

# Superior Court's Lawrence-Berrey moving up to appellate court

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After three years in Yakima County Superior Court, Judge Robert Lawrence-Berrey is moving up to the state appellate court.

Gov. Jay Inslee announced Lawrence-Berrey's appointment to Division III of the state Court of Appeals on Thursday.

"Judge Lawrence-Berrey is a highly respected leader in the law community with broad experience both on and off the bench," Inslee said in making the announcement. "His appellate experience is particularly noteworthy and I know he'll be a great addition to our appeals court."

He will fill a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Teresa Kulik, who has served on the appellate court since 2006. The court's five judges handle appeals from across all of Eastern Washington.

Lawrence-Berrey, 49, was one of six applicants for the vacancy. He said the governor's office contacted him Wednesday to tell him he was appointed.

"I'm very honored to have received the appointment," Lawrence-Berrey said Thursday. "There were several good, high-quality applicants, and I am humbled to have been chosen."

The governor's office declined to name the other applicants seeking to fill the vacancy.

Lawrence-Berrey was appointed to Superior Court by then-Gov. Chris Gregoire in January 2011 to replace Judge Michael Schwab, who retired before his six-year term had expired. Lawrence-Berrey sought, and won, election to the position the following November.

Prior to his appointment to Superior Court, he practiced law in Yakima starting in 1990, working at the firms of Peters & Fowler; Halverson & Applegate; and Finney, Falk, Lawrence-Berrey & Naught.

Lawrence-Berrey said becoming an appellate judge has been a longtime ambition.

"I was surprised to see how much I really enjoyed the trial process," Lawrence-Berrey said of his Superior Court tenure. "If I didn't receive the appointment, I would have been happy to have stayed here in Yakima County."

Division III is based in Spokane.

Lawrence-Berrey's term on the appellate court will begin March 1. He will have to stand for election in November to fill the remainder of Kulik's term, which expires in 2018.

Harold Delia, Yakima County court consultant, said pro-tem judges will help handle the caseload until Lawrence-Berrey's replacement is appointed by Inslee. That appointee will have to run in the next general election for the right to serve the remainder of Lawrence-Berrey's term, which expires in 2016.

The last Yakima County Superior Court judge to go to the appellate bench was Stephen Brown, who was elected to the court in 1996.



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I voted for him,. I HOPE he will support our wishes for very tough sentences for gang activity and violent crime here, unlike the forgiving attitude and actions by my old friend Steve Brown, apparently a hopeless liberal.

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Congratulations & Best Wishes to Rob!

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