

# Mary Fairhurst elected chief justice of state Supreme Court

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Washington Supreme Court Justice Mary Fairhurst

The state Supreme Court this week selected Mary Fairhurst to be its next chief justice.



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OLYMPIA — The state Supreme Court on Thursday elected Mary Fairhurst to be its next chief justice.

First elected to the court in 2002, Fairhurst will replace Barbara Madsen, who has occupied the role of chief justice since 2009.

Madsen, [who faces a re-election](#) challenge this year, has presided over the court through high-profile education rulings, such as the school-funding order [known as the McCleary decision](#) and a ruling that [declared charter schools](#) unconstitutional.

Madsen nominated Fairhurst to be the next chief, according to a news release by the state Administrative Office of the Courts.

Before becoming a justice, Fairhurst, who holds undergraduate and law degrees from Gonzaga University, spent 16 years at the state Attorney General's Office.

Fairhurst will be sworn in for a four-year term as chief Jan. 9 at the Capitol.

Among other things, the chief justice presides over the court's public hearings and acts as spokesperson.

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