

**April 30, 2012**

## **D.C. Superior Court Welcomes Former Defense Attorney as New Judge**



District of Columbia Superior Court Judge Danya Dayson, a former criminal defense and family law attorney, was sworn in to the court on Friday.

Dayson was one of three new judges confirmed by the Senate in November to Superior Court. Although she's been serving on the bench since then, Friday's ceremony marked her formal admittance to the court.

Before joining the bench, Dayson was an associate at Washington's O'Toole, Rothwell, Nassau & Steinbach, where she handled criminal litigation and led the firm's domestic relations practice.

Name partner Jeffrey O'Toole, in his remarks Friday, said Dayson is "driven by a sense of fairness" and possesses "that critical intangible" that makes for successful judges.

"The brain trust that runs this place has plucked a good one," he said.

O'Toole also used his remarks to address the ongoing national debate over the death penalty. He said that while the District of Columbia no longer has the death penalty, Dayson and other judges will continue to grapple with related issues like ineffective assistance of counsel and wrongful accusations. O'Toole and Dayson have co-taught a criminal law seminar at George Washington University Law School on the death penalty.



Superior Court Judge Robert Morin, who knew Dayson as one of his former law clerks in 2000, administered the oath of office. Dayson earned her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center in 1998, and practiced as a solo criminal law practitioner before her clerkship. Before joining O'Toole in 2003, she was name partner at the firm Wicks & Dayson, with veteran Washington attorney Jenifer Wicks.

In her first year on the bench, Dayson is one of several judges handling the domestic relations and neglect calendar of cases in the family court division.

Before she was nominated to the bench by President Barack Obama in July, Dayson served on the Domestic Relations and Paternity Support Subcommittee of the Family Court Implementation Committee, and the Steering Committee of the Family Law Section of the D.C. Bar. She also volunteered in the Family Court self-help resource center.

Dayson is one of three Superior Court judges nominated by the White House in July and confirmed by the Senate in November. The other two were Judge John McCabe and Judge Peter Krauthamer, who were both sworn in over the past few weeks.

*National Law Journal photos by Zoe Tillman.*

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