

# MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



## *Office of Public Information*

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### **Court of Appeals Judge Michael J. Talbot appointed to serve as special administrator of Detroit's 36<sup>th</sup> District Court; aims to address court's financial crisis**

LANSING, MI, May 28, 2013 – Judge Michael J. Talbot, a judge of the Michigan Court of Appeals and a former judge of the Wayne Circuit, Detroit Recorder's, and Detroit Common Pleas courts, has been appointed by the Michigan Supreme Court to serve as special judicial administrator of Detroit's 36<sup>th</sup> District Court.

The Court's unanimous order appointing Talbot comes in the wake of a recent assessment of the 36<sup>th</sup> District Court by the National Center for State Courts. The NCSC concluded that the district court is embroiled in an economic crisis that calls for both immediate and long-term action if the court is to continue functioning.

The NCSC assessment noted that the 36<sup>th</sup> District Court has serious financial issues, including a budget overrun of \$4.5 million this year. The NCSC was critical of the court for operating as if it had its requested budget of \$36 million, instead of the \$31 million authorized in the city of Detroit budget.

State Court Administrator Chad C. Schmucker called the 36<sup>th</sup> District's situation "dire," saying that extraordinary measures are required "to keep the doors open at this court and make sure that the public is getting the service it deserves."

Schmucker noted that Detroit Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr recently released a report detailing the city of Detroit's fiscal issues. "Given the dire financial situation of the district court's funding unit, the city of Detroit, we anticipate that the court's budget crisis will substantially worsen in the coming months," Schmucker said. "Just as Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr is calling for fundamental change in the way the city of Detroit operates, so too the 36<sup>th</sup> District Court has to make serious changes to ensure that the court continues to serve the citizens."

Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr., said that the district court's "extraordinary challenges" require "a strong change agent, not a traditional manager, to ensure that the 36<sup>th</sup> District Court can better serve the people who rely on this court. The situation calls for someone who can bring experience, vision, and a fresh perspective to the courts' problems. That is why Judge Talbot was the Court's unanimous choice for this challenging assignment. He has expertise in judicial administration; he also has many years of experience in Detroit's trial courts and knows them well."

There is precedent for the Supreme Court's appointment, Schmucker noted. In 1977, the Supreme Court appointed former Court of Appeals Chief Judge T. John Lesinski to temporarily serve as special judicial administrator of Detroit Recorder's Court, when that court was having difficulty managing its caseload.

Talbot said he is looking forward to his assignment. "As one who spent many years on the trial court bench, I understand trial court challenges, including economic issues," Talbot said. "I am looking forward to working with the judges and staff of the 36<sup>th</sup> District Court. I am confident that, if we have the will to embrace serious changes, we can keep this court operating and serving the people of Detroit."

Talbot is a graduate of Georgetown University, where he earned a degree in public administration. While attending the University of Detroit-Mercy School of Law, he worked for the city of Detroit under the Jerome P. Cavanagh administration. In 1975, while in the private practice of law, he was appointed by Mayor Coleman A. Young to the Detroit Housing Commission; Talbot served as a commissioner until he was appointed to the Detroit Common Pleas Court in 1978. In 1980, Talbot was appointed to Detroit Recorder's Court. He was appointed to the Wayne Circuit Court in 1991 and to the Court of Appeals in 1998.

Talbot helped draft Michigan's Crime Victim's Rights Act and served on the State Bar of Michigan's Special Committee on Victims of Crimes. A past chair of the State Bar's Criminal Law Section, he has also served on the State Bar's Criminal Jurisprudence Committee and Committee of Court Administration. He is a recipient of the State Bar of Michigan Service Award and the Michigan Corrections Association Judicial Servant Award. Talbot was a member of the Judicial Tenure Commission from 2004 to 2010; he currently chairs the Court Reporting and Recording Board of Review for the Michigan Supreme Court.

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