



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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Contact: Jon Goldstein
(Santa Fe) 505-476-2248

Governor Bill Richardson Appoints John Paternoster to Fill Vacancy on Eighth Judicial District Court

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today announced the appointment of John Paternoster to serve as a judge on New Mexico's Eighth Judicial District Court in Raton.

"John Paternoster is an honorable attorney and a man with a strong sense of fairness and justice," said Governor Richardson. "His extensive juvenile and criminal law experience will make him an excellent judge."

Paternoster has practiced law for 29 years, most recently as Municipal Judge for the Village of Eagle Nest. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of New Mexico and his law degree from the Gonzaga University. Paternoster is a former District Attorney for the Eighth Judicial District and a member of the New Mexico Defense Lawyers Association, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Eagle Nest Beautification Committee, and a former board member of the New Mexico District Attorney's Association.

Paternoster fills the vacancy left by the retirement of Judge Peggy Nelson.

Paternoster was the sole recommendation made by the Judicial Nominating Commission to Governor Richardson.

"I am extremely disappointed with the process undertaken by the Judicial Nominating Commission in this case," said Governor Richardson. "Like any job opening, it is always best to be able to interview more than one candidate, especially when that job includes the huge responsibilities of a judge. I am seriously considering a constitutional amendment to make it clear that more than one name must be submitted to the Governor on all judicial appointments."

Paternoster plans to stand for election in 2006.