

**The Hon. G. Helen Whitener, Justice
Washington State Supreme Court**

Justice G. Helen Whitener was appointed to the Washington State Supreme Court in April 2020 and she was elected by the voters to retain her position on the State Supreme Court in November 2020.

Prior to her appointment to Washington State's highest court, Justice Whitener served as a Pierce County Superior Court judge. Justice Whitener also served as a judge on the Washington State Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals and as a pro-tem judge in Pierce County District Court and the City of Tacoma Municipal Court. Before becoming a judge, Justice Whitener litigated both civil and criminal cases for 14 years as first a prosecutor and defense attorney and later as a managing partner of the law firm of Whitener Rainey Writt PS.

Justice Whitener is well recognized by the legal community for her commitment to justice and equity. In January 2021, Justice Whitener received the Western Region of the National Black Law Students Association Judge of the Year Award. The 400 Years of African American History Commission has also honored Justice Whitener, naming her a 2020 Distinguished 400 Awardee. Additionally in 2020, Justice Whitener received the Washington Women Lawyers Chief Justice Mary Fairhurst Passing the Torch Award and she received the International Association of LGBTQ+ Judges President's Award. In 2019, Justice Whitener was awarded the Washington State Bar Association's Charles Z. Smith Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award, the King County Washington Women Lawyers President's Award, the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association Service to Diversity Award, and the Seattle University School of Law and Women's Law Caucus Woman of the Year Award. In 2018, Justice Whitener received the Pierce County Washington Women Lawyers Woman of the Year Award.

Justice Whitener chairs the state's Annual Judicial Conference Planning Committee, the purpose of which is to provide yearly education related to the improvement of the judicial system and the administration of justice for all Washington state judges. Justice Whitener is also the Appellate Court Representative to the Washington Supreme Court Interpreter Commission, and she is the former co-chair of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission. Justice Whitener serves on the Board of Directors of the International Association of LGBT Judges as well as on the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee. Additionally, Justice Whitener is a member of the International Association of Women Judges, the National Association of Women Judges, and the American Judges Association. She is also a former chair and co-chair of the Washington State Superior Court Judges' Association—Equity and Fairness Committee. Justice Whitener is a judicial member of Washington Women Lawyers and is a judicial member of the Advisory Council for the QLaw Association of Washington.

Justice Whitener is the first Black woman to serve on the Washington Supreme Court, the fourth immigrant-born Justice and the first Black LGBT judge in the State of Washington. Justice Whitener is often invited to speak to organizations locally, nationally, and internationally on human rights, access to justice, and the responsibility of the judiciary to ensure the right of all who appear before the court to basic dignity and respect in judicial proceedings.

Justice Whitener was born and raised in the Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago. In 2015, at the request of the United States Embassy, Judge Whitener visited her home country to speak on human rights. In 2016, Judge Whitener gave a TEDxPOS Talk entitled, "Claiming your

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identity by understanding your self-worth” where she discusses the empowerment of embracing respect and how it informs her philosophy and approach to living.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57FMau29O_g

Justice Whitener earned her B.A. degree in Business Administration and International Marketing from Baruch College, New York, and received her J.D. degree from Seattle University School of Law. Justice Whitener lives in Pierce County with her wife, attorney Lynn Rainey (CSM-US Army Ret).