

California Courts News Transcript

Title: Governor Introduces Chief Justice Nominee

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California's governor Arnold Schwarzenegger says this was one of the most important decisions he's ever made in office: choosing a nominee to replace Chief Justice Ronald George, who's not seeking another term.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger *"And now it is my great pleasure to introduce a fine public servant, an outstanding Californian, a spectacular American, the next Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, Tani Cantil-Sakauye."*

Governor Schwarzenegger appointed Justice Cantil-Sakauye to the 3rd District Court of Appeal in Sacramento in 2005, after 14 years on the bench in Sacramento's superior and municipal courts. She also has experience as a deputy legislative secretary, a deputy legal affairs secretary, and she was a county prosecutor.

On this day in the Capitol's rotunda, surrounded by family, friends and dignitaries, she recalled her family's humble roots, and the opportunities she has been afforded.

Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye *"Is history remarkable, or what?" Applause.*

Justice Cantil-Sakauye will be the first Filipina-American on the state's high court. And the court will have a female majority for the first time in history.

Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye *"I am humbled by the experience, I am grateful for the opportunity, and I am mindful of the public trust; and the public can count on me to look and learn from the past, to address the immediate needs and priorities of the present, and to plan and prepare for the future."*

Chief Justice Ronald George congratulated the governor on his choice.

Chief Justice Ronald George: *"This is an exceptionally wise and far reaching decision that you have made. What in my view qualifies her most among the many wonderful qualities she has for this particular difficult task is her experience in the statewide administration of justice and her diplomatic skills.*

I know that you are exceptionally and eminently qualified to undertake these responsibilities and I wish you all the very best and the best to your family as well." Applause.

In addition to her legal scholarship, Justice Cantil-Sakauye is also known for her considerable administrative acumen. She has served on the Judicial Council for the last 2 years, and has successfully fulfilled many leadership roles.

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Hon. Lee Smalley Edmon, Los Angeles Superior Court: *“She’s kind and pleasant, but tough and strong; she’s just really going to bring such wonderful qualities to this job.”*

Administrative Director of the Courts Bill Vickrey says she’s perfect for this job.

“She brings decisiveness, diplomacy, she’s elegant and eloquent, but has the ability to make tough decisions, she has a backbone of steel, so she’s going to be a great leader for the branch and a great leader of the first among equals of our tremendous Supreme Court.”

If Justice Cantil-Sakauye’s nomination is approved by the Commission on Judicial Appointments, her name will be on the November ballot. There’s more on the nomination process on the court’s website.

I’m Leanne Kozak reporting in Sacramento for California Courts News.