

NEWS RELEASE

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FORMER PRESIDING JUDGE TO RETIRE AFTER SERVING 21 YEARS ON SAN FRANCISCO BENCH

SAN FRANCISCO -- Judge James J. McBride, a San Francisco native who served his City for three decades as a Judge, prosecutor and police officer, will retire on February 13, 2015, Presiding Judge John K. Stewart announced today.

"Judge McBride is a smart, dedicated, hard-working Judge who will be missed by his colleagues and those litigants and attorneys who have appeared before him for the past 21 years," Presiding Judge Stewart said. "Staff, judicial colleagues, jurors and attorneys will miss his pithy and colorful sense of humor, stories about San Francisco and sharp intellect. He truly is a San Francisco gem."

Judge McBride said, "My feelings on this decision are nothing if not mixed. I look back over the past 21 years with some pride and great satisfaction. I believe I have served the Court well. This is the best job of my life. However it is time to move on and make room for new blood. I offer my gratitude to the citizens of San Francisco for giving me the privilege of serving this City I know and love, and to my judicial colleagues and staff who put up with me all these years."

Judge McBride's judicial career began in 1994 when he was appointed by Gov. Pete Wilson

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SFSC/JUDGE MCBRIDE
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to the Municipal Court. Four years later, he was elevated to the Superior Court by unification. During his more than two decades as a member of the San Francisco bench, Judge McBride served in numerous leadership positions, including Presiding Judge in 2009-2010.

Judge McBride served as Presiding Judge at the start of the Great Recession, which plunged the state into a budget crisis that resulted in historic cuts to the Judicial Branch. As he led the Court through the beginning of this prolonged period of unprecedented austerity, he was determined not to let economic hardship be an excuse for overlooking creative ways to offer the best public service and access to justice. He simultaneously laid the groundwork for early action on cutting court expenses while achieving strides in operations, including an overhaul in asbestos case management. In early 2009 after a public hearing and comment period, Judge McBride consolidated all pre-trial motions in asbestos cases into a new asbestos case management department, which ultimately led to an end in the significant backlog of the Court's sizeable asbestos caseload. During this time, Judge McBride moved forward with an expansion of e-filing to include single assignment cases and other complex litigation cases besides asbestos cases – the precursor to the Court's recent expansion of mandatory e-filing to all general Civil cases.

Judge McBride also served as:

- Assistant Presiding Judge in 2007-2008.
- Supervising Judge of Civil in 2011-2012.
- Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division in 2006-2007.
- Presiding Judge of the Appellate Division in 2001.

Before overseeing the Criminal Operation, Judge McBride presided over Felony Preliminary Hearings and Felony trials. His assignments in the Civil Operation included Civil Trials, where he most recently presided, as well as Law & Motion.

Judge McBride was recognized by the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association as the Trial Judge of the Year (2001), and as the Judge of the Year by the San Francisco Bar Association's Barristers Club (2003).

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From 1975-1978, Judge McBride served as a San Francisco Police Officer. He was the Valedictorian of the 126th Police Academy Recruit Class.

A 1973 graduate from the University of California, Berkeley, he earned a J.D. from the Boalt School of Law in 1979. Judge McBride attended St. Agnes Grammar School, and was a graduate of St. Ignatius High School.

Judge McBride's retirement leaves four vacancies on the 52-member San Francisco Superior Court Bench.

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