafferty's departure, Deputy State Court Administrator Ken Kelemen, who is also head of the court's Judicial Information Center, will serve as acting State Court Administrator until a permanent replacement is named by the Chief Justice.

The State Court Administrator oversees the Administrative Office of the Courts, which provides a broad range of support services to all state courts, including information technology, legal support, government relations, financial administration and programs and policies consistent with the goals and direction established by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.