



Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan

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Governor Walz Appoints Justice Natalie Hudson to Serve as Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court

Governor Walz appoints Karl Procaccini to serve as Associate Justice

[ST. PAUL, MN] – Governor Tim Walz today announced the appointment of Justice Natalie Hudson to serve as chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Justice Hudson will fill the vacancy that will occur upon the retirement of Chief Justice Lorie Gildea in October. Governor Walz also announced the appointment of Karl Procaccini to serve as associate justice. Procaccini will fill the vacancy that will occur upon Justice Hudson’s elevation to chief justice.

“Justice Hudson is one of our state’s most experienced jurists. She has a strong reputation as a leader and consensus builder,” said Governor Walz. **“I know that she will use her decades of judicial experience and deep understanding of our justice system to lead the Judicial Branch with a steady hand and strong conviction. I am confident that she will advance a vision that promotes fairness and upholds the dignity of all Minnesotans.”**

“Justice Hudson’s historic appointment is another important first in our state’s history that will continue the work of opening doors and moving towards justice for all Minnesotans,” said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. **“She is a distinguished and principled leader who has dedicated her career to serving the people of Minnesota and has never wavered in that commitment.”**

“I am greatly honored to be selected as the next chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, and I thank Governor Walz and his team for their consideration,” said Justice Natalie Hudson of the Minnesota Supreme Court. **“This is a tremendous responsibility that I approach with humility and resolve, seeking to continue the work of my predecessors in administering one of the best state court systems in the nation, and always seeking to deliver the most accessible, highest-quality court services for the citizens of Minnesota.”**

“Justice Hudson is an outstanding choice to serve as Minnesota’s next chief justice,” said Chief Justice Lorie Gildea of the Minnesota Supreme Court. **“I have had the privilege of working closely with Justice Hudson on the Supreme Court for nearly eight years, and I have been impressed by her deep knowledge of the law, her collegial spirit, and her unparalleled work ethic. With more than 20 years of service as an appellate court judge, Justice Hudson is among the most talented and respected jurists in the state, and she is the perfect person to lead the Judicial Branch in the years ahead. I look forward to working closely with Justice Hudson to make this leadership transition as smooth as possible for our court and the Judicial Branch.”**

“I am delighted to learn that Governor Walz has appointed Justice Natalie Hudson to serve as chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court,” said Judge Wilhelmina Wright of the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota and former Minnesota Supreme Court justice. **“As a former colleague, I know she brings to this leadership role her keen intellect, her broad legal experience, and her respect for the rule of law. Importantly, she understands that the decisions of the Minnesota Supreme Court affect the lives of everyday people.”**

“What good news that Natalie Hudson will be our next chief justice! During the five years we served together, I learned that she is principled, thoughtful, accessible, and enjoys a good laugh,” said Justice David Lillehaug, retired Minnesota Supreme Court justice. **“Few people have more experience in the halls of appellate law, but her grounding is in community, listening to people from all walks of life. Under her leadership, the court will continue to be a place of frequent unanimity with occasional, respectful dissent.”**

About Natalie E. Hudson

Justice Natalie Hudson is an associate justice on the Minnesota Supreme Court, having been appointed to this position in October 2015 by Governor Mark Dayton. Hudson previously served as a judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals for thirteen years. She also practiced criminal

appellate law with the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General for eight years and served as the St. Paul city attorney. Early in her career, she represented indigent clients as a staff attorney with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services.

Hudson served as a member of the original Minnesota Supreme Court Racial Bias Task Force from 1991–1993 and later served on the task force’s implementation committee. Her other community involvement includes serving on the advisory board for Minnesota Women Lawyers and the advisory board for the University of Minnesota Law School. She also participated on the Warren E. Burger Inn of Court for many years. She is a member of the Judicial Division of the American Bar Association, the Minnesota State Bar Association, and the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers. Hudson earned her B.A. from Arizona State University and her J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School.

“With steadiness, humility, and an exceptional legal mind, Karl Procaccini navigated Minnesota through one of the most difficult periods in our history,” said Governor Walz. **“Karl understands how legal decisions impact the lives of Minnesotans. There is no one more prepared for the rigors and challenges that come with this important position. I know that Karl will continue to improve the lives of Minnesotans in this important role.”**

“Karl Procaccini is a deeply kind person who brilliantly and tenaciously tackled every challenge thrown his way, these past four-plus years,” said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. **“Time and time again, he has proven to be courageous, honest, fair, compassionate, and dedicated to the rule of law. Lives across the state of Minnesota have been changed for the better through his work, and I look forward to watching him continue to serve Minnesotans and uphold justice in this role.”**

“I am humbled by the Governor’s decision and grateful for this opportunity to serve Minnesotans as an associate justice,” said Karl Procaccini. **“I will strive to maintain the Supreme Court’s high standards, protect equal justice for all, and uphold the rule of law.”**

“Karl Procaccini is an outstanding choice for associate justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court,” said Judge Michael Davis of the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota. **“He has impeccable credentials as a lawyer, and he will be a splendid addition to the court. As a justice, Karl will continue the legacy of Judge Diana Murphy, who he and Justice Margaret Chutich both clerked for. I am ecstatic about his selection.”**

“That Karl Procaccini was destined for great things has been clear for a while,” said Justice David Lillehaug, retired Minnesota Supreme Court justice. **“He’s a brilliant lawyer who**

clerked for giants in the federal judiciary, practiced in one of Minnesota’s best firms, and then served as the Governor’s counselor during challenging times. He’ll bring to the court strong intelligence, great integrity, and a calm temperament.”

“I applaud the historic appointment of Justice Natalie Hudson to chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court and the appointment of Karl Procaccini as the next associate justice,” said Erin Sindberg Porter, chair of the Commission on Judicial Selection. **“It has been an honor and privilege to participate in this appointments process with the Governor, and I am confident that each appointee will serve with distinction.”**

About Karl Procaccini

Karl Procaccini teaches law at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. Procaccini previously served as general counsel in the Office of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, leading the office’s legal and appointments team. In his role as general counsel, Procaccini navigated complex legal issues and managed litigation across state government. Prior to his state service, he was a partner at Greene Espel PLLP, where his practice focused on litigation, investigations, and global compliance counseling. Procaccini has also taught at William Mitchell College of Law, and he has been published on topics including clemency and attorney-client privilege. At the start of his legal career, Procaccini clerked for Judge Diana E. Murphy on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals and Chief Judge Michael J. Davis on the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota.

In recognition of his work on the state’s response to COVID-19, Procaccini was named a 2020 Attorney of the Year by Minnesota Lawyer, and he received the 2021 Public Attorney Award of Excellence from the Public Law Section of the Minnesota State Bar Association. Procaccini is a fellow of the American Bar Foundation and has been recognized as a North Star Lawyer for his pro bono work. He is also a past chair of the Minnesota State Bar Association’s International Business Law Section, and he has served as the executive board president and advisory board co-chair of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Lawyer Chapter of the American Constitution Society. Since 2019, he has volunteered as a writing coach for Minneapolis middle school students through the Reader/Writer Program. Procaccini earned his A.B. from Harvard College, LL.M. in International and Comparative Law from the American University in Cairo, and J.D. from Harvard Law School.