

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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GOVERNOR PATAKI NOMINATES GRAFFEO TO COURT OF APPEALS

Governor George E. Pataki today nominated Appellate Division Justice Victoria A. Graffeo to serve as an Associate Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals.

"Justice Graffeo has greatly distinguished herself throughout her diverse career in public service, and I am confident that she will make an outstanding addition to the New York State Court of Appeals," Governor Pataki said. "Her keen intellect, the extraordinary breadth of her professional background including service in all three branches of government and her unwavering commitment to the rule of law will enable her to make an enduring contribution to our State's highest court and the people of New York."

Graffeo presently serves as a Justice of the Appellate Division, Third Department. She previously has served as a State Supreme Court Justice for the Third Judicial Department, Solicitor General and Counsel to the New York State Attorney General, and Chief Counsel to the Assembly Minority Leader. Prior to that, she maintained a private law practice that specialized in litigation, matrimonial and family law, real property law and contract law.

"I am deeply honored by Governor Pataki's nomination and will work hard every day to live up to the confidence the Governor has placed in me," Justice Graffeo said. "I look forward to joining a distinguished Court and working with outstanding jurists whom I respect and admire."

Court of Appeals Chief Judge Judith Kaye said, "Justice Graffeo has earned high regard among her peers as an excellent jurist and a valuable colleague. We are all looking forward to welcoming her at the Court of Appeals. Governor Pataki, for the third time, has made a terrific choice for the Court of Appeals."

Justice Graffeo is a graduate of the State University of New York at Oneonta, and she received her law degree from Albany Law School of Union University in 1977. She was admitted to the New York State Bar in 1978.

Justice Graffeo was rated "Well Qualified" by the New York State Bar Association, "Highly Recommended" by both the Women's Bar Association and the New York State Trial Lawyers Association and "Recommended" by the Association of the Bar of the City of New York the highest ratings awarded by these organizations.

Justice Graffeo, whose appointment requires confirmation by the State Senate, was selected from seven candidates recommended by the Commission on Judicial Nomination. The salary for an Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals is \$151,200.

Justice Graffeo, 48, and her husband, Edward Winders, reside in Guilderland, Albany County.

"I want to thank the Commission on Judicial Nomination for recommending to me seven superlative

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candidates to consider for this high honor," Governor Pataki said. "The members of the Commission and its staff deserve our thanks and appreciation for their fine job."

Justice Graffeo will be the third Court of Appeals appointment made by Governor Pataki, following his previous nominations of Judge Richard Wesley in 1996 and Judge Albert Rosenblatt in 1998.

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