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United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Jamie L. McGrady Appointed as New Federal Public Defender for District of Alaska

SAN FRANCISCO — The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has announced the appointment of Jamie L. McGrady as the new federal public defender for the District of Alaska. She succeeds Richard Curtner, who retired in early January after 24 years as Alaska’s federal public defender.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Ms. McGrady received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Allegheny College and her law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law. She has served as an assistant federal public defender for the District of Alaska in Anchorage for the past seven years; previously she was a Westlaw attorney consultant, and from 2003 to 2008 served as an assistant public defender for the State of Alaska. Her many professional activities include serving as board member and past president of the Federal Bar Association, and as a lawyer representative to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

“We’re pleased that Jamie is taking on this important role,” said Circuit Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw, who chairs the Ninth Circuit’s Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders. “During her years with the federal public defender’s office in Alaska she has shown a tremendous commitment to providing strong and diligent representation of her clients, and the leadership skills needed to ensure that the office continues to provide the excellent service that it has offered during Rich Curtner’s long tenure.”

Alaska’s federal public defenders represent more than half of all indigent federal defendants charged in Federal Court for the District of Alaska. The office currently has 20 full-time employees and covers the largest geographic district in the country.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender was created by Congress to fulfill the constitutional requirement that financially eligible individuals charged with crimes in the federal justice system be provided with professional legal representation at no cost. By statute, judges of the courts of appeals select and appoint the federal public defender for a renewable four-year term. In the Ninth Circuit, FPD applicants are evaluated by both a local screening committee and the court’s Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders, applying Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines. Reappointment to additional terms is based upon demonstration of highly satisfactory performance as determined by a broad survey and performance evaluation.

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