



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Senate Confirms Judge Eumi K. Lee for Federal Judgeship in Northern District of California

SAN FRANCISCO – The United States Senate today voted 50-49 to confirm President Joseph R. Biden Jr.’s nomination of Alameda County Superior Court Judge Eumi K. Lee to serve as a U.S. district judge for the Northern District of California. Upon taking her oath, Judge Lee will be the second Korean American Article III judge to serve on the court.

“On behalf of all the judges on the Northern District of California, we heartily welcome such an experienced and respected state court judge to our ranks,” said Chief U.S. District Judge Richard Seeborg, Northern District of California.

Judge Lee was nominated for the judgeship on July 27, 2023, and had her nomination hearing on Sept. 6, 2023. Her nomination was pending and thus was returned to the president when the First Session of the 118th Congress adjourned on Jan. 3, 2024. She was renominated on Jan. 8, 2024, and her nomination was reported to the Senate floor on January 18. She will fill a judgeship vacant since May 17, 2023, when District Judge William H. Orrick, III, assumed senior status. She will maintain chambers in San Jose.

Judge Lee has served as judge on the Alameda County Superior Court in Oakland and Hayward, California, since 2018. Previously, she worked at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law (now University of California, College of the Law, San Francisco), where she was clinical professor of law, 2011-2018; co-director, Hastings Institute for Criminal Justice, 2010-2012; ethics trainer, 2009-2010, 2012; associate clinical professor of law, 2008-2010; clinical attorney and assistant clinical professor, 2005-2008; and a moot court, legal research and writing instructor in 2001. She was in private practice for over a decade in San Francisco as a contract attorney and of counsel at Gonzalez & Leigh (dissolved/defunct), 2010-2012 and 2006-2008; as an associate at Kecker & Van Nest LLP (now Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP), 2002-2005; and as an associate at Thelen Reid & Priest LLP (dissolved/defunct), 2000-2001.

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Judge Lee has been a member of the Alameda County Bar Association since 2019 and served on its Criminal Law Section Executive Committee from 2020 to 2023. She has served on the board of trustees of the Bernard E. Witkin Law Library Alameda County since 2020. She held numerous membership positions, from 2009 to 2016, including as president of the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area. Judge Lee served as treasurer of the AABA Law Foundation in 2014 and was a board member of the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, 2010-2013 and 2006-2009. She served on the board of the Asian Law Caucus (now Advancing Justice–Asian Law Caucus), 2006-2012, and on the board of the Community Youth Center in San Francisco, 2003-2005.

Born in Madison, Wisconsin, and raised in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Judge Lee received her Bachelor of Arts from Pomona College in 1994 and her Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Georgetown University Law Center in 1999. She was a corps member for Teach America for two years after graduating from Pomona. While in law school, she was a summer extern for the Honorable Helen Ginger Berrigan of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana in 1997. Following law school, she clerked for the Honorable Jerome Turner of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee from 1999 to 2000 and the Honorable Warren J. Ferguson of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit from 2001 to 2002.

Judge Lee is the recipient of several awards, including the Legal Professional of the Year, Korean American Bar Association of Northern California, 2019; the Unity Award, Minority Bar Coalition, 2016; “Best Lawyers Under 40,” National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, 2011; and the “Rising Star Award,” Minority Bar Coalition, 2009.

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California had 6,857 new case filings in calendar year 2023. The court is authorized 14 judgeships.

Appointed under Article III of the U.S. Constitution, federal district court judges are nominated by the president, confirmed by the Senate and serve lifetime appointments upon good behavior.

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