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United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Ninth Circuit Judge Raymond C. Fisher to Assume Senior Status

SAN FRANCISCO – Circuit Judge Raymond C. Fisher announced Thursday (January 3, 2013) that he will step down as an active judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Judge Fisher, 73, plans to assume senior status on April 1, 2013, at which time he will have almost 14 years of active service to the court.

“I plan to continue to render substantial judicial service, although enjoying a bit more time to spend with my family,” Judge Fisher said in a letter informing President Obama of his intention to take senior status. He emphasized to his colleagues his “privilege and pleasure in having the opportunity to serve on this great Circuit,” assuring them he would still be participating in hearing cases and in other court matters. He will continue to maintain chambers in the Richard H. Chambers U.S. Courthouse in Pasadena.

Nominated by President Clinton, Judge Fisher was appointed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on October 12, 1999, and currently ranks 10th in seniority among the court’s 28 active judges. He came onto the federal bench after having been appointed by President Clinton in 1997 to serve as the Associate Attorney General of the United States. As the third ranking official at the Department of Justice, he oversaw the work of the DOJ’s civil, civil rights, antitrust, tax, and environmental and natural resources divisions.

Prior to his federal service, Judge Fisher had practiced law in Los Angeles, where he was active in civic affairs. He was appointed by Mayor Richard Riordan to the Los Angeles Police Commission and served as its president in 1996. He previously served as the deputy general counsel for the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, better known as the “Christopher Commission,” which was created in 1991 to investigate police practices in the wake of the Rodney King beating. He also served on the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission from 1984 to 1989, including one year as president.

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Born in Oakland, Judge Fisher received his undergraduate degree from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1961, and his LL.B. in 1966 from Stanford Law School, where he served as president of the *Stanford Law Review* and was awarded the Order of the Coif. After law school, he served as a clerk for Circuit Judge J. Skelly Wright of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, 1966 to 1967, and for U.S. Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., 1967 to 1968.

Judge Fisher began his legal practice in 1968 with the Los Angeles law firm of Tuttle & Taylor. In 1988 he became a founding partner of the Los Angeles office of Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe. He specialized in complex business and constitutional litigation and alternative dispute resolution. He is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

In addition to hearing cases, Judge Fisher is involved in judicial administration at the circuit and national levels. He currently serves on the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, the governing body for federal courts in nine western states, and has been a member of the U.S. Judicial Conference's Committee on the Judicial Branch since 2005.

Judge Fisher is involved in two nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations that focus on educating young people about civics and the law, serving as Chair of the Western Justice Center and as a board member and former president of the Constitutional Rights Foundation. He is also a member of the American Law Institute, serving on its Election Law Advisory Committee.

Federal law allows an Article III judge with the requisite tenure on the bench to retire as early as age 65 at their full current salary. Many judges choose, instead, to take senior status and continue to serve the judiciary at essentially no cost. The "Rule of 80" is the commonly used shorthand for the age and service requirement for a judge to assume senior status. Eligible judges are at least age 65 with 15 years experience, or at least 70 with 10 years experience.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the nation's largest and busiest appellate court, hears appeals of cases decided by federal trial courts and certain executive branch administrative agencies in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions.

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