

Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby
Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals



The Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigsby was appointed Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals in March 2017. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby chairs the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration for the District of Columbia court system, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby served as President of the National Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and as Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) for the 2023-2024 term. She Chairs the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) Committee of Public Trust and Confidence in State Courts and Chairs the National CCJ/COSCA AI in State Courts Rapid Response Teams. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby Chairs the national AI Governance and Ethics work group of the NCSC/TRI AI Consortium for Law and Courts. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby led the establishment of the DC Courts AI Taskforce and also the establishment of the DC Courts Regulatory Reform Taskforce. Under her leadership of the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration, the DC Courts have been at the forefront of innovations to improve the administration of justice and promote access to justice.

Prior to being designated Chief Judge, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was nominated by President George W. Bush in August 2006 to serve as an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Before that, she was nominated by President William Jefferson Clinton to serve as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia from 2000-2006, and she previously served as a Magistrate Judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia from 1995-2000.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby graduated from Duke University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and received the Duke University Presidential Leadership Award. Following graduation from Duke University, she was selected to be one of twelve Public Affairs Fellows of the Coro Foundation in San Francisco, California. She earned her law degree from Howard University School of Law, graduating in the top five percent of her class. While in law school, she served as the Lead Articles Editor of the Howard Law Journal and served as the Co-Captain for the Charles Hamilton Houston Moot Court Team.

Following law school, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was an associate at the law firm of Hogan Lovells US LLP (formerly Hogan and Hartson) in Washington, D.C., where she litigated commercial, real estate, employment discrimination, and education matters before state and federal courts and administrative agencies. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby later joined the District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General (formerly the Office of the Corporation Counsel), where she served as Special Counsel, working as part of the senior management team. She then served as the Deputy of the Family Services Division, where she managed the Division's 65 attorneys and support staff, responsible for handling child abuse and neglect, child support enforcement, and domestic violence cases.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has taught Trial Advocacy at Harvard Law School and Professional Responsibility as an Adjunct Professor at the David A. Clarke School of Law at the University of the District of Columbia. She has also taught legal ethics at Georgetown University Law Center. Additionally, she has taught Continuing Legal Education courses for the District of Columbia Bar.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has trained judges from other countries in conjunction with the National

Center for State Courts and the United States Department of State. She has lectured and trained judges around the world in North America, Central America, the Caribbean, South America, Africa and Europe on topics including: access to justice, effective case management, appellate advocacy, effective judicial writing, judicial leadership and artificial intelligence in courts and the legal profession. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was selected by the American Board of Trial Advocates to lecture in Milan, Italy and Frankfurt, Germany.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has held offices in several judicial organizations. As an Associate Judge of the D.C. Court of Appeals, she chaired the District of Columbia Courts' Standing Committee on Fairness and Access, and she served on the District of Columbia's Access to Justice Commission. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby served on the Board of Directors for the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts and also formerly served as the Consortium's President and Moderator. She is a former Chair of the Washington Bar Association's Judicial Council. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby is a Past President of the National Association of Women Judges. In addition to her work with the National Association of Women Judges, she also serves on the Board of Managerial Trustees for the International Association of Women Judges and served as Chair from 2010-2014. In March of 2006, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby represented the IAWJ at a Judicial Conference in Turin, Italy, where she delivered a speech on Racial Equality in the Workplace at the Lavoro dei Migranti e Discriminazione Convegno. In 2003, she traveled to Johannesburg, South Africa to participate in a conference of the African Judicial Network. In 2014, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby led the delegation of women judges from the United States at the Biennial Conference of the International Association of Women Judges in Tanzania. In 2017, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby presented a paper at the Summit of Women Judges and Prosecutors on Human Trafficking and Organized Crime hosted by the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences at the Vatican. Through her work with these organizations, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has sought to promote the rule of law and access to justice.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has received awards for her legal, judicial and community service, including the 2023 Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award, the American Bar Association's 2020 Margaret Brent Award honoring women in the legal profession and the National Association of Women Judges 2020 Lady Justice Award. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was named the Washington Bar Association's 2020 Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit recipient. She also received the Business and Professional Women's League's Sojourner Truth Award, the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia's 2014 Star of the Bar Award, the National Bar Association's Heman Sweatt Champion of Justice Award, the Greater Washington Area Women Lawyers Division's (GWAC) Charlotte E. Ray Award, and the National Association of Women Judges' Justice Vaino Spencer Leadership Award. In 2017, she was inducted into the Washington Bar Association Hall of Fame. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was named 2018 Woman Lawyer of the Year by the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was born in the District of Columbia. She is married to Judge Robert R. Rigsby, Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, former Attorney General for the District of Columbia, Retired Military Judge, and Retired Colonel of the United States Army. They have one adult son.