

PRESS RELEASE

United States District Judge Rebecca Beach Smith, the first female Constitutional federal judge in Virginia, has become the first female Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, one of the thirteen original judicial districts in the United States. Chief Judge Smith, a native of Hopewell, Virginia, was appointed to the federal bench in 1989 by President George H. W. Bush. She is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the College of William and Mary, received her Masters Degree in City Planning from the University of Virginia, and graduated first in her law school class at the Marshall-Wythe School of Law, College of William and Mary, serving as Executive Editor of the Law Review and being elected to Order of the Coif. Prior to her appointment as a United States District Judge, Chief Judge Smith was engaged in the private practice of law and then served as a United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia from 1985 to 1989. As Chief Judge, her chambers will remain in Norfolk, Virginia, but she will preside over the federal courts in Alexandria, Richmond, Norfolk, and Newport News. A Chief Judge has not been located in the Norfolk Division of the court for 26 years. The seven-year term as Chief Judge became effective December 4, 2011.