



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge**

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Date: March 22, 2024

Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson Names Judicial Co-Chair to the Attorney Emeritus Program’s Advisory Council

NEW YORK—Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson today announced the appointment of Hon. Christine M. Clark as Judicial Co-Chair of the New York State Attorney Emeritus Program (AEP) Advisory Council. In her capacity as Judicial Co-Chair, Justice Clark will join renowned attorney and law professor John D. Feerick in leading this eminent group of lawyers and academics, which provides guidance and support to the court system’s AEP in its mission to expand quality civil legal services for low-income New Yorkers in some of life’s most crucial matters. A partnership of Fordham Law School’s Feerick Center for Social Justice and the courts’ Office for Justice Initiatives—which administers the program—the AEP works to recruit and place seasoned attorneys, age 55 and above, as volunteers to work in pro bono programs under the guidance of AEP-approved legal services organizations or court-sponsored initiatives which, in turn, train and supervise the volunteers. In addition to offering strategic advice to the AEP, the Advisory Council acts as a bridge to New York’s bar, legal services community, and nonprofit sector.

“Justice Clark is a highly regarded member of New York’s bench who has gained wide recognition for her active and enthusiastic support of pro bono programs and other initiatives to help narrow the State’s justice gap. Her innovative spirit and collaborative approach, combined with her deep understanding of the difficult issues impacting access to justice, will be an asset to the Council’s esteemed chair, Mr. Feerick, to the group’s distinguished members, to the Attorney Emeritus Program, and, ultimately, to the many struggling New Yorkers who rely on pro bono legal representation in housing, consumer debt, and other matters that profoundly affect their lives and livelihoods,” said Chief Judge Wilson.

"I applaud Chief Judge Wilson in appointing Justice Clark as the AEP Advisory Council's Judicial Co-Chair. She is a talented lawyer and jurist who brings to this distinguished group broad-based experience, superb leadership abilities, tremendous energy, and, above all, a deep commitment to the pursuit of equal access to justice," said Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas.

"I extend my congratulations to Justice Clark on her well-deserved appointment. I look forward to the expansion of the AEP's vital efforts under the Council's guidance which, with Justice Clark joining legal giant John Feerick at the helm, is in very able hands," said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George.

"I am delighted that Justice Clark will join founding Chair John Feerick to lead the Council in guiding the AEP, including its efforts to increase the number and broaden the diversity of volunteers, who provide critical—often, life-changing—legal services to some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers. I have no doubt that Justice Clark, with her many talents and unwavering commitment to equal justice, is up to the task. I am eager to work with her toward that end," said Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Edwina G. Richardson, an ex-officio member of the AEP Advisory Council.

"It is a deep honor to serve as Co-Chair of the AEP Advisory Council with Justice Clark. I look forward to our working together to guide its efforts and to support the AEP team at the Office for Justice Initiatives and Fordham Law School's Feerick Center in their work leveraging civil pro bono services by AEP volunteers," said John Feerick.

"We are deeply privileged to partner with the Office for Justice Initiatives to support the AEP and honored to be able to serve under Justice Clark's leadership of the AEP Council. We look forward to working with Justice Clark to continue strengthening this critically important access-to-justice initiative. Justice Clerk's profound expertise in leveraging pro bono resources will help expand the AEP's reach and impact," said Dora Galacatos, Executive Director of Fordham Law School's Feerick Center for Social Justice.

"I am honored and humbled by Chief Judge Wilson appointing me to co-chair the AEP Advisory Council. I admire all the work that Professor Feerick and the Advisory Council have achieved and am eager to join their efforts. I am committed to supporting access to justice for those many New Yorkers who are in need, and I look forward to this opportunity to work with the Advisory Council to further expand such access," said Justice Clark.

Since her appointment in 2014, Justice Christine M. Clark has served as an Associate Justice in the Appellate Division, Third Department which, comprising 28 counties, stretches from the Hudson Valley to the Canadian border. Her judicial career started in 2005, upon her appointment to the Schenectady City Court bench, to which she was subsequently elected. She was then designated an Acting County Court Judge and an Acting Family Court Judge. Justice Clark was elected to the Schenectady County Family Court bench in 2010 and later designated an Acting Supreme Court Justice. In 2012, she was elected to the State Supreme Court in the Fourth Judicial District, becoming the second woman to attain this position. Prior to ascending the bench, she

worked in the Schenectady County District Attorney's Office, first as a DWI prosecutor and later as a sex crimes and child abuse prosecutor. She went on to become the Schenectady County District Attorney's first Bureau Chief of the Special Victims Unit. In that role, she helped establish the Schenectady County Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Team, which collaborated with child protective workers and police officers as well as community leaders. Justice Clark began her legal career as an associate at Dreyer Boyajian LLP.

An alumna of Columbia University and Albany Law School, Justice Clark did not follow the typical path to college. After graduating from high school, she attended a certificate program at the renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, pursuing her undergraduate studies after several years as a dancer with various modern dance companies.

Justice Clark is a former board member of the Capital District Women's Bar Association and the Schenectady County Bar Association. She is the recipient of numerous honors, including the Schenectady County Bar Association's 2017 Lawyer of the Year Award; the Capital Women's District Bar Association's 2018 Hon. Judith S. Kaye Distinguished Attorney Award; the New York Trial Lawyers Association's 2018 Felix J. Aulisi Award; and Albany Law School's 2021 Kate Stoneman Award.

Her appointment is effective immediately.

AEP volunteers who are retired are exempt from attorney registration fees or mandatory CLE requirements; AEP volunteers who are still active are eligible to receive up to 15 CLE credit hours. For more information about the Attorney Emeritus Program, including how to apply as a volunteer, go to <https://www.nysattorneyemeritus.law/>.

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