

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



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Justice McCormack praised, welcomed to Supreme Court in investiture

LANSING, MI, January 23, 2013 – New Justice Bridget Mary McCormack was praised for her legal scholarship and character at her investiture ceremony at the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing today.

Chief Justice Robert P. Young Jr., who administered the judicial oath to McCormack, described her as “endlessly bright, obviously in love with the law and engaged. I am grateful to the voters of Michigan for sending her to us.”

Young told the audience that the ceremony “is a grand moment for Justice McCormack. But it is also an opportunity for the rest of us who wear black robes to ponder, and reaffirm, our own commitment to the rule of law that makes our system of ordered liberty possible.”

McCormack, who was elected to the Supreme Court in November 2012, was previously a law professor and associate dean at the University of Michigan Law School.

Speakers included Evan Caminker, dean of the University of Michigan Law School; Justice Michael F. Cavanagh and Justice Mary Beth Kelly of the Supreme Court; William McCormack Jr., McCormack’s brother; and Steven Croley, her husband. Wallace D. Riley, president of the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, also spoke, as did McCormack.

Caminker praised McCormack as “both brilliant and commonsensical” and “unceasingly fair-minded.” McCormack “has the strength of character necessary to follow the law, even if doing so is unpopular,” the dean said. He also extolled her “unbelievable work ethic,” saying that a student once described McCormack “as the Energizer Bunny with an extra battery pack.”

Cavanagh said the Court “is indeed fortunate” to have McCormack as a member because of “her wisdom, her energy, her experience and her passion.” He concluded with an Irish toast: “May the worst of the days ahead of you be better than the best of the days behind you.”

McCormack said in her remarks that she looks forward to working with her fellow justices. “I promise to be a good listener, to the litigants who appear before us, but no less to you as well,” she told the other justices.

“I believe in the power of law, and in the legal system that distinguishes our country from so many other places,” McCormack said. “Of course, anyone familiar with the legal system

knows that perfect justice is not achieved in every case. But what is distinct about our system is that, where attorneys do their jobs, and judges do theirs, there justice might be achieved.”

McCormack’s sons, Harold Croley and Matthew McCormack, opened the ceremony with the Pledge of Allegiance. Her daughter Anna Croley and her son John McCormack presented the new justice with her judicial robe. Hon. Angela Kay Sherigan, an attorney and associate judge for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, presented McCormack with a banner from the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan.

McCormack, a graduate of the New York University Law School, spent the first five years of her legal career trying cases in New York City’s trial courts with the Legal Aid Society, and also argued in appellate courts with the Office of the Appellate Defender, handling over 1,000 cases for individual clients in the trial and appellate courts. In 1996, she became a faculty fellow at the Yale Law School.

In 1998, McCormack joined the University of Michigan Law School faculty, teaching criminal law and legal ethics courses; she was named Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs in 2002. She expanded the law school’s practical education curriculum, including a domestic violence clinic, pediatric health advocacy clinic, mediation clinic, human trafficking clinic, and others. In 2008, she founded the Michigan Innocence Clinic, in which students seek to exonerate the wrongfully convicted.

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