



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge**

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New Administrative Judge Named to the Fifth Judicial District

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas today announced the appointment of Hon. Deborah H. Karalunas as Administrative Judge for the Fifth Judicial District. The appointment was made with the approval of Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson and after consultation with Hon. Gerald J. Whalen, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department.

In her new capacity, Judge Karalunas will oversee the daily operations of the trial-level courts in the Fifth Judicial District, which encompasses Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Onondaga and Oswego counties in Central New York. She is filling a vacancy left by Judge James P. Murphy, who earlier this month was named Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts Outside New York City.

“Judge Karalunas is a proven leader who has earned the respect and admiration of Central New York’s court family and entire legal community. Her familiarity with, and sensitivity to, the varied and complex issues impacting the court system and the fair, timely delivery of justice—combined with her integrity, sound judgment and commitment to diversity—make her an ideal candidate to take on the many demands of this important administrative post,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas. “I am greatly appreciative that she has accepted this new challenge and am eager to work with her as we build on Judge Murphy’s achievements to enhance productivity and improve the quality of justice for those served by the Fifth Judicial District.”

“I am humbled and honored that Chief Administrative Judge Zayas, together with Chief Judge Wilson and Presiding Justice Whalen have entrusted me to oversee the daily operations of the trial courts in the Fifth Judicial District,” said Judge Karalunas. “I look forward to supporting and collaborating with the dynamic leadership of the New York Courts, including First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George, Deputy Chief Administrative Judges James P. Murphy, Edwina Richardson-Mendelson and Deborah Kaplan, and the entire court family to deliver equal and timely justice to our diverse constituents.”

Judge Karalunas was first elected to the Onondaga County Supreme Court bench in 2002 and re-elected in 2016, handling a varied, complex civil caseload including commercial, personal injury, medical malpractice, intellectual property and environmental matters. She has served as the Presiding Justice of the County’s Supreme Court-Commercial Division since 2007. Prior to her ascension to the bench, she was a partner at Bond, Schoeneck & King, having first joined the Syracuse law firm in 1983. She began her legal career as a law clerk to Chief Judge Howard G. Munson of the U.S. District Court in the Northern District of New York. She is a graduate of Syracuse University College of Law, where she was a member of the International Law Review, Moot Court and Justinian Honor Society.

Among her numerous extra-judicial activities, Judge Karalunas is a member of various bar associations, a former chair of the Fifth Judicial District’s Women in the Courts Committee, a past president of the Association of Justices of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, a past president of the Central New York Women’s Bar Association and a former presiding member of the New York State Bar Association’s Judicial Section. Additionally, she is an adjunct professor at Syracuse University College of Law, where she teaches New York Civil Practice, and a member of the Committee on Pattern Jury Instructions.

Her appointment is effective July 10, 2023.

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