



For immediate release
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Two Local Attorneys Named as Magistrate Judges

WASHINGTON, DC – DC Superior Court Chief Judge Lee Satterfield today appointed Gretchen Rohr and Rainey Brandt as magistrate judges. Ms. Rohr will serve as chair of the Mental Health Commission and will preside over the Juvenile Mental Health Diversion Court. “The addition of these two very qualified and dedicated attorneys to our bench will enhance our ability to serve the people of the District of Columbia,” said Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield. “They are both experts in their field and have demonstrated a commitment to serving their community.”

Rainey Ransom Brandt has served as Special Counsel for each of the last three chief judges of DC Superior Court. She has held leadership roles on various committees working to improve access to and the administration of justice. Dr. Brandt coordinated two successful Fugitive Safe Surrender initiatives, a US Marshals program that encourages people with outstanding warrants to turn themselves in. The most recent DC Safe Surrender program took place August 2011 and was a great success – despite being interrupted by a hurricane - with over 700 people turning themselves in.

Within the court, Dr. Brandt has brought about improvements in court efficiency, arranged for mentoring opportunities for the students at Thurgood Marshall Academy, a public charter high school in Anacostia, and provided judicial training sessions. In 2010, Dr. Brandt was selected as the recipient of the Council for Court Excellence’s Justice Potter Stewart Award. This award is given annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the law, the legal system, the courts, or the administrative process in our nation's capital.

Prior to her work at the court, Dr. Brandt was a full-time professor in the Department of Justice, Law and Society at American University. She is still an adjunct associate professor there. Her areas of expertise include the prison system and other justice related issues. Dr. Brandt received the university’s Outstanding Adjunct Professor Award an unprecedented two times in just four years, 2006 and 2009.

Dr. Brandt earned her Ph.D. from American University in 1993, focusing on Sociology, with a specialty in justice issues. She attended The Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America, and received her JD in 1995.

“I have worked with Rainey as a judge, as the Presiding Judge of Family Court and for the last four years as Chief Judge during which she served as my Special Counsel. Her expertise, insight and broad understanding of the Superior Court and the DC criminal justice system will make her a first-rate judge,” said Chief Judge Satterfield.

Gretchen N. Rohr served for five years as the Director of the DC Jail and Prison Advocacy Project for University Legal Services where she represented men, women and youth with mental illness. She designed an interdisciplinary initiative for diverting these individuals to community-based, self-directed treatment. The Project crafted new reentry practices in federal prisons and administered the District's first jail initiative preparing chronically homeless people for release. Under Ms. Rohr's leadership, this work has been recognized as an innovative model and she has lectured across the country on topics including disability law compliance, trauma responses and employing peer specialists.

Prior to her practice in DC, she was a staff attorney with the Georgia Advocacy Office, representing individuals with psychiatric disabilities seeking release from hospitalization, access to community-based alternatives and protection against institutional abuse, neglect and sexual violence. For two years, Ms Rohr worked as a Holland & Knight LLP *Chesterfield Smith Fellow*, where she worked in partnership with the Atlanta-based Southern Center for Human Rights.

Ms. Rohr is a Rhodes Scholar and Truman Scholar. She earned her first law degree from Oxford University where she focused her studies on International Human Rights. After working in Zimbabwe as a volunteer attorney with Women and Law in Southern Africa, she returned to the U.S. to complete a J.D. at Georgetown University Law Center. She teaches as an Adjunct Faculty member at Georgetown's Law Center.

"Gretchen has devoted her career to ensuring due process, dignity and fairness to those with mental illness. She is an expert in this field and a very capable lawyer. We are most fortunate to have her join our bench in the role of Chair of the DC Mental Health Commission," said Chief Judge Lee Satterfield.

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