



Supreme Court of Georgia

Jane Hansen, Public Information Officer
244 Washington Street, Suite 572
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
404-651-9385
hansenj@gasupreme.us



CAROL HUNSTEIN BECOMES NEW CHIEF JUSTICE

Atlanta, June 12, 2009 – Presiding Justice Carol W. Hunstein has been unanimously elected as the new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia. She will assume the position July 1, 2009, succeeding Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears, who is stepping down from the Court June 30.

The Court has also unanimously elected Justice George H. Carley to become the new Presiding Justice.

Former Gov. Zell Miller – who appointed both Justices to the Supreme Court – will swear them into their new positions in a ceremony in the state Supreme Court courtroom on July 1, beginning at 11 a.m. All media are welcome, and the ceremony can be viewed live by going to the Court’s website at www.gasupreme.us.

The state’s Chief Justice presides over Georgia’s judicial branch, just as the governor heads the executive branch of government, and House and Senate leaders lead the legislative branch. The Presiding Justice serves in her absence. The Chief Justice is the main spokesperson for the Court, as well as for the entire judiciary. She presides over oral arguments and runs the meetings in which the Court makes its decisions, although she has only one vote as does each of the Justices. The Chief Justice, who is eligible to serve two two-year terms, also chairs the Georgia Judicial Council, which governs all levels of the state’s courts.

Justice Hunstein was a DeKalb County Superior Court Judge when Gov. Miller tapped her in 1992 to become the second woman in history to serve on Georgia’s Supreme Court. She was the first woman to serve as President of the Council of Superior Court Judges. In 1989, then Chief Justice Thomas Marshall appointed her to chair the Georgia Commission on Gender Bias in the Judicial System. Gov. Miller and later Gov. Roy Barnes appointed her three times to chair the state’s commission on child support guidelines in 1993, 1998 and 2001. She has served on the advisory board of several organizations, including the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, and she currently chairs the Georgia Commission on Access and Fairness.

Justice Hunstein has received many honors, including an honorary LL.D. from Stetson University College of Law where she received her juris doctor in 1976. She has three grown

children and a grandson.

Justice Carley served in the Georgia House of Representatives and spent 14 years on the Georgia Court of Appeals, including as Chief Judge, before Gov. Miller appointed him to the state's high court in 1993. He received his LL.B. degree from the University of Georgia School of Law in 1962 and practiced law in Decatur where he was a partner in the firm of McCurdy & Candler. He also served as the attorney for the Housing Authority of the City of Decatur and as a Special Assistant Attorney General handling eminent domain cases for the state Department of Transportation. Since 1988, Justice Carley has been actively involved with the Georgia and National High School Mock Trial Competitions.

He and his wife have one son and two grandsons.