



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Supreme Court Inauguration Ceremony next Monday for Justice Steven González

OLYMPIA, WA— On Monday, January 9th at 9:30 a.m. Steven González will be sworn in as the state's newest justice of the Washington Supreme Court. The event is open to the public and will be held in the Supreme Court at the Temple of Justice in Olympia.

González was appointed to the Court by Governor Christine Gregoire in November and will be the first justice of Mexican heritage to serve on the bench of the Washington Supreme Court since its formation in 1889. González was first appointed as a judge to the King County Superior Court bench in March 2002 and voters elected him that fall. He was re-elected in 2004 and 2008.

From 1997 to 2002, González was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the state's Western District. Assigned to the major crimes division, his work included the notable case of *U.S. v. Ressam*, in which Ahmed Ressam was tried after being captured in Port Angeles in 1999 en route to Los Angeles, where he planned to detonate a bomb at the International Airport. González gave the prosecution's opening statement and examined nearly 70 witnesses. He also worked in the City of Seattle Attorney's Office from 1996 to 1997 as a trial attorney in the domestic violence unit. Before that, he practiced business and civil law with the firm Hillis Clark Martin and Peterson from 1991 to 1996.

"Judge González is a highly regarded and experienced trial court judge, a former federal prosecutor and an acknowledged leader in improving access to justice for all in Washington," said Washington State Supreme Court Chief Justice Barbara Madsen. "Judge González will be an outstanding addition to the Supreme Court and I am confident he will continue to serve the public with great energy and distinction."

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González is former Chair of the Washington State Access to Justice Board, a position to which he was appointed by former Chief Justice Alexander. He served as chair until his appointment to the Supreme Court.

From 2006 to 2010 he co-chaired the Court Security Committee for the State of Washington. The Washington State Bar Association recently presented the 2011 Outstanding Judge of the Year Award to González, along with Judge Mary Yu, citing their work on promoting equal access to the courts, including developing helpful materials for self-represented persons.

In addition to his judicial background, González has worked in the community for the past 20 years. He served on the Board of Directors of El Centro de la Raza and on the steering committee of the Northwest Minority Job Fair. Before becoming a judge, he volunteered as a pro bono attorney for the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project.

González earned his J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley's law school and was admitted to the Washington state bar in 1991. He graduated from Pitzer College, a member of the Claremont Colleges, with a B.A. in East Asian Studies and studied abroad in undergraduate and advanced studies in Japan and China. In May 2011 he was awarded an honorary doctorate of law from the Gonzaga University Law School, where he gave the commencement address.

For full biographies on each of the justices, please visit www.courts.wa.gov.

The ceremony will be covered by TVW, Washington's Public Affairs TV Network. For channel information, or to view coverage online, visit www.tvw.org

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Editor's note: Flash photography will be allowed during the inauguration ceremony. For interviews with Justice González on the day of the event, please contact the number listed above prior to the ceremony.