

**February 06, 2012**

## **D.C. Appeals Court Judge Corinne Beckwith Sworn In**



District of Columbia Court of Appeals Judge Corinne Beckwith was sworn in on Friday as one of the newest members of the city's highest court.

The Senate formally [confirmed Beckwith in November](#). She didn't speak during Friday's ceremony, which took place in the appeals court's ceremonial courtroom, but remarks from former colleagues and friends offered a glimpse into her approach to the law.

Beckwith began her career as a newspaper reporter, but after earning her J.D. in 1992 and taking on two clerkships – including one with U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens – she worked as a public defender until her appointment to the bench. In 1999, Beckwith joined the appellate division of the D.C. Public Defender Service and served as a division supervisor as of 2009.

Former public defender service colleague Andrea Roth, now a professor at University of California, Berkeley School of Law, said in her remarks that Beckwith's early training as a reporter taught her seek out the stories behind each case.

Roth called Beckwith “the most ridiculously humble person I have ever met,” and said that given the large egos that can often accompany judges to the bench, “the qualities that make the robe seems like an odd fit...make it precisely the right fit.”

Public defender service appellate division head James Klein praised Beckwith's "brilliant, meticulous, magnetic writing." He noted that Beckwith was among the first attorneys to be recruited specifically for the office's appellate division. "In the judges hands, those briefs must have felt like precious works of art," Klein said.

Klein used his remarks to encourage Beckwith to remember the lessons she learned as a defender. He warned her against relying on the "back alley" of unpublished opinions or bowing to pressure to refuse to hear cases in order to cope with the large caseload. Beckwith knows "the pernicious process" that can cause lawyers and clients to lose faith in the system, Klein said.

President Barack Obama [nominated Beckwith to the court](#) in April, making her his first nominee to the local appeals court. The other new member of the court, fellow public defender service alumna Judge Catharine Easterly, was also confirmed by the Senate in November and is scheduled to be sworn-in this Friday.

*National Law Journal photo by Diego M. Radzinski.*

Posted by Zoe Tillman on February 06, 2012 at 10:11 AM