



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack Serves as Visiting Judge on Wayne County Probate Court Bench *“Have Gavel, Will Travel” Initiative Aimed at Raising Community Engagement*

DETROIT, MI, August 14, 2019 – Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack today joined Wayne County Chief Probate Judge Freddie G. Burton, Jr., on the bench to hear and decide cases. Chief Justice McCormack was in Detroit to participate in the new initiative called “Have Gavel, Will Travel” through which justices are traveling to district, circuit, and probate courts statewide and sitting on the bench. The goal of the program is to increase engagement and build ties between courts and the community.

“We know that community engagement is critically important to increasing public trust in our judiciary,” said Chief Justice McCormack. “I am honored to join Chief Judge Burton on the probate bench and am so thankful for the opportunity to learn more about the challenges he and his team face each day. Residents come to our courts at the most stressful times in their lives, and our courts are committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect.”

Chief Justice McCormack and Justices Beth Clement and Megan Cavanagh each will visit three courts around Michigan to launch “Have Gavel, Will Travel.” In each instance, the Justices will sit with a local judge on the first day, and on the second day will be hearing and deciding cases on their own as a visiting judge.

In addition to the benefits of engaging the local community and court system, the three Justices have never served as trial court judges, so the experience will be invaluable to understand the day-to-day concerns judges see in their courtrooms, and to appreciate the critical work that is being done in courtrooms from Wayne County to Kent County to Marquette.

“We are so pleased that the Justices are going to courts across the state to spend time meeting people, learning firsthand about how decisions are made, and helping families facing difficult life decisions,” said Chief Judge Burton. “I hope that Chief Justice McCormack’s time on the probate court bench contributes to a broader understanding of our successful work here in Wayne County and strengthens the effort to engage the community statewide.”

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