



Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Court of Appeals Judge Kristopher N. Houghton takes office

SANTA FE – New Mexico Court of Appeals Judge Kristopher “Kris” Houghton donned a judicial robe with a special connection to his legal career after taking the oath of office at his public investiture.

The robe had been used by the late Supreme Court Justice Charles W. Daniels, who Judge Houghton clerked for from 2008 to 2010. Randi McGinn, the justice’s widow, lent the robe to Judge Houghton for his investiture and attended the event.

“I am grateful to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham for appointing me to New Mexico’s appellate bench and to the many people who supported me along the way,” Judge Houghton said.

“The health of our democracy demands a fair, strong, and independent judiciary,” said Judge Houghton. “I am honored to serve alongside judges who hold themselves to the highest standards and who make difficult decisions that put them in harm’s way. With my appointment, I feel a deep sense of responsibility to uphold the rule of law and to provide just and clear decisions for the people of New Mexico.”

Judge Houghton was robed for the first time after taking the oath of office at a public ceremony on Sept. 5. Court of Appeals Chief Judge Jacqueline R. Medina administered the oath.

“We welcome Judge Houghton to the Court,” said Chief Judge Medina.

A bipartisan Judicial Nominating Commission recommended Judge Houghton for appointment to a court vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Kristina Bogardus. He was administered the oath of office by Court of Appeals Judge J. Miles Hanisee during a private ceremony on Aug. 15 when the governor’s appointment took effect. After clerking for Justice Daniels and serving a stint as a staff attorney for the Court of Appeals, Judge Houghton served as a law clerk for Judge Hanisee from 2011 to 2012.

Before joining the Court of Appeals, Judge Houghton worked as a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) lawyer for more than a decade. He held several positions in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Mexico, including as chief of its criminal division in which he oversaw 50 attorneys and 20 staff members. He worked for both the criminal and civil divisions at the U.S. Attorney’s Office. He also led the Office of the Judicial Attaché in the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá,

Colombia from 2020 to 2022, where he was the DOJ's lead diplomat and advised prosecutors and agents on U.S.-Colombia bilateral investigations. His team completed more than 300 extraditions from Colombia to courts across the United States.

Judge Houghton earned his law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law. He received undergraduate degrees in mathematics and Spanish from California State University, San Marcos. He was born in Oregon but grew up across the country, following his father's career as a U.S. Army officer. Judge Houghton was a Captain in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, and is still a member of the Inactive Ready Reserve.

Ten judges serve on the Court of Appeals, which is New Mexico's intermediate appellate court. The court hears appeals in civil, non-capital criminal and juvenile cases, and has discretionary jurisdiction over most cases appealed from administrative agencies. The court's judges act in panels of three on appellate opinions.

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Court of Appeals Judge Kristopher N. Houghton speaking at his public investiture.

He is wearing a robe used by the late Justice Charles W. Daniels. (Photos courtesy of Judge Houghton)

