



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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

SAN FRANCISCO — Judges of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have approved the reappointment of Federal Public Defender Jamie L. McGrady of the District of Alaska to a second four-year term. First appointed to lead the office in 2020, her reappointment is effective Jan. 24, 2024.

“We are pleased to reappoint Jamie as FPD for the District of Alaska,” said Circuit Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw, chair of the Ninth Circuit’s Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders. “She did a tremendous job in her first term managing the challenges created by the pandemic and adopting new approaches to case management that have enhanced the quality of representation for FPDO clients.”

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 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. Before her appointment as FPD, she worked for seven years as an assistant FPD in the Alaska federal defender office. 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 member of the Lawyer Representatives Coordinating Committee for the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. McGrady has served as a member of the Ninth Circuit’s Trial Improvement Committee which recommends “policies and best practices to ensure the consistent and efficient administration of bench and jury trials” across the Ninth Circuit.

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 22 full-time employees and covers the largest geographic district in the country.

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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, 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 on a comprehensive evaluation of the federal public defender's performance, including an invitation for public comment.

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