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Colorado Court of Appeals Chief Judge Steve Bernard announces retirement *Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice to appoint next Chief Judge*

DENVER – The Honorable Steve Bernard, a member of the Colorado Court of Appeals since July 2006 and its current Chief Judge, announced today that he will step down from the bench and retire on Jan. 1, 2022.

“Chief Judge Bernard’s contributions to the legal community and judiciary are too vast to list or even recollect,” Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Brian Boatright said. “Judge Bernard is a thoughtful and compassionate jurist who exhibits those same characteristics as the leader of the Court of Appeals. In every sense of the term, he truly is a consummate public servant. He is a friend and colleague who we will all miss seeing daily. I wish him well in his much-deserved retirement.”

Chief Justice Boatright also lauded Chief Judge Bernard for his management of the Court during the ongoing COVID pandemic.

“Chief Judge Bernard is to be commended for his exemplary leadership in guiding the Court of Appeals through this pandemic,” Chief Justice Boatright said. “He and the Court’s leadership team worked expeditiously to develop and employ the resources necessary to ensure the Court’s work was not hindered, and it continued to serve the public in the manner it always has.”

Judge Bernard, a native of Colorado Springs, earned his undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Colorado in 1975 and his law degree from CU in 1978. He worked as a prosecutor in Adams County for 26 years before becoming chief deputy district attorney in Weld County, where he served for a year-and-a-half before joining the Court.

“It’s hard to believe more than 40 years has passed since I began practicing law,” Chief Judge Bernard said. “Many things have changed; laws, court rules, technology and the like, but one thing hasn’t and that’s the people. In this life, I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with so many interesting and intelligent people that I consider myself the lucky one.”

Chief Judge Bernard added, “I have appreciated the opportunity afforded me by Governor Bill Owens in appointing me to the bench and Chief Justice Coats for naming me Chief Judge. Most of all, I have appreciated being a member of, and leader for, the extraordinary team at the Court of Appeals. Now, it’s my time to step aside and let the next generation lead the Court and make their difference.”

In the coming weeks, Chief Justice Boatright will meet with the judges of the Court of Appeals to discuss the Court’s ongoing needs and appoint Chief Judge Bernard’s successor.

The Court of Appeals consists of 22 judges who sit in three-member divisions to decide cases. The Chief Judge assigns judges to those divisions and rotates those assignments every four months. Established by statute to provide appellate review of cases properly brought before it, the Court of Appeals has initial jurisdiction, with some exceptions, over appeals from Colorado’s district courts, Denver Probate Court and Denver Juvenile Court. It also has specific appellate jurisdiction over decisions from many state administrative boards and agencies. Litigants whose cases are decided by the Court of Appeals may seek review by the Colorado Supreme Court.