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**MAYOR DE BLASIO APPOINTS 26 JUDGES TO FAMILY, CRIMINAL AND CIVIL COURT**

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio has made 26 judicial appointments for the New Year, including four appointments and three reappointments to Family Court; eight appointments and ten reappointments to Criminal Court; and one interim reappointment to Civil Court. All appointments are effective beginning December 23 or December 29, 2015, or January 1, 2016.

“New Yorkers deserve impartial, compassionate and qualified judges in court. Today, I welcome back 15 judges and 11 new appointments, each of whom will represent the best interest of New Yorkers and our communities. With these strong additions to our judicial system, I am confident that the people of this city will find fair and effective judicial oversight of our courts,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

Of the 26 appointees and re-appointees, 8 reside in Brooklyn, 7 in Queens, 6 in Manhattan, 3 in the Bronx, and 2 in Staten Island.

Family, Criminal and Civil Court are part of the New York State Unified Court System. Family Court judges hear cases related to adoption, foster care and guardianship, custody and visitation, domestic violence, and abused or neglected children. The City’s Criminal Court handles misdemeanor cases and lesser offenses, and conducts arraignments and preliminary hearings for felonies. The judge appointed to Civil Court will sit on Family Court.

*The Mayor appointed the following judges to Family Court:*

**Judge Tracey Bing** was first appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge in October 2013 and has since served in Family Court. She formerly served with The Legal Aid Society for nearly a decade, before becoming Director of the Family Law/Domestic Violence Unit of Manhattan Legal Services. Judge Bing is a graduate of SUNY Stony Brook and received her J.D. from CUNY School of Law. This appointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Margaret Morgan** began her career with the New York City Administration for Children’s Services, last serving as Chief of Staff in the Division of Family Court Legal Services. She then served as a Family Court Support Magistrate for over four years. Judge Morgan is a graduate of Pace University and received her J.D. from Jacob D. Fuchsberg Touro Law Center. This appointment was effective December 29, 2015.

**Judge Javier Vargas** has served with the New York State Unified Court System since 1993 in various capacities, including Senior Court Attorney in the New York State Court of Appeals and Nassau County Family Court; Principal Law Clerk in Supreme Court and Appellate Division; and most recently as a Housing Court Judge in Bronx County. Judge Vargas received his undergraduate degree from SUNY at Buffalo, law degree from SUNY Buffalo, School of Law and Master of Law degree from New York University School of Law. This appointment was effective December 29, 2015.

**Judge Karen Lupuloff** was appointed to the Criminal Court in January 2005, and formerly served with the New York County District Attorney's Office, The Office of Special Commissioner of Investigations for the New York City School District and the New York State Attorney General's Office. Judge Lupuloff received her undergraduate degree from The American University and law degree from Temple University School of Law. This appointment was effective December 23, 2015.

*The Mayor appointed the following judges to Criminal Court:*

**Judge Heidi Cesare** was first appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge in February 2015 and has since served in Criminal Court. She served with The Legal Aid Society for 15 years in the Criminal Defense and Federal Defender Divisions and with the Federal Defenders of New York. Judge Cesare received her undergraduate degree from Columbia College and her law degree from Boston University School of Law. This appointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Marguerite Dougherty** was first appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge in February 2015 and has since served in Criminal Court. She formerly served as Executive Director and Assistant General Counsel for JP Morgan Chase & Co. and as a Court Officer and Court Clerk in the Criminal and Supreme Court for 18 years. Judge Dougherty is a graduate of St. Francis College and received her J.D. from Brooklyn Law School. This appointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Althea Drysdale** was first appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge in February 2015 and has since served in Criminal Court. Prior to her appointment, Judge Drysdale served with The Legal Aid Society and the New York County Defender Services. She received her undergraduate and master degrees from John Jay College of Criminal Justice and received her law degree from Syracuse University School of Law. This appointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Karen Gopee** began her career with the Kings County District Attorney's Office, and has served with the New York State Unified Court System as Principal Court Attorney at the Red Hook Community Justice Center. Judge Gopee is a graduate of SUNY Binghamton and received her J.D. from St. John's University School of Law. This appointment was effective December 29, 2015.

**Judge Laura Johnson** was first appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge in January 2013 and has since served in Criminal Court. She previously served with the New York County District Attorney's Office and The Legal Aid Society, including as Attorney-in-Charge of the Criminal Appeals Bureau and Director of the Special Litigation Unit of the Criminal Defense Division. Judge Johnson also served as an Assistant Solicitor General and clerked for a former Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals. Judge Johnson received her undergraduate degree from Barnard College and her law degree from Columbia University School of Law. This appointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Donald Leo** first served with the New York County District Attorney's Office for 13 years before becoming Deputy Bureau Chief of the Sex Offender Management Bureau of the New York State Attorney General's Office. Judge Leo is a graduate of New York University and received his J.D. from Brooklyn Law School. This appointment was effective December 29, 2015.

**Judge Elizabeth N. Warin** began her career as a Law Clerk with the United States District Court, Southern District of New York, then served with The Legal Aid Society, Criminal Defense Division and was Of Counsel to two firms specializing in criminal defense. Judge Warin received her undergraduate degree from Yale University and her law degree from New York University School of Law. This appointment was effective December 29, 2015.

**Judge Joanne Watters** has served with the Bronx County District Attorney's Office, New York City Police Department's Department Advocate's Office and most recently, Court Attorney to the Supervising Judge of Kings County Criminal Court. Judge Watters received her undergraduate degree from Fordham University and her law degree from Pace University School of Law. This appointment was effective December 29, 2015.

*The Mayor reappointed the following judges to Family Court:*

**Judge Diane Costanzo** was appointed to the bench in July 2015, and previously served with The Legal Aid Society and with the New York State Unified Court System for 18 years including as Executive Assistant to the New York City Family Court Administrative Judge, Court Attorney Referee and Principal Court Attorney. Judge Costanzo graduated from LaSalle University and received her J.D. from Catholic University School of Law. This reappointment was effective December 23, 2015.

**Judge Dean Kusakabe** has served on the Family Court bench since July 2012. Prior to his appointment, he was a solo practitioner specializing in family law and has served with The Legal Aid Society in the Juvenile Rights Division. Judge Kusakabe is a graduate of Emory University and received his law degree from Brooklyn Law School. This reappointment was effective December 29, 2015.

**Judge Karen Wolff** began her career in private practice, then joined the New York City Law Department's Medical Malpractice Unit. Prior to her appointment in January 2010, Judge Wolff was a Special Referee of a Matrimonial Part and Court Attorney of the Supreme Court in Richmond County. Judge Wolff graduated from SUNY at Albany and received her law degree from Union University at Albany Law School. This reappointment was effective December 29, 2015.

*The Mayor reappointed the following judge to Civil Court, who will sit on Family Court:*

**Judge Judith Waksberg** was appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge in July 2015 and has since served in Family Court. She began her career with The Legal Aid Society in 1982, having worked as Director of the Juvenile Rights Special Litigation Unit and the Juvenile Rights Appeals Unit. Judge Waksberg received her undergraduate degree from Brandeis University and her law degree from New York University School of Law. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

*The Mayor reappointed the following judges to Criminal Court:*

**Judge Miriam Cyrulnik**, an Acting Supreme Court Justice, was first appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge in June 2003. She was subsequently appointed to the Criminal Court in January 2004. Prior to her appointment, Judge Cyrulnik served as a Law Clerk for over twenty years in Criminal Court, and Supreme Court Criminal Term, Civil and Appellate Term. Judge Cyrulnik received her undergraduate degree from Brooklyn College and her law degree from Brooklyn Law School. She currently serves as Secretary of the Association of Criminal Court Judges. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge James Griffin**, an Acting Supreme Court Justice, was first appointed in March 1986 as an Interim Civil Court Judge. He was subsequently appointed to the Criminal Court in February 1987. He served with the Office of the Corporation Counsel for over a decade prior to his appointment to the bench as the Chief of the Commercial Litigation Division. Judge Griffin is a graduate of Fordham University and received his law degree from St. John's University School of Law. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Steven Hornstein** was appointed to the Criminal Court in January 2013. He began his career with the Bronx County District Attorney's Office and was a criminal defense attorney in private practice. Judge

Hornstein is a graduate of SUNY at Albany and received his law degree from New York Law School. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Nicholas Iacovetta**, an Acting Supreme Court Justice, was first appointed to the Criminal Court in April 1988. He was with the Bronx County District Attorney's office for over a decade, having served as Bureau Chief of the Criminal Courts Bureau and Homicide Bureau. Judge Iacovetta is a graduate of Fordham College and received his law degree from Fordham Law School. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Elisa Koenderman** was appointed to the Criminal Court bench in 2007. Prior to her appointment, Judge Koenderman worked for the Bronx County District Attorney's Office for over two decades, having served as Bureau Chief of the Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Bureau. Judge Koenderman is a graduate of Barnard College at Columbia University and received her law degree from Boston University School of Law. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge John Latella, Jr.**, an Acting Supreme Court Justice, has served on the Criminal Court bench since 1987. Prior to his appointment, Judge Latella was with the New York County District Attorney's Office as Bureau Chief, the United States Attorney's Office, and served as a federal law clerk. Judge Latella received his undergraduate degree from Princeton University and his law degree from Yale Law School. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Michael Obus** is the Administrative Judge of Supreme Court, Criminal Term in New York County and an Acting Supreme Court Justice. Prior to his appointment in August 1986, Judge Obus served as the Appeals Bureau Chief with The Legal Aid Society of Nassau County, Public Defenders Office. Judge Obus is a graduate of Rutgers University and received his law degree from Columbia University School of Law. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Eugene Oliver, Jr.** previously served with the Bronx County District Attorney's Office for over a decade, including as Executive Assistant District Attorney, prior to his appointment to the Criminal Court bench in 1990. Judge Oliver is Deputy Administrative Judge of Supreme Court, Criminal Term in Bronx County and an Acting Supreme Court Justice. He received his undergraduate degree from Middlebury College and his law degree from Fordham University School of Law. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Matthew Sciarrino, Jr.**, an Acting Supreme Court Justice, served with the New York State Unified Court System for a decade as a Court Attorney and Principal Law Clerk, primarily in the Richmond County Supreme Court. Judge Sciarrino received his undergraduate degree from St. John's University and his law degree from St. John's University School of Law. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

**Judge Ruth Shillingford**, an Acting Supreme Court Justice, was first appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge in June 2003. She was subsequently appointed to the Criminal Court in January 2006. She previously served as a Law Clerk with the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands, as Special Narcotics Asset Forfeiture Unit Chief with the New York County District Attorney's Office, as a solo practitioner and as an Assistant Deputy Chief Court Attorney with the Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department. Judge Shillingford is a graduate of Lincoln University and received her J.D from Georgetown University Law Center. This reappointment is effective January 1, 2016.

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