



Supreme Court of Kentucky

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John D. Minton, Jr.
Chief Justice of Kentucky

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For Immediate Release

Chief Justice Minton first Kentuckian in nearly 25 years to head conference of his peers

*Takes over this week as head of national Conference of Chief Justices,
board chair of National Center for State Courts*

FRANKFORT, Ky., July 27, 2016 – Starting today, Kentucky will have a representative who can help shape the work of the country’s chief justices and the board that provides support to state courts across the country. Chief Justice of Kentucky John D. Minton Jr. has been elected by his fellow chief justices to serve a one-year term as president of the Conference of Chief Justices and chair of the National Center for State Courts Board of Directors.

The election took place this week during the annual meeting of the [CCJ](#) and the [NCSC](#) Board of Directors in Jackson Hole, Wyo. Chief Justice Minton is the first chief justice from Kentucky to hold this post in nearly 25 years. The only other chief justice from Kentucky to be CCJ president was the late Robert F. Stephens, who served from 1992-1993.

“Chief Justice Minton has earned a national reputation as a strong and effective leader who is committed to improving the justice system,” NCSC President Mary C. McQueen said. “He stabilized his state’s court budget and successfully worked to help reform Kentucky’s penal code and improve public safety. We will all benefit from his leadership.”

The CCJ is comprised of the top judicial officers of each state, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. The group promotes the interests of state judicial systems by developing policies and educational programs designed to improve court operations. The CCJ also acts as the primary representative of the state courts before Congress and federal executive agencies.

“People across the country depend on a fair and independent judiciary,” Chief Justice Minton said. “The opportunity to work with my fellow chief justices to positively change our state courts is an honor and one of the highlights of my career. I want to spend the next year looking at how we can address access to justice for people who can’t afford an attorney, how the practice of law can adapt to changes in society and how we can work with our communities on the issues that erode trust in the justice system.”

As a long-standing member of the CCJ, Chief Justice Minton has served on the joint Court Management and Problem-Solving Courts committees of the CCJ/Conference of State Court Administrators.

This is the second national announcement for Chief Justice Minton in the last two weeks. The [White House announced](#) July 13 that President Barack Obama has nominated Chief Justice Minton to serve on the board of directors of the [State Justice Institute](#), a federal nonprofit corporation that awards grants to improve the quality of justice in state courts. Chief Justice Minton must next be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

About Chief Justice Minton

John D. Minton Jr. of Bowling Green was elected to an eight-year term on the Supreme Court of Kentucky in 2006 and again in 2014. His fellow justices elected him for a four-year term as chief justice in 2008, 2012 and 2016.

The Kentucky court system has been transformed in many areas during Chief Justice Minton's two terms as chief justice. The Great Recession had plunged the country into a financial crisis when he began serving as chief justice in 2008. Faced with significant cuts to the Judicial Branch budget, he steered the state court system through Kentucky's worst economic downturn in decades by cutting programs, streamlining the organizational structure of the Administrative Office of the Courts and creating efficiencies at all four levels of the court system.

He managed to keep the Judicial Branch within its appropriated budget while also focusing on his two main goals: investing in the people who operate the courts and in the court technology that can cut costs and deliver better service. He has overseen a sweeping KYeCourts technology initiative and the implementation of eFiling statewide.

He created the Judicial Branch Compensation Commission to determine how to make the court system's salary structure more fair and competitive with the other branches of state government. The commission's work resulted in the first overhaul in decades of the salary structure for non-elected court personnel and salary improvements for the elected circuit court clerks. He is currently seeking to increase the pay of Kentucky's elected judges, whose compensation lags well behind many other states.

Under his leadership, the AOC has conducted a groundbreaking study to measure judicial caseloads as the basis to address workload imbalances among jurisdictions and provide data for a comprehensive judicial redistricting plan.

During his tenure, the Supreme Court has adopted the state's first uniform family law rules and Juvenile Court rules to ensure that family and juvenile law is applied consistently in all 120 counties. He formed the Kentucky Access to Justice Commission to improve access to civil legal aid for those who cannot afford legal representation. Chief Justice Minton has also joined forces with the Executive and Legislative branches to reform Kentucky's juvenile justice system and overhaul its penal code to curb prison costs and improve public safety.

Prior to being elected to the [2nd Supreme Court District](#) in 2006, Chief Justice Minton was a circuit judge from 1992 to 2003 and a Kentucky Court of Appeals judge from 2003 to 2006.

He was in private practice for 15 years before taking the bench. He holds degrees from Western Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky College of Law.

He previously served on the board of The Council of State Governments and is a 2010 alumnus of the CSG's prestigious Toll Fellowship Program, one of the nation's top leadership development programs for state government officials. The Kentucky Bar Association gave him the Outstanding Judge Award in 2003 and he was named Distinguished Jurist in 2012 by the University of Kentucky College of Law Alumni Association. He was inducted into the Western Kentucky University Hall of Distinguished Alumni in 2013.

About the NCSC

The National Center for State Courts, headquartered in Williamsburg, Va., is a nonprofit court organization dedicated to improving the administration of justice by providing leadership and service to the state courts. Founded in 1971 by the Conference of Chief Justices and Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger, the NCSC provides education, training, technology, management and research services to the nation's state courts.

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