Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gallup judge becomes Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial District Court

GALLUP – Judge R. David Pederson of Gallup has been named Chief Judge in the Eleventh Judicial District covering McKinley and San Juan counties.

He succeeded Judge Curtis Gurley in the position.

“It is an honor and privilege to serve as Chief Judge. I will work with my colleagues on the bench and court personnel to ensure we do our best to meet the needs of New Mexicans and administer justice fairly, efficiently and in a timely manner,” said Chief Judge Pederson.

In New Mexico, chief judges are elected by their peers within a judicial district. They perform both court and administrative duties. While continuing to preside over court cases, they serve as the administrative authority for day-to-day operations of district and magistrate courts in their jurisdiction. Their responsibilities include fiscal, personnel and policy matters. Chief judges also represent the Judiciary during the Legislature, acting as an advocate for legislative priorities of state courts and funding.

Chief Judge Pederson served in the state House of Representatives from 1993 to 2000. As a legislator, he chaired the House Judiciary Committee.

He was appointed to the district court in 2020. Before joining the bench, Chief Judge Pederson had an extensive career in governmental service. He previously was the chief deputy district attorney in the Eleventh Judicial District in McKinley County, deputy district attorney in Cibola County in the Thirteenth Judicial District, city attorney and acting city manager for the city of Gallup, contract county attorney for McKinley County, and general counsel to former Attorney General Gary King. He also has engaged in the private practice of law.

Chief Judge Pederson was born and raised in Gallup. He received a juris doctor degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 1978, and earned an undergraduate degree from UNM.

He was elected Chief Judge in May and will serve a three-year term.

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Eleventh Judicial District Court Chief Judge R. David Pederson