



Administrative Office of the Courts

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Jan. 5, 2026

New Mexico Supreme Court celebrates its 114th anniversary

SANTA FE – The public is invited to attend a [ceremony on Thursday, Jan. 8](#), to commemorate the 114th anniversary of the establishment of New Mexico’s highest court.

Justice Michael E. Vigil will speak about the history of the Court and its building during an event starting at 1 p.m. in the Supreme Court courtroom. [Click here](#) for a live stream of the event.

[Jan. 10 is Supreme Court of New Mexico Day](#) — the anniversary of when the first state Supreme Court justices took their oaths of office in 1912. New Mexico became the 47th state four days earlier, and the Territorial Supreme Court went out of existence when the state court justices assumed office.

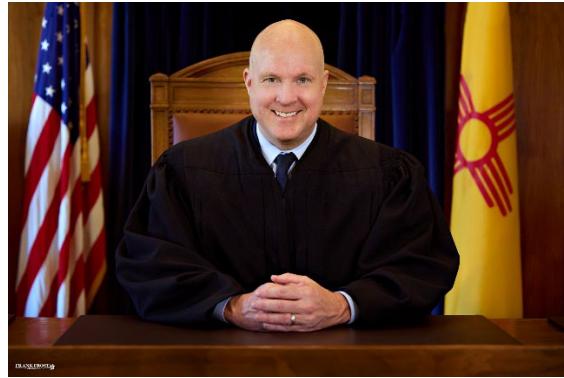
“For 114 years, our Supreme Court has served to protect the rights of New Mexicans and uphold the rule of law,” Chief Justice David K. Thomson said. “By recognizing the establishment of New Mexico’s highest court, we honor the vital role that our state court system plays in providing fair and impartial justice to all people.”

The Supreme Court of New Mexico oversees other courts that make up the judicial branch of New Mexico: the Court of Appeals, 34 district courts, 43 magistrate courts, the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court, 33 county probate courts, and 78 municipal courts. The Supreme Court is the final authority on questions of law and can review lower court decisions.

Before statehood, the Territorial Supreme Court was run by the federal government and its justices were appointed by the president. The New Mexico Constitution, adopted by voters in 1911, provided for the election of state Supreme Court justices. There were three state court justices in 1912. The Court was expanded to five justices in 1929.

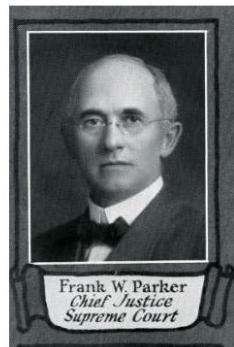
The Territorial Supreme Court performed the duties of appellate and trial court judges. The justices met in Santa Fe to hear appeals, but each of them rode circuit from county to county within the territory’s judicial districts to conduct trials and decide cases. The New Mexico Constitution separated trial and appellate courts. Initially, there were eight district court judges in addition to the three Supreme Court justices.

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Chief Justice David K. Thomson
(Photo courtesy of the NM Supreme Court)

First Three New Mexico Supreme Court Justices



Richard H. Hanna, from the Santa Fe New Mexican, January 13, 1912
Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico



Clarence J. Roberts
Representative New Mexicans, 1912, page 246