



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 3, 2019

Commonwealth Court Appoints New Chief Legal Counsel, Announces Leadership Changes

Harrisburg -- President Judge Mary Hannah Leavitt today announced the appointment of Gretchen Hanrahan, Esquire, to serve as Chief Legal Counsel to the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania. Ms. Hanrahan's appointment will be effective July 22, 2019.

Although the title of Chief Legal Counsel is new, Ms. Hanrahan will assume the duties of Kristen W. Brown, Esquire, who recently retired after 37 years of service with the Court, the last 11½ as the Court Prothonotary. The Chief Legal Counsel manages the operations of the Office of Legal Counsel (formerly the Office of the Prothonotary), including supervision of staff attorneys and administrative support personnel.

"Kristen Brown provided many years of dedicated and outstanding service to the Commonwealth Court, most recently as its Prothonotary," said President Judge Leavitt. "We thank her and wish her well."

The President Judge also welcomed Ms. Hanrahan to her new post within the Court. "Gretchen has been with the Court for over 20 years in different capacities, most recently as a senior staff attorney in the Prothonotary's office. She has earned the respect and confidence of her peers and the Board of Judges. We know she will do an outstanding job as the Court's Chief Legal Counsel."

"I am grateful to the President Judge and the Board of Judges for their confidence," said Hanrahan. "I have been with the Court for most of my professional career. I look forward to working with the judges and our talented court staff in this new role."

With the appointment of Ms. Hanrahan as Chief Legal Counsel, the Court's current Chief Clerk, Michael F. Krimmel, Esquire, will take the title of Prothonotary effective July 22, 2019. The Prothonotary manages the Office of the Prothonotary (formerly the Office of the Chief Clerk) and oversees the receipt, docketing, and maintenance of all documents filed with the Court, the scheduling of the Court's argument sessions, and the maintenance of caseload inventory and statistics.

“This is a change in titles, not a change in functions,” explained President Judge Leavitt. “These new titles will better reflect the functions, duties, and responsibilities of each position and each office within the Court.”

The Commonwealth Court was established in 1968 and is one of Pennsylvania's two statewide intermediate appellate courts. The Commonwealth Court has subject matter jurisdiction over state and local government matters. It also acts as a trial court when lawsuits are filed by or against Commonwealth officials and Commonwealth agencies.

Appellate cases are generally heard by panels of three judges in Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, although, on occasion, the Court sits in other locations. Cases may also be heard by a single judge or by *en banc* panels of seven judges.

For more information about Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court visit <http://www.pacourts.us/courts/commonwealth-court/>.

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About Chief Legal Counsel Gretchen Hanrahan

Ms. Hanrahan was appointed Chief Legal Counsel for the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania in July 2019. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Hanrahan spent 23 years working for the Court in various capacities, most recently as a staff attorney in the Office of the Prothonotary (now known as the Office of Legal Counsel). During her time with the Court, Ms. Hanrahan also clerked for the Honorable Samuel L. Rogers, Senior Judge, and served as Administrative Law Clerk for the Honorable Joseph F. McCloskey, Senior Judge. Prior to working for the Court, Ms. Hanrahan was a litigation associate with a Harrisburg, PA law firm, focusing primarily on insurance defense. She received her J.D. from the Dickinson School of Law and her B.A. from Susquehanna University. She resides in Cumberland County with her husband, Tom; they have two children.

About Prothonotary Michael F. Krimmel, Esq.

Mr. Krimmel was appointed Chief Clerk of the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania in 2006. In July 2019, his title changed to Prothonotary. Formerly he served as staff counsel to the Minor Court Rules Committee of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. In 2001, he also served on the staff of the Supreme Court's Intergovernmental Task Force to Study the District Justice System. Before joining the Commonwealth Court, he worked in the Pennsylvania county courts for 14 years as Deputy Court Administrator for the Twenty-third Judicial District (Berks County), and Bail & Pretrial Services Administrator for the Second Judicial District (Lancaster County). While a county court administrator, he was active in the Pennsylvania Association of Court Management (PACM), having served as chair of PACM's Special Courts Management Committee and as an *ex officio* member of the Minor Court Rules Committee. Mr. Krimmel currently is a member of the National Association of Appellate Court Clerks, Secretary (*ex officio*) of the Pennsylvania

Commonwealth Court Historical Society, and past president of the St. Thomas More Society of Central Pennsylvania. In addition, he is a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Administrative Law Section, Appellate Advocacy Committee, and Judicial Administration Committee. He taught various legal studies courses at area colleges for more than 17 years, and has lectured for the Pennsylvania Bar Institute. He received his J.D. from Widener University School of Law and his B.A. from American University. Mr. Krimmel lives in Lancaster County with his wife, Jeannie; they have three children.