

Chief Judge of the State of New York



Janet Di Fiore

July 11, 2022

Dear Colleagues:

Serving as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York has been a high honor and the greatest privilege of my professional life.

As Chief Judge, I set out to bring operational and decisional excellence to every level of our court system while leading our state's high court in developing a strong, predictable body of law to guide our communities, our economy and the personal and professional lives of our citizenry.

Over the past seven years, thanks to the hard work and skill of many people, we have made incredible progress to achieve these goals, eliminating what many thought to be an intractable statewide backlog of cases, and creating a new culture that is laser-focused on efficient case management and the delivery of high-quality court services. Even when confronted with an unprecedented public health crisis, the New York State courts not only remained open and functioning but were transformed from a massive, complex, in-person operating system into an effective virtual model capable of meeting the demand for our services. And now that the pandemic has eased, we are actively combining the lessons of the Excellence Initiative with the innovations of the pandemic to help us manage our dockets and deliver our services more efficiently and effectively than ever before.

And so, with the foundational principles of the Excellence Initiative now fully integrated into our operating model; with presumptive ADR an integral component of our civil case management system; with our historic work to achieve racial equity and meaningful inclusion among the members of our court family well underway; and with our access to justice services expanded and more fully funded, it is time for me to move on to the next chapter of my professional life.

There are so many people to thank for the extraordinary progress, reform and innovation we have achieved over these seven years: my colleagues on the Court of Appeals and the talented, highly-skilled professional staff at the Court who contribute to the positive development of the law; our extraordinary Chief Administrative Judge, Lawrence K. Marks, whose knowledge, skill and steady devotion to the provision of high quality justice services is unmatched; the Presiding Justices of the Appellate Division, Rolando T. Acosta, Hector D. LaSalle, Elizabeth A. Garry and Gerald J. Whalen, who have served with me on the Administrative Board and led their respective courts in delivering outstanding appellate services across the state; the entire hard-working judicial and non-judicial leadership team of the Unified Court System; the many talented and dedicated judges who

make up our appellate and trial bench, including our town and village justices across the state; the members of our non-judicial staff who have inspired me every day of my service, particularly during those dark days and months of the pandemic when their courage, commitment and indefatigable spirit lifted all of us to a higher level of performance, and without whom we could not have weathered the storm; our court officers who protect us and keep us safe each day; and, of course, the professional bar whose support and counsel have been instrumental to our progress.

On August 31, 2022 I will step down as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York and move on to the next chapter in life deeply proud of what we have been able to accomplish together, and forever grateful to each of you for your commitment to excellence. Excellence is a mindset, one that is now fully integrated into the fabric of the New York State courts, leaving us well-prepared to meet the future justice needs of every lawyer, litigant and court user who comes to our courthouses seeking fair, timely and effective justice services.

With grateful appreciation and respect for all you have done,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janet DiFiore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Janet" is written in a simple, connected script. The last name "DiFiore" features a prominent, large loop for the "i" and a long, sweeping tail for the "ore" that extends to the right.