# Administrative Office of the Courts

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**The Honorable Sylvia F. LaMar to retire**

SANTA FE –Judge Sylvia F. LaMar, the longest serving Family Law judge at the First Judicial District Court in Santa Fe, is retiring after 11 years on the bench.

She practiced law in Santa Fe, focusing on Family Law, before being appointed to the court in 2012 by Governor Susana Martinez; Judge LaMar was then elected to her position in 2014. Family Law includes domestic violence, dissolution of marriage, custody, and kinship guardian cases. Her retirement is effective today.

"I am most proud of implementing and expanding Resolution Day at the court," said District Court Judge Sylvia LaMar. "Twice monthly, litigants are able to meet with a volunteer attorney before their hearing to address issues, and if an agreement is reached, a court order is prepared and the agreement goes on the record. A hearing is held if there is no agreement. This gives the parents, spouses, and former spouses another opportunity to maintain ownership of their decisions, instead of turning them over to the judge."

As New Mexico's judicial representative to the National Judicial Opioid Task Force, Judge LaMar was trained to teach other judges about substance use disorders. She was appointed to the task force in 2019 by then Chief Justice Judith Nakamura.

Judge LaMar was an instrumental member of the New Mexico Judicial Translation Project Team, which piloted making domestic violence and domestic relations petitions, forms, and court orders available in bilingual format for all litigants in the First Judicial District.

For a decade, Judge LaMar chaired the First Judicial District Access to Justice Committee. The committee is composed of judges, court personnel, the SC Law Librarian, and attorneys dedicated to providing resources and free legal clinics, among other things, to self-represented litigants.

The statewide Kinship Guardianship Advisory Committee that began in 2022 was instituted by Judge LaMar. Originally, the Committee met regularly with CYFD Secretary Barbara Vigil to

address the dire needs of guardians, parents, and children in kinship guardian cases statewide. Today, the committee meets bimonthly and is composed of family law judges, the Children, Youth and Families Department, the Southwest Family Guidance Center, Pegasus Legal Services and New Mexico Legal Aid.

“Judge LaMar's passion for improving the lives of families, particularly children, is inspiring and infectious,” said First Judicial District Chief Judge Bryan Biedscheid. “After witnessing her commitment to her cases and seeing the high standards that she sets for our court's domestic services, we know that it will be very challenging to maintain those high standards without her. Luckily, while we may not have the privilege of working with her on a daily basis, she will continue to be a great resource for our court.”

Judge LaMar plans to open a part-time mediation practice, devote time to volunteering, and spend more time with her grandchildren and husband. “Being a judge is the most wonderful job and opportunity on the planet,” said Judge LaMar. “There are few other ways that you can help so many people and make a difference in children’s lives.”

The First Judicial District Court serves people in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Los Alamos counties. Judge LaMar will be honored at a ceremony today.

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