

## **Judge Russell takes oath of office on Court of Appeals**

May 20, 2011

Court of Appeals Judge Ermea Russell was sworn in today, becoming the first African-American woman to sit on a Mississippi appellate court.

Gov. Haley Barbour, who appointed Judge Russell to a vacancy on the court, moved up the effective date of her appointment to allow her to participate today in the dedication of the Gartin Justice Building. The judicial appointment was originally scheduled to be effective May 23.

Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Leslie D. King administered the oath of office to Judge Russell in the chambers of Court of Appeals Chief Judge L. Joseph Lee.

A formal investiture ceremony for Judge Russell will be scheduled at a later date.

Judge Russell, of Flora, takes the District 2, Position 2 Court of Appeals seat previously held by Justice King. Justice King was appointed to the Mississippi Supreme Court, taking the position previously held by James E. Graves Jr. Judge Graves was appointed to the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Judge Russell maintained a private law practice before her appointment to the Court of Appeals. She served as a senior trial attorney for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 1999-2007. Gov. Kirk Fordice appointed her to the Hinds County Circuit Court, where she served 1998-1999. She also previously served as Secretary of the Mississippi Senate, chief counsel to Lt. Gov. Eddie Briggs and Assistant Commissioner of Intercultural Relations at the state Institutions of Higher Learning.

Judge Russell has served in the U.S. Army Reserve since 1973, where she holds the rank of Colonel. She is a veteran of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. She earned the Bronze Star and the Global War on Terrorism and Expeditionary, Meritorious Service and Joint Service Commendation medals.

She is a member of the Mississippi Bar, Charles Clark Inns of Court, the Women Lawyers' Association and the Southern Association of Mediators. She is a former member of the Board of Bar Commissioners. She served on the Governor's Judicial Reform Commission in 1997.

Judge Russell earned both a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of West Alabama and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law.

####