

Glendening announces appointment of three Baltimore circuit judges

2 of them will fill
newly created positions;
one replaces retired judge

By IVAN PENN
SUN STAFF

Gov. Parris N. Glendening announced the appointment of three judges to Baltimore's Circuit Court yesterday, filling one position left vacant since February and two others created by the 1996 General Assembly.

The governor appointed Alfred Nance, 49, of the Alfred Nance & Associates law firm in Baltimore to replace Judge Thomas Ward, who retired in February.

Glendening appointed Marcela A. Holland, 49, a 13-year prosecutor in the city state's attorney's office, and M. Brooke Murdock, 48, of the Baltimore law firm Ferguson, Schetelich, Heffernan & Murdock to the two new judgeships.

The three judges will be sworn in within 30 days.

Their appointments bring the number of city circuit judges to 30 and increase the number of female judges to eight.

"I know all three of them," said Administrative Judge Joseph H. H. Kaplan of city Circuit Court. "I have full faith in all three of them. We're busily building to accommodate everybody."

Kaplan, who met with the three new appointees yesterday, said circuit judges are overburdened and have long needed the help to ease the caseload, particularly in domestic relations and general civil areas.

All three appointees have extensive backgrounds as trial lawyers.

Nance, a 1976 graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law, began his career as a Legal Aid attorney and in the Office of the Public Defender before founding his general practice firm in 1987.

He is a member of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee of the Maryland State Bar and chairman of the Judicial Selec-

tions Committee of the Monumental City Bar Association.

In 1994, Nance made an unsuccessful run for the state Senate in the 40th District against incumbent Ralph M. Hughes. He said he was excited about his appointment to the bench.

"Obviously, I will no longer be seeking public office," Nance said. "I'm honored to have been chosen. It's the ultimate position in an attorney's career."

Holland, a 1983 graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law, has spent her career in the city state's attorney's office. She joined the office in 1984 in the juvenile and trial divisions before being assigned to the economic crimes unit in 1988.

Holland, a past president of the Monumental City Bar Association, served three terms with the National Bar Association and was the Maryland representative to the National Black Prosecutors Association. She is a member of the Baltimore City Bar Association's Executive Council.

Holland said she was looking forward to her new post, a long-time goal. "It's a rare privilege for an attorney to sit on the bench," she said.

Murdock, a 1977 graduate of the University of Baltimore School of Law, was an assistant state's attorney and an assistant public defender for the city.

In 1991, she and three partners formed a private practice. She was president of the Women's Law Center from 1995 to 1996 and is vice chair of the litigation section of the Maryland Bar Association.

Murdock said she wasn't always interested in being a judge because "I've seen what good judging and bad judging can do to the system." But she said she decided to apply in hopes of making a difference in the courtroom.

"I believe that judges have to have common sense, knowledge of the rules of evidence and an understanding of the importance of a lawyer's role," Murdock said. "Good judging really makes a difference."