



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Chief Judges Named in Berrien, Menominee & Wayne Counties**

LANSING, MI, AUGUST 4, 2015—The Michigan Supreme Court has appointed three new chief judges: Chief Judge Gary J. Bruce replaces retired Chief Judge Thomas E. Nelson in the Berrien Unified Trial Court; Chief Judge Jeffrey G. Barstow replaces retired Chief Judge William A. Hupy in Menominee Probate Court; and Chief Judge Freddie G. Burton, Jr. replaces Chief Judge Milton L. Mack, Jr. in Wayne County Probate Court. Judge Mack was appointed State Court Administrator in July.

“Chief judges provide the leadership needed to drive change and improve service to the public,” said Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. “Just as important, chief judges make the tough decisions needed to re-engineer court processes, streamline operations, improve efficiency, and share resources. Chief judges make sure that their courts are the best possible stewards of public resources.”

- Chief Judge Bruce is currently Chief Judge Pro Tem of the Berrien Unified Trial Court and presiding judge of the Criminal Division. First elected to the court in 1998, Chief Judge Bruce was most recently re-elected in 2010. Previously, he worked in private practice and also served as a Berrien County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney from 1983 to 1987. He received his law degree from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in 1980.
- Chief Judge Barstow was first elected to the bench in 1984, was re-elected last year to a sixth term, and also serves as Chief Judge of the 95A District Court in Menominee. Chief Judge Barstow earned his law degree from South Texas College of Law.
- Chief Judge Burton joined the Wayne County Probate Court in 1987 and was most recently re-elected in 2012. Before becoming a judge, he practiced law and served as a Wayne County Commissioner and a public administrator. He received his law degree from Wayne State University Law School.

Each judge will serve for the remainder of 2015 when the Supreme Court considers appointments for the new term in 2016.

Chief judges play a critically important role in helping to achieve the Supreme Court’s strategic objectives for the state’s 243 trial courts: measuring performance and adopting best practices; implementing technology and increasing access; and re-engineering court processes and improving service.

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