

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 12, 2019**

**The Honorable Collins J. Seitz, Jr. Takes the Oath of Office for  
Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court**

The Honorable Collins J. Seitz, Jr. was sworn in for his first term as Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court on Friday, Nov. 8, 2019 in a small, private ceremony at the Historic Courthouse in Old New Castle.

Chief Justice Seitz decided to forgo the usual, large investiture in favor of a small, short ceremony with just a few family and friends. Pastor Miriam Foltz, of New Castle Presbyterian Church, offered the invocation before retired Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr., administered the Oath of Office while Gail Seitz, Chief Justice Seitz's wife, held the Bible.

At his confirmation hearing before the Delaware Senate on Nov. 7, 2019 Chief Justice Seitz promised legislators, "I will work hard, I will do my best. I will always keep the citizens of Delaware in my mind." The Senate then unanimously confirmed Gov. John Carney's nomination of Chief Justice Seitz to a 12-year term as the head of Delaware's Judicial Branch.

Following the confirmation vote on Thursday, Governor John Carney described Chief Justice Seitz as "one of Delaware's finest legal minds," and praised him as a person who "has the judgment, sense of fairness, and experience necessary to maintain and build on the Delaware courts' reputation as objective, stable, and nonpartisan."

Chief Justice Seitz first joined the Supreme Court as a Justice in 2015 after his nomination to the bench by Gov. Jack Markell. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Chief Justice Seitz was a founding partner of Seitz, Ross, Aronstam & Moritz LLP. In that capacity, he regularly litigated corporate, commercial, and intellectual property cases, and advised clients on issues of Delaware corporate law. Before that, Chief Justice Seitz was a partner at Connolly Bove Lodge & Hutz LLP, where he practiced for more than three decades. During his years in private practice, Chief Justice Seitz was well known in Delaware for his representation of the State in the United States Supreme Court case *New Jersey v. Delaware*, where Delaware prevailed in its claim to ownership of the Delaware River in the Twelve Mile Circle.

In addition to his work in the courtroom, Chief Justice Seitz is actively involved in his community. He has served as a trustee for the New Castle Presbyterian Church, a board member of the Friends of Hockessin Colored School #107, a former board member and president of the Greater Hockessin Area Development Association, and a former board member and president of Community Legal Aid Society.

Chief Justice Seitz is carrying on a family tradition of public service in the law, following in the footsteps of his late father, Collins J. Seitz Sr. (1914-1998), who served on the Delaware Court of Chancery as Chancellor and later as Chief Judge of the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. Chief Justice Seitz's father was also a "Judge" of the Delaware Supreme Court as opposed to a "Justice" in that he served on the state's highest court during the years when the court was

comprised of sitting trial judges from the Court of Chancery and the Superior Court. (In 1951, the Delaware Supreme Court became a separate court with its own Justices.)

In 1952, as Chancellor, Seitz Sr. made national headlines and legal history in the cases of *Bulah v. Gebhart* and *Belton v. Gebhart* where he ruled that black students in Delaware were receiving an inferior education under the segregationist doctrine “separate but equal.” The cases later went on to become a part of the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that ended segregation in all public schools in the United States. The Delaware cases were the only cases affirmed by the United States Supreme Court.

Following his confirmation hearing, Chief Justice Seitz said, “I know my father is looking down at me from heaven, and I know he would be proud.”

Chief Justice Seitz received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Delaware in 1980. He earned his law degree at the Villanova University School of Law in 1983 and was admitted to the Delaware Bar that same year. Chief Justice Seitz is married with three children.

**For more information, please contact  
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