

Balto. County Judge Joseph Murphy Tapped for Md. CSA

Gov. Schaefer Ignores Pleas From Women's Groups to Replace Ex-Judge Rosalyn Bell on Intermediate Appellate Court With Female Candidate

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Baltimore County Circuit Judge Joseph F. Murphy Jr. was appointed Friday to the Maryland Court of Special Appeals, Gov. William Donald Schaefer announced.

Murphy, who has served on the circuit bench since 1984, will replace retired CSA Judge Rosalyn B. Bell on the state's second-highest court.

Bell was forced to retire in April when she reached the state's mandatory retirement age of 70. She was one of only two women on Maryland's appellate courts at the time.

Women's groups unsuccessfully tried to convince Schaefer

that it was important to replace Bell with a female candidate to promote diversity on Maryland's intermediate appellate court.

If his appointment is confirmed by the Maryland General Assembly next session, Murphy will serve until the 1994 general election. Voters will then decide whether to approve or reject his appointment for a 10-year term.

"I think I've been a good teacher. I think I've been a good trial judge, and I think I was a good trial lawyer," Murphy said on Friday. "A good appellate judge should have each of those qualities.

"I'm sure I'll miss the day-to-day contact with the lawyers and the court clerks and the court personnel," he added. "But I've always enjoyed the research and the writing, so I think that will help me in my new job."

The 49-year-old judge began his career in the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office in 1970 after earning his law degree from the University of Maryland Law School a year earlier. He is a 1965 graduate of Boston College, where he earned an undergraduate degree in economics.

Murphy served as deputy state's attorney in the city from 1975 until he was appointed to the Baltimore County Circuit Court in 1984.

'Excellent job'

"He's done an excellent job here and there is no question in my mind that he will be an excellent appellate judge," said Edward A. DeWaters, chief judge of the county's circuit bench. "He loves the law. He's always been a student of the law, he teaches, he's written a book on evidence and he really enjoys the academic side.

"His academic experience and his interest in the law make him extremely well-suited to be an appellate court judge," DeWaters added. "And his background on this court will help him appreciate what's going on at the trial court level."

Schaefer chose Murphy from a list of six finalists recommended by the State Appellate Nominating Commission, which interviewed 19 applicants for Bell's seat.

The other finalists were Baltimore City Circuit Judges John Carroll Byrnes and Ellen Hollander, Eastern Shore lawyer Sally Adkins, Montgomery County State's Attorney Andrew L. Sonner and Assistant Attorney General Robert A. Zarnoch.

Women's groups pushed the governor to tap a woman for the post, saying either Hollander or Adkins, whose father is former Maryland Court of Appeals Judge William H. Adkins II, were well-qualified for the job.

Reward time

But sources familiar with Schaefer's judicial selections predicted the governor, who is a lame duck, would not feel compelled to choose a woman to replace Bell and would opt instead to use his remaining judicial appointments to reward friends and loyalists in the legal community.

"It seems to me that advocacy groups have every right to advocate for their causes," Murphy said of the push to fill the seat with one of his female colleagues.

"All I can say is that my daughter, who is about to enter University of Baltimore Law School, is very happy her father was appointed."