



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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Date: February 2, 2016

Hon. A. Gail Prudenti Named Chair of NY's Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children

NEW YORK — Chief Judge Janet DiFiore today announced the appointment of Hon A. Gail Prudenti as Chair of the New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children. The Executive Director of Hofstra University's Center for Children, Families and the Law, Ms. Prudenti, a former New York Chief Administrative Judge with a long and exemplary judicial career, succeeds the late Judith S. Kaye, New York's longest-serving Chief Judge who led the Commission with distinction from 1992 until her recent passing.

Formed in 1988 to improve the lives and life chances of children involved with New York courts, the Commission is made up of judges, lawyers, advocates, physicians, legislators, and state and local officials. At its inception, the Commission predominantly targeted its efforts toward the youngest children before the court, including infants involved in child welfare proceedings. In 1994, the State Court of Appeals designated the Commission to implement the New York State Court Improvement Project (CIP), a federally funded project to assess and improve foster care, termination of parental rights and adoption proceedings. Since 2006, the group has expanded its focus to include older youth involved with the courts.

"I am absolutely delighted that Judge Prudenti has so graciously agreed to take on the responsibilities as Chair of this pivotal Commission, whose dedicated efforts have resulted in a

statewide network of Children's Centers in the Courts, among numerous other accomplishments. A passionate voice for children and families in crisis, Judge Prudenti is a highly regarded, long-standing member of New York's legal community with a special gift for bringing together people from various backgrounds and disciplines in pursuit of common goals. We are fortunate to benefit from her extensive experience, administrative abilities and many other talents. I look forward to working closely with our new Chair as we seek to build on the many achievements of the Commission under the late Judith Kaye, and am confident that the Commission will continue to flourish under her capable stewardship." In tribute to former Chief Judge Judith Kaye, Chief Judge DiFiore added, "The late Judith Kaye was a true champion of children's rights, devoting much of her distinguished judicial career to the educational needs and well-being of New York's children, and fighting tirelessly on behalf of families in crisis across our state. A singular force throughout her tenure with the Commission, she leaves behind a legacy of hard work, innovation and unbridled energy."

"I am both thrilled and humbled that Chief Judge DiFiore has asked me to lead this prestigious Commission, whose vital work is very close to my heart, intersecting as well as complementing my objectives as Executive Director of the Center for Children, Families and the Law. While I can never fill Judge Kaye's shoes, I am deeply committed to building upon her wonderful legacy and look forward to working with the distinguished members of the Commission to that end," said Hon. A. Gail Prudenti.

Since September 2015, Hon. A. Gail Prudenti has served both as Executive Director of the Center for Children, Families and the Law and Special Adviser to Dean Eric Lane at the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University. Prior to her current position at Hofstra Law, Judge Prudenti distinguished herself as a well-respected jurist and hands-on administrator during a judicial career that spanned more than two decades, most recently serving as New York State Chief Administrative Judge, from December 2011 to July 2015. Previous to her appointment as Chief Administrative Judge, she served as the Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division for the Second Judicial Department in New York State, the first woman to hold that position. Before that, she was the first woman from Suffolk County to serve as an Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Department. Prior to her ascension to the Appellate Division, Judge Prudenti was the Administrative Judge for the Tenth Judicial District (Suffolk County) for almost three years. Her judicial career began in 1991, upon her election to the New

York State Supreme Court, where she served until 1995, at which time she began her term as the first woman elected Surrogate of Suffolk County. Her first legal position was in Suffolk County's Surrogate's Court, where she was a clerk and then a law assistant. For two years following her service in the Surrogate's Court, she was an Assistant District Attorney for Suffolk County. Over the next decade, she was a private practitioner specializing in trusts and estates, and served as special counsel to the New York City Patrolmen's Benevolent Association's Widows and Orphans Fund. She earned her law degree from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, which also awarded her an honorary Doctorate of Laws in 2004 and an honorary appointment as Professor in the School of Law.

Her appointment is effective immediately.

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