

# Four More Years!

## For D.C.'s Top Judge, That Is



The District's top jurist is getting another four years on the bench, D.C. Courts announced today. Lee Satterfield, the chief judge of D.C. Superior Court, was reappointed to the post today.

In a press release, D.C. Courts highlighted parts of Satterfield's first term, including his efforts on community courts, landlord and tenant issues, the implementation of the District's same-sex marriage law and an expanded use of technology in the courtroom. As DCist has noted in the past, D.C. Superior Court is one of the more tech-friendly courthouses in town, allowing people to hold on to their phones and computers inside the building, even if judges are skittish about live-tweeting courtroom proceedings.

D.C. Courts' technology policy recently came into focus when a group of grand jurors complained about being completely severed from the outside world while carrying out their service, which is conducted at the office of the U.S. Attorney. Satterfield weighed in on that gripe, reminding former and future grand jurors that the no-personal-electronics policy was the business of the U.S. Attorney, not his office.

A few months ago, in a conversation with the D.C. Bar Association's Washington Lawyer magazine, Satterfield reflected on his first four years as the District's top judge. In the interview, Satterfield talked about expanding what he called "access to justice":

Another area I wanted to focus on was access to justice. This is a perennial issue, made worse by the tough economic times we have had in recent years. The Superior Court has taken a number of steps to try to address the needs of self-represented parties and ensure that their rights are not limited because of a lack of ability to afford an attorney. One thing I did early in my tenure as chief judge was to set up a training session for all Superior Court judges to provide information to them on how to best handle self-represented parties, to best assist them in presenting their case, without taking sides.

In the D.C. Courts press release announcing his reappointment, Satterfield called his job "incredibly rewarding."

The D.C. Bar feels similarly, according to communications director Cynthia Kuhn.

"The D.C. Bar enjoys a very productive relationship with Chief Judge Satterfield, who has been extremely open, creative, and available to work with our organization on a range of initiatives aimed at increasing access to justice," Kuhn said. "We look forward to continued successes in his upcoming term."

Contact the author of this article or email [tips@dcist.com](mailto:tips@dcist.com) with further questions, comments or tips.

By Benjamin R. Freed in News on July 26, 2012 12:30 PM