



Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court
Darren Toms, Community Outreach Coordinator
Justice Center
1200 Ontario Street
Cleveland, OH 44113
Phone: 216.443.8635
dtoms@cuyahogacounty.us

**“Hon. John J. Russo Elected Administrative Judge of the
Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court”**

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For Immediate Use

(Cleveland) – Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Judge John Russo has been chosen by his colleagues as the next Administrative Judge of the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court.

Judge Russo was elected unanimously during the monthly meeting of the Court’s judges Wednesday afternoon. He will begin his term in January.

The administrative judge is responsible for appointing committees, presiding over the docket of the court’s General Division and speaking about court policy.

“I am excited about leading the Court forward in a collaborative approach with those involved in the Justice System. I want the opportunity to have a positive working relationship with all the work force that makes up the General Division of the Court of Common Pleas,” says Judge Russo.

Judge Russo has served on the Cuyahoga Common Pleas Court since January 2005. Prior to assuming the bench, Judge Russo practiced as a Civil and Criminal litigator for 12 years in his own law practice. Judge Russo earned his B.S.B.A Degree at John Carroll University and his J.D. Degree at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.

Judge Russo currently serves as Committee Co-Chairperson for the Ohio Judicial Conference Court Administration Committee, Committee Person for the Judicial Advisory Committee; Trustee of the Cleveland Marshall Law Alumni Association; Trustee of the Westshore Bar Association; Appointed by the Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court on the Joint Task Force on the Death Penalty and the Board of Commissioners of the Clients Security Fund of Ohio.

Judge Russo has served as Committee Chairperson for the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Security Committee for six years; Trustee of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association for three years and as Past President of the Legal Eagles St. Edward High School Community.

Judge Russo volunteers as a judge in the Ohio Mock Trial State & Local Competitions, is active in a teaching capacity for the Ohio Supreme Court Judicial College, the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association, the Ohio Association for Justice, the National Business Institute, the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and the Cleveland Marshall Alumni Association. He is a member of the Ohio State Bar Association, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Bar Association, Westshore Bar Association and Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association. Judge Russo has also been active with the Judicial Legislative Exchange Program, Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program, Polaris Advisory Board, and the 3R’s Program with the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and the Cleveland Municipal School District.

Judge Russo is a member of the American Inns of Court, Trustee of the Justinian Forum and the Italians Sons and Daughters of America. Judge Russo is active in the Mock Trial Program at St. Edward High School, teaching Street Law class at St. Edward High School and active with Senior Career Day. Judge Russo has also received the honor of being named The Legal Eagle Man of The Year. He has been active as a volunteer Coach in Westlake and at St. Bernadette grade school for 18 years and is also active on the Parish Council at St. Bernadette. As a member of the bench, Judge Russo participates with all schools as a guest speaker and hosts various middle school and high school age children as they come to Court and experience "a day in the life of a judge."

Judge Russo was nominated by Judge Michael Donnelly who says, "Judge Russo has all the talents necessary to become a great leader of this court. He is honest, fair and listens to all sides before he makes a decision. I expect great accomplishments during his tenure as Administrative Judge."

Current Administrative/Presiding Judge Nancy A. Fuerst will resume her daily judicial duties and regular case assignments on January 1, 2014 after four terms as Administrative Judge. Under Judge Fuerst's leadership, prison commitments from Cuyahoga County markedly decreased from 25% to 17% through the use of evidence-based practices and availability of expanded community programs. Judge Fuerst is known statewide as a proponent for behavioral health, community corrections and regionalization of services.

Judge Fuerst is credited with establishing e-Filing and other technological improvements within the Court's case management system. Judge Fuerst also expanded the preparation and publication of court performance measurements, most notably CourTools and led the Court to adopt a permanent Commercial Docket.

"It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as Administrative Judge for the Court these past four years with the broad support of my colleagues in the court and fellow administrative judges. Together, we have made significant improvements in our Court. I warmly congratulate Judge Russo and offer him my full support as he brings fresh ideas and energy to build upon the progress we've made," says Judge Fuerst.

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