

Gov. Gregoire appoints James Verellen to Washington state Court of Appeals, Division I

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OLYMPIA – Gov. Chris Gregoire today announced the appointment of James Verellen to the Washington state Court of Appeals, Division I. Verellen is currently a mediator, arbitrator and consultant for Judicial Dispute Resolution, LLC and will be replacing retiring Judge Anne Ellington.

“Jim has a deep understanding and passion for the law,” said Gregoire. “His work as a lawyer with a varied trial and appellate practice, followed by extensive experience as a court commissioner, makes him a tremendous asset to the court. I am confident that he will serve all Washingtonians well as a member of the Court of Appeals. I am pleased to welcome him to this new role.”

“Serving as a judge on the Court of Appeals is a tremendous responsibility and privilege,” said Verellen. “I am honored and humbled by Governor Gregoire's confidence in me. Throughout her judicial career, Judge Anne Ellington has demonstrated exceptional intellect, judgment, and eloquence. I will do my best to live up to her inspiring example.”

For nearly 20 years, Verellen served as a Division I, Court of Appeals commissioner where he decided motions for discretionary review, emergency motions, motions on the merits, and other matters. His rulings included a wide range of issues in almost every area of law.

“We are delighted to have Jim return to Division I as a member of the Court,” said Chief Judge J. Robert Leach. “He brings a wealth of knowledge about the workings of the Court and Washington law that will allow him to begin work immediately.”

"Jim has keen intelligence, generosity of spirit, and a deep understanding of the law and the role of courts," said Ellington. "I almost wish I were not retiring, just so I could work with him again!"

Prior to his time as commissioner, Verellen spent 14 years as an associate and partner at the law firm currently known as Vandenberg, Johnson and Gandara. During his time at the firm, he argued cases before the Washington Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. Verellen began his career as a law clerk for Judge Vernon Pearson in Division II of the Court of Appeals.

Verellen has shared his extensive knowledge of the legal system with classrooms in high schools around Seattle and has been a repeat speaker at the University of

Washington School of Law's appellate advocacy seminar. He has served on the boards of youth ballet and baseball organizations and has coached youth soccer and basketball.

Verellen earned his bachelor's degree in political science with distinction from Washington State University in 1973, and earned his juris doctorate from Willamette University College of Law in 1976 – the same year he was admitted to the Washington State Bar.

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