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**LINDA THOMAS, CHIEF JUSTICE OF FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF  
APPEALS AT DALLAS, ANNOUNCES PLANS TO STEP DOWN; IS LONGEST  
SERVING JUDGE IN TEXAS**

(Dallas) September 8, 2009 --The Honorable Linda B. Thomas, Chief Justice of the Fifth District Court of Appeals at Dallas and the longest serving judge in Texas, announced today that she is leaving the bench effective October 31, 2009. She notified Gov. Rick Perry and the Fifth District Court of Appeals this morning.

“It has been a great privilege to serve the people in this geographic region, but after nearly 31 years on the bench, I am ready to pursue the next phase of my legal career,” said Justice Thomas.

Justice Thomas plans to be actively involved in mediations and arbitrations. In addition, she will work with attorneys and their clients so that people in crisis, particularly families, are able to resolve their conflicts outside the courtroom. “I plan to offer my assistance to help people move toward resolutions in a way that allows them to control their own destinies. I particularly want to help families with children so that they can avoid the litigation process.”

Justice Thomas also will continue teaching at Southern Methodist University’s Dedman School of Law, where she currently holds the position of Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law.

Justice Thomas, who has led the Fifth District Court of Appeals for almost fifteen years, has served the people of Texas in several judicial capacities. Her judicial path began when she was elected in 1978 to serve as judge of the 256<sup>th</sup> District Court in Dallas, a family court. After two full terms of hearing family law matters, she ran for and was elected in 1986 to the Fifth District Court of Appeals at Dallas. She was elected to and became Chief Justice in 1995, the first woman in the Court’s 101-year history to hold this position.

“No one has given and sacrificed more for the good of this state and its judiciary than Chief Justice Thomas,” commented John Cayce, Chief Justice of the Second District Court of Appeals at Fort Worth. “The people of the State of Texas are far better off today thanks to her many years of public service. She will be deeply missed.”

In recognition of her contributions, she has received numerous awards and honors, including: the Sam Emison Award (1990) in recognition of her meritorious contributions to family law; the Dallas Bar Foundation Fellows Award (2005) in honor of her distinguished legal career and civil contributions; the Maura Award (2004) in recognition of her significant contributions to improving the lives of women and children; and the Outstanding Profile Award (2005) for dedication, mentoring, and support of individuals in pursuit of public service.

Justice Thomas received her B.A from the University of Texas at Arlington and her J.D. from Southern Methodist University. In 1992, she received the UTA Distinguished Alumni Award and in 2008, received a Distinguished Alumni Award for Judicial Service from Southern Methodist University’s Dedman School of Law.

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