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Supreme Court Justice Peggy Quince To Be Keynote Speaker at Pro Bono Ceremony

CLEARWATER - Florida Supreme Court Justice Peggy A. Quince will be the keynote speaker at this year's ceremony honoring those who have done exemplary pro bono work in the Sixth Judicial Circuit.

Justice Quince will be giving her remarks at what will be the circuit's Second Annual Recognition Ceremony, where lawyers, law students, law firms and paralegals will be praised for the legal work they have done without remuneration on behalf of those with not enough financial resources to pay for legal services themselves.



Justice Peggy Quince

The ceremony will be held on April 15 in Courtroom One at the County Justice Center in Clearwater, at 14250 49th St. N. It begins at 3 p.m. and is open to the public.

While the Florida Bar gives pro bono awards to lawyers across the state every year, as do the local bar associations, the Sixth Circuit's Pro Bono Committee, under the leadership of Circuit Judge Kimberly Todd, decided to undertake its own awards system as of last year.

Nominations from across the Sixth Judicial Circuit were voted on by the committee in the categories of outstanding pro bono work by an attorney, law firm, paralegal and law student.

Justice Quince graduated in 1970 from Howard University with a B.S. Degree in Zoology; she received her J.D. Degree from the Catholic University of America in 1975.

She practiced law in Virginia and Florida from 1975 to 1980, when she began her 13- year tenure in the criminal division of the Florida Attorney General's office. She served as the Tampa bureau chief for five years, handling, among other things, death penalty appeals. She has argued before the Virginia Supreme Court, the Florida Second District Court of Appeal, the Florida Supreme Court and the Federal Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 1993, Justice Quince was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeal, a move which made her the first African-American woman to serve on a Florida appellate court. She was appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles and Governor-elect Jeb Bush to the Florida Supreme Court in 1998, and became the first African-American woman to head any branch of Florida government when she became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Florida in 2008.

As one of the seven justices serving on the State Supreme Court, Justice Quince has many responsibilities that ultimately affect the lives of over 20 million Floridians. As a justice she must review final judgments imposing sentences of death, cases involving the constitutionality of laws passed by the Florida Legislature, and other matters as delineated in the Florida Constitution.

She also lectures on various legal topics including the need for a fair and impartial court system, search and seizure, probation and parole, use of peremptory challenges, post-conviction relief, professionalism and ethics, and the independence of the judiciary.