

MBA NEWS

20 West Street, Boston, MA 02111-1204 • communications@massbar.org

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CONTACT:

Jennifer Rosinski (617) 338-0675

Tricia M. Oliver (617) 338-0677

Massachusetts Bar Association congratulates past president Mark D Mason on judicial appointment

BOSTON, Mass. — The Massachusetts Bar Association congratulates past President Mark D Mason, who served during the 2006-07 association year, on his appointment to the Springfield District Court. Mason, whose tenure on the bench began today, will be ceremonially sworn in by Gov. Deval Patrick at a later date. He fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge William W. Teahan Jr.

“The people of the Commonwealth, who rely upon fair, impartial and independent judges, are fortunate to gain an attorney of Mark's consummate competence and impeccable character. It is a proud moment for the Massachusetts legal community to see Mark elevated to the highest level of public service in our profession,” said MBA President Edward W. McIntyre.

Prior to his appointment, Mason was a principal in the litigation department of Cooley Shrair PC in Springfield, where he represented individuals, small businesses, and large corporations in a variety of matters including business litigation, domestic relations, personal injury and real estate and also served as a court-appointed master, mediator and arbitrator. Mason was an adjunct professor at Cambridge College and former professor at Bay Path College in Longmeadow and Our Lady of the Elms College in Chicopee.

A longtime MBA officer and committee member, Mason was the MBA's first openly gay president. Until his appointment, he sat on the MBA House of Delegates and the Executive Management Board. Mason has chaired the Post-Goodridge Task Force and co-chaired the Anniversary Fee Task Force. He is a former chair of the Young Lawyers Division, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee and the MBA Task Force on Same Gender Marriage, as well as a former secretary of the Judicial Administration Section Council.

Mason's appointment was made following a thorough review, which included a favorable vote from the Governor's Council Dec. 10, a hearing before the Governor's Council Dec. 3, and an evaluation by the Joint Bar Committee on Judicial Appointment.

The JBC is comprised of two dozen attorneys from across the state. The group is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, voting and reporting on the qualifications of individuals under consideration for judicial appointments – including clerk-magistrates – to all courts of the commonwealth.

The committee is an independent entity and its votes are kept confidential. The committee considers several aspects of an individual before it takes a vote and submits a report to the governor and/or the Governor's Council, which must approve and appoint the candidate. Among the qualities considered are integrity, reputation, knowledge and ability in the field of law, professional experience, judicial temperament, financial responsibility and commitment to public service.

Mason is a recipient of the 2001 *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* Lawyer of the Year Award, the 2004 Gay and Lesbian Advocates Spirit of Justice Award, and has been named a "Super Lawyer" by *Boston Magazine* since 2005. Mason also received the 2008 Community Service Award from the MBA for his ongoing commitment of using his legal skills to serve the public. He was nominated by the Massachusetts Lesbian & Gay Bar Association, of which he has been an active member for 15 years. He obtained his bachelor's degree from Columbia University in 1980 and earned his law degree from Boston University School of Law in 1984.

Mason lives in Springfield where he performs as a member of the First Violin Section of the Pioneer Valley Symphony. Among his many community service activities, Mason has served as a Big Brother and on the board of the Community Music School of Springfield. He is the past president and board member of the March of Dimes of Western Massachusetts and the co-founder and past president of the Gay & Lesbian Civic Association of Greater Springfield.

Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law. The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth.