

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



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Michigan Court of Claims judges named Unanimous Supreme Court appoints Judges Pat M. Donofrio, Amy Ronayne Krause, Deborah A. Servitto, Michael J. Talbot; judges' previous trial experience cited

LANSING, MI, November 13, 2013 – Four judges of the Michigan Court of Appeals will serve on the state's Court of Claims, with the judges' prior trial experience a major factor in their appointments.

Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. explained that the four judges were chosen by a unanimous Supreme Court "for their outstanding legal ability, including their diverse experiences as former trial judges managing trial dockets, since the Court of Claims operates as a trial court."

The Court of Claims judges are:

Judge Pat M. Donofrio. Donofrio was a Macomb County Circuit judge, and served as presiding judge of the court's civil/criminal division, before his appointment to the Court of Appeals in 2002 by Governor John Engler. He was elected to the Court of Appeals in 2004 and 2010. Donofrio, who earned his undergraduate and law degrees from Wayne State University, was in private practice as a litigator before becoming a judge. He has been on the faculty for the Institute for Continuing Legal Education, the National Judicial College, and the Michigan Judicial Institute. Donofrio has served on the Michigan Supreme Court Committee on Model Civil Jury Instructions and on the Michigan Supreme Court Task Force on Trial Court Performance Standards.

Judge Amy Ronayne Krause. Ronayne Krause was appointed to the Court of Appeals in December 2010 by Governor Jennifer Granholm; Ronayne Krause previously served as a judge of the 54-A District Court in Lansing. Before becoming a judge, Ronayne Krause was in private practice as a litigator; she then served for eight years as an assistant prosecuting attorney. From 1997-2002, she served as an assistant attorney general and was the first recipient of the Frank J. Kelley Award for Excellence in Trial Advocacy. An adjunct professor at Thomas M. Cooley Law School, Ronayne Krause earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and her law degree from the University of Notre Dame.

Judge Deborah A. Servitto. Servitto has 27 years' experience as a judge. She was elected to Warren's 37th District Court in 1986 and appointed to the Macomb County Circuit Court in 1990 by Governor James Blanchard; Servitto was elected three times to the circuit court.

While on the circuit court, Servitto helped launch a drug court and a program aimed at helping children cope with their parents' divorce. Governor Jennifer Granholm appointed Servitto to the Court of Appeals in March 2006; the judge was elected to the appeals court in November 2006 and re-elected in 2012. Servitto is a graduate of Oakland University and the Detroit College of Law. She is a founding director of Care House, which serves young victims of sexual and physical abuse.

Judge Michael J. Talbot. Talbot, who will serve as the chief, or presiding, judge of the Court of Claims, was a trial judge for 20 years, starting with his 1978 appointment to Detroit Common Pleas Court by Governor William Milliken. Talbot also served on Detroit Recorder's Court from 1980 until his appointment to the Wayne County Circuit Court in 1991. He was appointed by Governor John Engler to the Court of Appeals in 1998, was elected to the Court of Appeals in 2002, and re-elected in 2008. Talbot helped draft Michigan's Crime Victim's Rights Act and was a member of the Judicial Tenure Commission from 2004 to 2010. Talbot is a graduate of Georgetown University, where he earned a degree in public administration, and of the University of Detroit-Mercy School of Law. He currently serves as special judicial administrator of Detroit's 36th District Court. In 2015, he will begin serving as chief judge of the Court of Appeals.

Public Act 164 of 2013, which Governor Rick Snyder signed into law yesterday, locates the Court of Claims in the Court of Appeals. The Court of Claims hears lawsuits against the state of Michigan.

Talbot said that he and the other judges will work swiftly to implement the legislation, which takes immediate effect. "In anticipation of the Governor signing this bill, last week Court of Appeals staff began meeting with the judges and staff of the 30th Circuit Court, where the Court of Claims was previously located. The 30th Circuit has been wonderfully helpful as we make this transition," Talbot said.

The Supreme Court's order appointing the Court of Claims judges is available at http://www.courts.mi.gov/Courts/MichiganSupremeCourt/rules/court-rules-admin-matters/Adopted/2013-01_2013-11-13_Court%20of%20Claims-appointments.pdf.

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