

News Release

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CONTACT:

Washington Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu at (206) 682-7328
Heidi Walter, Campaign Manager at (206) 412-8986 or Heidi@justicemaryyu.com

Gov. Gregoire Joins Campaign for Justice Mary Yu

Gregoire co-chairs Yu's Spokane campaign with Judges Eitzen and O'Connor

Washington Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu received a triple dose of big name support recently with the addition of former Governor Christine Gregoire and Judges Tari Eitzen and Kathleen O'Connor as co-chairs of the Spokane organizing committee for Justice Yu's election campaign.

"I'm very proud to offer my support to Justice Yu here in Eastern Washington," said Gregoire. "I know Mary to be a strong leader in the legal community with the highest level of integrity and fairness as a judge. Beyond that, I also think that Mary's hard work and leadership with several associations and non-profits shows her commitment to the broader community, and it makes her a real asset to our Supreme Court bench."

Gregoire is co-chairing the committee with two other women who are well-known leaders in the Spokane legal community, including retired Judge Kathleen O'Connor, who made history as the first female Superior Court Judge in Spokane County.

"I have known Mary for several years as a fellow trial court judge and it so important that we have someone with actual trial court experience at the Supreme Court. Mary knows the impact of decisions on ordinary lives and her long service as a highly respected judge helps maintain the fairness and impartiality that we want from our Supreme Court." said O'Connor, who spent more than 36 years on the bench before retiring earlier this year. "We have to uphold and embody the highest standards of integrity. Mary has demonstrated that she is a role model of the highest integrity throughout her career as a lawyer, a judge, and now as a Supreme Court Justice, and I am proud to support her campaign."

Gregoire and O'Connor are joined by former Spokane Superior Court Judge Tari Eitzen, who also retired earlier this year. "I'm supporting Mary's campaign because I know she possesses the kind of experience, integrity and impartiality it takes to be an excellent Supreme Court Justice," said Eitzen, who has taught at the Gonzaga University law school and who received the 2010 Outstanding Judge of the Year Award from the Washington State Bar Association. "Her years on the bench in King County have shown that she has the ability to judge each case on its merits with impartiality. And it has also given her the ability to see the real-life impacts that a

judge’s decision has on the people in our communities. There really is no substitute for that kind of experience.”

Gregoire, O’Connor and Eitzen have already had a big impact on Yu’s campaign, with more than 35 community leaders signing on to the Spokane organizing committee in less than a month.

“The support from Governor Gregoire, Judge O’Connor and Judge Eitzen is tremendous, and I’m truly grateful to them and really touched by their support and commitment to our campaign,” said Justice Yu. “These women are community leaders in Eastern Washington, and they are some of the most respected leaders in Washington’s legal community, and I can’t thank them enough for their hard work and support.”

Appointed by Governor Jay Inslee on May 1, 2014, Justice Yu joined the Washington Supreme Court after more than 14 years as an accomplished trial court judge in King County Superior Court where she heard a wide variety of criminal and civil cases and presided over hundreds of adoptions and other family law matters. Justice Yu is the first Asian, the first of woman of color (Asian and Latina), and the first member of the LGBT community to serve on the Washington Supreme Court. Before becoming a judge, Justice Yu served as Deputy Chief of Staff to King County Prosecutor Norm Maleng and as a deputy in the Criminal and Civil Divisions. Yu was raised in Chicago by immigrant parents—her mother came from Mexico and her father from China—and she is the first in her family to graduate from college.

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