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Chief Justice Appoints Judge Julio L. Mendez as Assignment Judge of Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner today announced the appointment of Superior Court Judge Julio L. Mendez as assignment judge of the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage. Judge Mendez will succeed Judge Valerie H. Armstrong, who will retire Nov. 1 after 10 years as assignment judge, capping 20 years on the Superior Court bench.

Judge Mendez has been on the bench for nine years. He was appointed by Gov. James E. McGreevey on July 19, 2002 and then reappointed with tenure by Gov. Jon Corzine in July 2009. His first assignment was in Cumberland County, first to the criminal division for two years and then to the family division.

"Judge Mendez has proven himself a leader among his peers and a jurist of the highest caliber," said Chief Justice Rabner. "The judges, staff, attorneys and litigants in Atlantic and Cape May counties will be well served by his experience and dedication.

"As Judge Mendez steps in to succeed Judge Armstrong, we thank her for her extraordinary service and wish her well in her retirement," Rabner said.

In September 2005, after he served for one year in the family division, then-Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz appointed Judge Mendez to be presiding judge of the division for the Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Vicinage. In addition to his role as leader of the family division in the three-county vicinage, Judge Mendez has served on various statewide conferences and committees as a policy maker and problem solver. He served as chair of the Children in Court Committee of the Conference of Presiding Family Judges. He also served for six years on the Supreme Court Committee on Family Practice, two as vice-chair of the committee. In addition to his leadership on case-related committees, Judge Mendez devotes time as a member of the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Outside Activities of Judiciary Employees.

Judge Mendez, who is the first Hispanic judge to join the ranks of New Jersey assignment judges, is a graduate of Glassboro State College, now Rowan University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1978, and Rutgers School of Law – Camden, where he earned his law degree in 1981.

"I am grateful to be selected by Chief Justice Rabner to lead the outstanding judges and staff in the Atlantic and Cape May courthouses. When I left my native Cuba as a teenager, it would have been impossible to imagine the honor of serving New Jersey as a judge in this role. And while succeeding Judge Armstrong is certainly a challenge, it is one I promise to face with my colleagues in a spirit of fairness and integrity and with hard work," Judge Mendez said.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Mendez was in private practice for 20 years. He then served as a staff attorney for the Cumberland County Board of Social Services, as Vineland City solicitor and as a trustee for Cumberland County College. His professional associations have included the New Jersey State Bar Association, the Cumberland County Bar Association and the Hispanic Bar Association.

Judge Mendez and his wife, Rosa, live in Vineland. They are the parents of Julius, a firefighter and Melissa, a first-grade teacher