

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON FOR PIERCE COUNTY

PRESS RELEASE

March 31, 2020

RE: RETIREMENT OF JUDGE FRANK CUTHBERTSON

Pierce County Superior Court is announcing the retirement of Judge Frank Cuthbertson from the bench after more than 19 years. Judge Cuthbertson's last day will be March 31, 2020.

Judge Cuthbertson was born in New York City in the Borough of Queens in Jamaica Hospital. His mom worked there as a nurse and it is one of the hospitals currently inundated with Covid-19 patients. His dad was a parole officer and worked at the infamous Rikers Island. Judge Cuthbertson earned his bachelor's degree from Duke University in 1975 and his Juris Doctor from Seattle University Law School in 1993.

Judge Cuthbertson has been interested in social justice and equality issues since he was young growing up at the height of the civil rights movements in the 1950's and 60's. He saw the law as an important tool for improving our society. He sought a judicial position because there were no African American judges in Pierce County and diversity is important to building the public's trust and confidence in the justice system.



During his time as a lawyer Judge Cuthbertson worked at Davis Wright Temaine, as counsel for Group Health Cooperative and at Gordon, Thomas, Honeywell, Malanca, Peterson & Daheim. In March of 2001, then-Governor Gary Locke appointed Judge Cuthbertson as Pierce County Superior Court Judge for the newly created Department 21.

As a judge, Judge Cuthbertson spent time in the court's various rotations, including criminal, civil, family and juvenile courts. Judge Cuthbertson was Presiding Judge from 2015-2016.

Judge Cuthbertson is particularly proud of helping establish Pre-Trial Services, working with Judge Murphy, Councilmember Ladenburg and others to create Felony Mental Health Court, helping to reduce the incarceration of juveniles in Pierce County and helping lead the court through a major reorganization.

Judge Cuthbertson had this to say about Clarence Henderson Jr., who will be taking over Department 21 when he retires, "I have had several discussions with Judge Henderson. His intellect, his judicial demeanor and his compassion will make him an outstanding judge. The

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advice I passed on to Judge Henderson is what several lawyers have told me, treat everyone with respect as you struggle to do justice.”

When asked what he will miss about the court, Judge Cuthbertson had the following to say, “I will miss my colleagues, although we do a good job of keeping up with each other after retirement. I will miss our excellent Superior Court Staff and other justice system partners including corrections officers. I will mostly miss the lawyers who work diligently to provide justice for their clients.

Going forward, Judge Cuthbertson and his wife plan to travel. He remains committed to fighting for equal justice, and hopes to share what he has learned with younger attorneys and continue to advocate for improvements to the behavioral health system.



Judge Cuthbertson had hoped to celebrate his time with friends and family at a couple of different retirement parties. Unfortunately for Judge Cuthbertson, the COVID-19 pandemic had other ideas. The court looks forward to providing an opportunity for the greater court community to celebrate with him, but that will have to happen after we have resumed our normal lives again. Stay tuned to our website for more information as it becomes available. Please join us in congratulating Judge Cuthbertson on his retirement.

About Pierce County Superior Court:

Pierce County Superior Court is the second largest superior court in the state of Washington and is proud to serve the citizens and visitors of Pierce County. The court is staffed with 22 judges and nine commissioners. There are three sites where court is held; the County City Building at 930 Tacoma Ave S., Tacoma, Remann Hall Juvenile Court at 5501 6th Ave, Tacoma, and Western State Hospital at 9601 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood. For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.piercecountywa.gov/superiorcourt>.

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