

Glendening Reappoints Two, Names Five New Circuit Judges

Anne Arundel County's Lerner and Wolff Will Hold Respective Seats; New Faces for Howard, Washington, Harford and Charles Counties

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Seven appointments for various circuit court judicial openings throughout the state were announced by Gov. Parris Glendening yesterday, marking the second batch named under his new executive order which demands more diversity on Maryland's bench.

Donna Hill Staton, Diane O. Leasure, Ralph H. France II, Thomas E. Marshall and Steven Chappelle were appointed to judge-ships in Howard, Washington, Harford and Charles counties.

Judges Eugene M. Lerner and Martin A. Wolff, who have both served on the Anne Arundel County Circuit for the last 15 years, were also reappointed to their respective seats.

Staton, who was appointed to the Howard County Circuit Court bench, will replace Judge C. F. Sybert Jr. She is currently a partner in the law firm of Piper & Marbury and she has represented Fortune 500 companies as well as a variety of medium and small businesses. She has also represented abused and neglected children on a *pro bono* basis.

She said she felt honored that the governor selected her and is "pleased that he has confidence in me." She said she is looking forward to "going out there and rolling up her sleeves" to get some work done.

Leasure was also appointed to the Circuit Court for Howard County. She will fill a new seat in the court created by the General Assembly. She is currently a principal at Fossett & Brugger, where she specializes in business litigation, as well as employment and franchise law matters.

"It's like a dream come true," Leasure said. She said she was extremely honored for being appointed to the circuit court and that she is looking forward to being able to work for her community.

France, who has three decades of legal experience, was appointed to the Washington County Circuit Court. He will replace Judge James F. Strine. He has been the Washington County attorney since 1989, and prior to this position he worked in pri-

NEW CIRCUIT COURT APPOINTMENTS

Donna Hill Staton - Howard County Circuit Court

Ralph H. France, II - Washington County Circuit Court

Diane O. Leasure - Howard County Circuit Court

Thomas E. Marshall - Harford County Circuit Court

Steven Chappelle - Charles County Circuit Court

vate law practice for 25 years.

France said that he was very happy and pleased about his appointment. He said there were "quite a few [nominees] qualified to be judge," and that he was "fortunate to be the one selected."

Marshall was appointed to the Harford County Circuit Court. He will fill a newly created fifth judgeship in that court. Marshall has been a principal at Stark & Keenan since 1988, where he specializes in eminent domain, business, corporate, and real estate

law, bankruptcy, and other general civil litigation.

"I am very pleased the governor selected me to fill the position, and I will give it my best efforts to do a credible job," said Marshall.

Chappelle will replace Judge George Bowling in the Charles County Circuit Court. Chappelle has been a partner at Vallario, Collins & Chappelle since 1982, where he specialized in criminal law, domestic and family relations, and personal injury cases. Chappelle was unavailable for comment.

Lerner served in the U.S. Army from 1954 through 1956, and prior to his judgeship he served as an attorney and alderman for the City of Annapolis. He has also served as a member of the Annapolis planning and zoning commission, as a Maryland trial magistrate, and as an attorney for the Anne Arundel-County Electrical Board.

Wolf was previously an associate judge for the District Court of Maryland for Anne Arundel County, as well as a deputy and an assistant state's attorney for Anne Arundel County.

"Between them, these two jurists bring nearly 60 years of legal experience to the bench," the governor said of Lerner and Wolf.