



# Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Chief Justice Emeritus Stephen A. Zappala Accepts Post to Oversee Court Automation

**HARRISBURG, January 9, 2003** — Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ralph J. Cappy announced today that Chief Justice Emeritus Stephen A. Zappala has agreed to continue to serve the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in an administrative role.

Chief Justice Emeritus Zappala has long been involved in guiding the development of automation in Pennsylvania's Judiciary. In his new non-adjudicatory role, he will continue to oversee the Judiciary's computerization efforts.

"We've made tremendous progress over the last decade in making the state court system even more efficient and accessible to all Pennsylvanians through automation," Chief Justice Cappy said. "With extensive collaboration from the executive and legislative branches of government, the Judiciary's automation efforts are providing a benefit to the state as well as the courts."

Work is underway on the last part of a Statewide Automation Project that began in 1982 — under a committee chaired by then Justice Zappala who had been charged with guiding the development of a plan for implementing technology in the state court system. In subsequent years, a comprehensive case management system was installed in every district justice court in the commonwealth, and a newly developed case management and docketing system for the appellate courts was implemented in 2000. The single largest remaining goal is the automation of Pennsylvania's Common Pleas Courts.

"During my tenure on the court, working with the support of former chief justices Robert N.C. Nix Jr. and John P. Flaherty, we have built a technical infrastructure unrivaled by most other states," Chief Justice Emeritus Zappala said. "Technology has done more to unify the courts in Pennsylvania over the last 10 years than any other previous initiative of the court."

Chief Justice Emeritus Zappala, who was the commonwealth's 55<sup>th</sup> chief justice, retired at the end of 2002 after having served on the court for 20 years. He previously was an Allegheny County Common Pleas Court judge before being elected to the Supreme Court in 1981 and retained for a second term in 1991. He received the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Judicial Award in 1992 and the Gold Medal for Distinguished Service from the Order of Sons of Italy in America in 1995.

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