



## Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 24, 2023

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### Supreme Court unveils portraits of Chief Justices Barbara Vigil and Judith Nakamura

SANTA FE – The Supreme Court honored and celebrated the judicial careers of Chief Justices Barbara J. Vigil and Judith K. Nakamura during a ceremony today to unveil their official portraits.

The portraits will be displayed in the historic Supreme Court building in an area known as the Hall of Chief Justices because it contains portraits of other justices who led the state’s highest court.

“These paintings serve as a permanent reminder of the extraordinary accomplishments and leadership provided by Justices Vigil and Nakamura on the Supreme Court and as trial court judges,” said Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon. “Each of them strengthened the administration of justice with an unwavering dedication to ensuring that all New Mexicans are treated fairly under the laws of this state.”

Justices Vigil and Nakamura formed the Court’s first female majority along with Justice Petra Jimenez Maes.

Justice Vigil served on the Supreme Court in 2012-2021, and was the third woman elected by members of the Court as Chief Justice. She held the leadership position in 2014-16. Before joining the Supreme Court, the justice was a district court judge for 12 years in the First Judicial District of Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Los Alamos counties.

Justice Nakamura joined the Court in 2015 and retired in 2020. She was Chief Justice in 2017-2020 — the fourth woman to lead the Court since statehood. The justice served nearly three years as a Second Judicial District Court judge and more than 14 years as a Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court judge before her appointment to the Supreme Court.

“I am humbled at having my portrait displayed alongside former colleagues and people I admire,” said Justice Vigil. “I cherish my time on the Supreme Court because each day I worked with so many individuals committed to strengthening our justice system.”

Justice Nakamura said, “I thank my colleagues for this great honor. The portraits in the Hall of Chief Justices once again remind me of what a great privilege it was to serve on the bench and have an opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives.”

The Chief Justice performs both court and administrative duties. In addition to presiding over Supreme Court hearings and conferences, the Chief Justice serves as the administrative authority over personnel, budgets and general operations of all state courts and acts as an advocate for the Judiciary on legislative, budget and other matters.

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Chief Justices Judith K. Nakamura (on the right) and Barbara J. Vigil (on the right) at a portrait unveiling at the state Supreme Court courtroom on Aug. 24, 2023. Photo courtesy of the Administrative Office of the Courts.