

# THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

May 21, 2014

## State Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu sworn in

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The Spokesman-Review

Tags: Mary Yu state Supreme Court



**Washington Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu is applauded by current court members after being sworn in Tuesday in Olympia.**

OLYMPIA – With people who inspired her standing at her side and some she hoped to inspire sitting in the audience, Mary Yu was sworn in Tuesday to a state Supreme Court seat she’s almost sure to hold for the next two years despite being on the ballot this fall.

No one filed to run against her last week. Barring an unprecedented write-in campaign in November, Yu, who is Gov. Jay Inslee’s first appointment to the high court, will finish out the term of Justice Jim Johnson, who retired last month. She said she was “perplexed and surprised” by the lack of opposition, but attributed it more to the short time potential challengers had to plan a campaign than to her strengths as a candidate.

“I’m relieved,” she said in a brief meeting with reporters after the ceremony. “I’m delighted and happy.”

She’ll be eligible to run for a full term in 2016.

Yu, whose mother is from Mexico and father from China, is the high court’s first Asian, first Latina and first lesbian justice. As she took the oath of office, she had at her side Ruth Woo, Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney and Anne Levinson, three women she said inspired her with their work for equal rights for the state’s Asian, Hispanic and gay communities. In the audience were teens, many of them minorities, who had just attended a symposium on the juvenile justice system Yu had helped organize as the co-chairwoman of the Minority and Justice Commission. In the lobby was a draped portrait of former Justice Charles Smith, the first minority member to serve on the court, that was scheduled to be unveiled a few minutes later.

It was important for those teens, particularly the ones who were minorities, to be in the Temple of Justice this day, Yu said. The day's message was clear that "they could come here, too, and they could be a justice someday."

While Yu's move from King County Superior Court to the Supreme Court offers better representation for several different groups, it does not provide more representation for Eastern Washington residents. They make up more than 20 percent of the population, but the nine-member court has only one justice, Debra Stephens, from Eastern Washington.

Yu said she's not convinced justice is tied to where a person lives, but she plans to get around the state in the coming months to campaign, even though she has no opponent, with stops in Eastern Washington's cities and small towns.

"I need to make an effort to go out and hear what people's concerns are," she said.

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