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Judge Jose L. Fuentes, Hudson County Superior Court, Judge Edith K. Payne, Essex County Superior Court, Elevated to Appellate Division

Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz signed an order appointing Judge Jose L. Fuentes and Judge Edith K. Payne to the Appellate Division effective August 1.

"The Judiciary and the people we serve will benefit greatly from the wide experience and strong leadership that Judge Fuentes and Judge Payne bring to the Appellate Division," said Chief Justice Poritz.

Assigned temporarily to the Appellate Division from April 28 to May 18, 2002, Judge Fuentes served previously in the Civil Division of the Superior Court in the Hudson Vicinage. Appointed to the bench in 1993 by then-Governor Jim Florio, he also has served in the Family and Criminal Divisions.

Originally from Cuba, Judge Fuentes immigrated with his family in 1967 at the age of 11 and settled in Union City, Hudson County. He graduated from Montclair State College in 1978 and from Rutgers Law School in 1982.

Prior to his judicial career, Judge Fuentes focused his private practice in the areas of municipal land use, tenant/landlord law, matrimonial and family law, general real estate, and civil rights litigation. He served as a Court-appointed mediator and binding arbitrator for the General Equity Division in Hudson County, and as Guardian ad Litem and mediator for the Family Part in Hudson County. He also was a Municipal Court judge in Union City and an adjunct lecturer at Seton Hall Law School. A member of the Union City School Board from 1982 to 1988, he served as President from 1986 to 1988.

Judge Fuentes resides in Montclair with his wife, Aida, two children, Johnathan and Shelley, and a Sheltie named Daisy. A history major in college, his interests include the Civil War and Early Republic eras.

Judge Payne served on temporary assignment to the Appellate Division from May 19 to June 8, 2002. Previously, she served in the Civil and Criminal Divisions of Essex County Superior Court. She was appointed to the bench in 1996 by then-Governor Christie Whitman.

Judge Payne graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1964 and from Rutgers Law School in 1976. Before her appointment to the Superior Court, she was a partner in the law firm of Stryker, Tams and Dill, where she specialized in litigation involving insurance law, toxic tort law and product liability. She has authored articles in the Rutgers Law Review and other law-related publications and also served as an adjunct lecturer at Rutgers University Law School. In addition, Judge Payne served on the Supreme Court Committee on Character from 1991 to 1996.

Judge Payne and her husband, John, have two grown sons, Adam and Mathew. They live in Glen Ridge in a house

designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and have been involved in national efforts to preserve his work. They also collect Japanese prints.

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