

Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye Joins Skadden, Arps

Leading Jurist was First Woman to Serve on New York's Highest Court

NEW YORK — Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP is very pleased to announce that the Honorable Judith S. Kaye, Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeals for the past 15 years, is joining the firm.

Chief Judge Kaye was first appointed in 1983 by Governor Mario Cuomo as an Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals — New York's highest court. The first woman ever to serve on the Court of Appeals, she was appointed Chief Judge by Governor Cuomo and has served for 15 years until her retirement on December 31, 2008.

She served longer than any other chief judge in New York's history and established a national reputation for both her groundbreaking decisions and her innovative reforms of the New York court system. In his inauguration address last year, New York Governor David Paterson called her "the chief judge who I believe will go down in history as one of the greatest chief judges this State has ever had."

Judge Kaye leaves an impressive legacy. She was one of 10 women out of a class of about 300 when she graduated from New York University School of Law in 1962. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she established herself as a prominent civil litigator and became the first female partner at Olwine, Connelly, Chase, O'Donnell & Weyher.

On the bench, she wrote notable decisions on adoption rights for gay couples and the death penalty. As the *New York State Bar Association Journal* recently noted, she "earned a reputation as a jurist who let common sense and fairness guide her decisions, particularly in areas in which she believed evolving social norms had outpaced statutes."

Judge Kaye also left her mark on New York's courts as a creative reformer, changing the jury system to eliminate exemptions and establishing community courts to handle crimes such as graffiti, shoplifting and vandalism and provide on-site services for drug treatment, mental health counseling and job training. Her reforms have been adopted by many other state courts.

"We are very excited to have a jurist of Judge Kaye's prominence join Skadden," said Robert C. Sheehan, the firm's executive partner. "She brings unparalleled wisdom and judicial experience that will be of great value to our clients."

Said Judge Kaye: "I am delighted to begin Chapter 3 of my professional life next week in this great law firm with a strong commitment to public service."

Skadden is one of the world's leading law firms, with more than 2,000 lawyers in 24 offices around the world. In 2008, for the eighth straight year, Skadden was named the best corporate law firm in the United States by *Corporate Board Member* magazine and in 2008, *The American Lawyer* named the firm a finalist for "Litigation Department of the Year."