

New York

SERVING THE BENCH AND BAR SINCE 1888

VOLUME 27—NO. 14

1/22/02

TODAY'S NEWS

Update

Justice A. Gail Prudenti, a former Surrogate and administrative judge, who was appointed by Governor Pataki to the Appellate Division, Second Department, in October, was the only person interviewed by Governor Pataki's screening panel last Thursday to become that court's presiding justice. With the First Department's screening panel set to interview candidates for presiding justice on Thursday, sources said that a likely leading contender is Justice Milton L. Williams. Justice Williams, 69, if appointed, would be the third of the last four presiding justices in the First Department to have to step down after one year because of the state's age requirement. The fourth served as presiding justice for only two years before turning 70. Other potentially strong candidates in the First Department are reportedly Justices Richard T. Andrias, John T. Buckley and George D. Marlow. Meanwhile, speculation abounds as to whether the Governor has an outside candidate because of the creation of new 16th seat in the First Department in September. Insiders say, though, that Bronx Supreme Court Administrative Judge Luis A. Gonzalez may be in line for an associate justice appointment either to the open seat in the First Department should an insider be elevated, or in the Second Department should Justice Prudenti, 48, be appointed as presiding justice.

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NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2002

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TODAY'S NEWS

Update

Justice A. Gail Prudenti, in a long anticipated move, was appointed the presiding justice of the Appellate Division, Second Department, yesterday by Governor Pataki. The Governor's action capped a meteoric rise for Justice Prudenti, 48, who in the last two years was appointed by the Office of Court Administration as the administrative judge of the Supreme Court in Suffolk County, and then last October elevated by the Governor to the Appellate Division. Meanwhile, the Governor's screening panel for the First Department has interviews set for next Thursday with four First Department justices for the presiding justice post there: Richard T. Andrias, John T. Buckley, Eugene L. Nardelli, the court's acting presiding justice, and Milton L. Williams.