



# **PRESS RELEASE**

**New York State  
Unified Court System**

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

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## **Chief Administrative Judge Zayas Makes Historic Appointment to Appellate Term, First Department's 1st and 12<sup>th</sup> Districts**

**NEW YORK**—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas today announced the appointment of Hon. Bianka Perez as Associate Justice of the Appellate Term of the Supreme Court, First Department, in the First and Twelfth Judicial Districts—the first person of Dominican descent to sit on this appellate bench—which, led by Presiding Justice Shlomo Hagler, hears appeals from the Civil and Criminal Courts in New York (Manhattan) and Bronx counties. The appointment was made after consultation with Hon. Dianne Renwick, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department. Justice Perez fills a vacancy created by the recent elevation of Hon. Marsha Michael to the State Supreme Court's Appellate Division, First Department.

“Justice Perez is a fair and dedicated jurist who has earned a reputation for her high standards, collegiality, and hard work. She has broad-based legal and judicial experience, handling a range of criminal and civil matters over the course of her distinguished career. Her wide-ranging expertise, combined with her fine character and passion for the law and the pursuit of justice, will greatly benefit New York's Appellate Term bench,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas.

“It is an honor to be appointed to the Appellate Term, First Department, and to serve our community of the Bronx in the People's Court,” said Justice Perez. “I know I didn't get here alone. With the help of my loving and courageous mom, my wonderful husband, and my girls, I am not only the first-generation lawyer in my family but also now the first Justice of Dominican descent to be appointed to the Appellate Term, First Department. I want to thank Chief Administrative Judge Zayas. I remain committed to using my example and trajectory to empower our community and future generations of public

servants. I promise to listen courteously to the litigants, and in the words of Socrates, ‘to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and to decide impartially.’”

Justice Perez was elected in 2020 to State Supreme Court in Bronx County, where she has been serving in the Civil Term, presiding over the Court’s Motor Vehicle Part and conducting hearings and jury, bench, and summary jury trials on all Supreme Court civil matters. She has also been handling cases and presiding over trials in the County’s Criminal Court, where she has served since 2017. She was elected to the New York City Civil Court bench in 2016, assigned to the New York City Criminal Court bench in Bronx County in 2017, and to the Bronx County’s Civil Court bench in 2018, where she served for two years. Prior to her ascension to the bench, Justice Perez served as the Commissioner for the Board of Elections of the City of New York, presiding over hearings to determine candidate ballot eligibility, among her many other responsibilities. Before that, she served New York City’s Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) as an Administrative Law Judge, presiding over hearings involving alleged violations of local laws, rules, and regulations relating to, or affecting, health within New York City. She was in private practice for over a decade, representing clients in a range of civil, criminal, and family matters. She began her legal career as an associate at the New York City law firm of Ginarte, O’Dwyer, Winograd & Laracuenta.

Justice Perez is a graduate of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, and New York Law School. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2018 Dominican Day Parade Ambassador of Justice Medal and the 2023 Dominican Bar Association Judicial Excellence Award.

Among her many professional and civic activities, she is a past president of the Dominican Bar Association, currently serves as the Dominican Bar Association’s Judiciary Chair, and since 2020 has been an adjunct professor at Monroe College, where she teaches courses in criminal justice to New York City and Westchester County high school students enrolled in a program to jump start their college and career paths, as well as undergraduate students enrolled in the college’s Criminal Justice Program.

Her appointment is effective immediately.

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