

Chief Justice Paul Newby Appoints Chief District Court Judges in Districts 9 and 43



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RALEIGH — [Chief Justice Paul Newby](#) announced the following appointment effective December 4, 2024:

Judge Donna Forga has been appointed to serve as chief district court judge for Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties (Judicial District 43). Judge Forga was first elected to the bench in 2010. She received her undergraduate degree from University of North Carolina Asheville and her law degree from the University of North Carolina School of Law. Prior to her election, Judge Forga was in private practice and later a staff attorney for Legal Aid of North Carolina. Judge Forga replaces Judge Roy Wijewickrama, who was [appointed to superior court judge](#) by Governor Roy Cooper.

Chief Justice Newby announced the following appointment effective January 1, 2025:

Judge W. Curtis Stackhouse has been appointed to serve as chief district court judge for Greene, Lenoir, and Wayne counties (Judicial District 9). He was first elected to the court in 2016. Judge Stackhouse received his undergraduate degree from North Carolina State University and law degree from North Carolina Central University School of Law. After graduating from law school, he served as an assistant district attorney in the Ninth Prosecutorial District. Judge Stackhouse will replace Chief District Court Judge Elizabeth Heath, who is retiring.

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About North Carolina Judicial Branch

The [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#) is an equal and distinctively separate branch and core function of government. More than 7,400 Judicial Branch employees statewide administer justice in courthouses in North Carolina's 100 counties. The [Judicial Branch budget for FY 2022–23](#) was \$712.8M, 87% of which is used to pay salaries and 11.5% is used for operations. The Judicial Branch receives 2.64% of the overall State budget.

About North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) is the administrative agency for the [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#), providing administrative services to help the North Carolina court system operate more efficiently and effectively, taking into account each courthouse's diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources.

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