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Magistrate Judge Susan E. Cox selected as presiding magistrate judge as Judge Maria Valdez's term comes to an end

Chicago, Ill.- Today U.S. Magistrate Judge Susan E. Cox assumed her new role as presiding magistrate judge as Judge Maria Valdez's term came to an end.

"Congratulations to Magistrate Judge Cox on her appointment as presiding magistrate judge. Judge Cox's diverse practice background as an attorney and her more than twelve of years of experience on our magistrate bench will tremendously benefit our court," said Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer.

Judge Susan E. Cox was selected as a magistrate judge for the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago on April 19, 2007 and assumed the bench on August 27, 2007. Prior to her appointment as magistrate judge, Judge Cox was the president and owner of The Law Offices of Susan E. Cox, Ltd., a litigation firm specializing in federal criminal defense and litigation. Judge Cox's litigation background includes three years as law clerk to U.S. District Judge Wayne R. Andersen, eight years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and thirteen years of civil practice, including substantial trial work in employment, commercial, and patent infringement cases. Judge Cox also served as an impartial Due Process Hearing Officer for the Illinois State Board of Education from June 2005 until June 2007, and as a Federal Defender panel attorney from 2003 until her judicial appointment. Judge Cox was also appointed by the federal court to assist in monitoring employment actions of the City of Chicago and served in that capacity from August 2005 until her appointment as magistrate judge. Judge Cox earned her undergraduate degree from Allegheny College and her law degree from Boston University Law School, where she was an editor of the Boston University Law Review.

“On behalf of our court, I want to thank Judge Valdez for her outstanding service to our court as presiding magistrate judge,” said Chief Judge Pallmeyer.

Magistrate Judge Valdez was first appointed presiding magistrate judge in 2016 and reappointed again by the court again in 2018.

Judge Valdez was appointed to the federal magistrate bench in 2005. Prior to becoming a federal magistrate judge, Judge Valdez was the Chicago Regional Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), concentrating her trial and appellate practice in the areas of constitutional law and the federal Voting Rights Act. She began her legal career in 1988 as a federal public defender in Los Angeles, California, representing indigent criminal defendants. Judge Valdez also worked as a senior associate at the law firm of Hughes, Socol, Piers, Resnick & Dym in Chicago, where she specialized in civil rights. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of California at Los Angeles and her law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law.

Pursuant to the court’s Internal Operating Procedures, the presiding magistrate judge is appointed by the chief judge of the District Court for a term of two years. Historically, magistrate judges have been nominated for more than one consecutive term but have stepped down after serving two terms as presiding magistrate judge.

Presiding magistrate judges coordinate the activities of the district’s magistrate judges, make duty assignments, monitor magistrate judge workloads, regularly meet with the chief district judge, and maintain liaison with the district judges and other court officers.

Magistrate judges perform a variety of duties for the court, including conducting preliminary proceedings in federal criminal cases and the trial and disposition of federal misdemeanor cases upon consent of the litigants. They conduct various pretrial matters and evidentiary proceedings upon referral from a district judge of the court and the trial and disposition of federal civil cases upon consent of the litigants.

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