



**SNOHOMISH COUNTY'S NEWEST
SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE IS SWORN IN
BY CHIEF JUSTICE - LYNNWOOD TIMES**

EVERETT—The honorable Judge Whitney M Rivera, Snohomish County's newest [Superior Court Judge](#), was officially sworn in Thursday, May 10, by Washington State Chief Justice [Steven Gonzalez](#)



The honorable Judge Whitney M Rivera, Snohomish County's newest Superior Court Judge, was officially sworn in Thursday, May 10, by Washington State Chief Justice Steven Gonzalez. Lynnwood Times | Kienan Briscoe.

Judge Rivera replaces Judge Anita Farris who retired from the bench on April 30. Coincidentally it was Judge Farris who first hired Judge Rivera as her law clerk 18 years ago.

Judge Farris joked that her decision to hire Rivera was set in stone before she even walked into her office for the interview not simply because of her qualifications, which were impressive none-the-less, but because her resume was printed on fine linen paper within a gold inlaid folder.

“That stellar resume, created from hard work and attention to detail was a harbinger, a foreshadow of the stellar career about to begin,” **said Judge Farris.** “Whitney was not a normal attorney; she was a super star. She tried case after case, bringing motion after motion, she was always attacking the toughest of issues. Whitney became the epitome of grace under fire.”

A crowd of nearly 200 people packed into the Snohomish County courthouse to witness the ceremony, which was led by Judge Paul Thompson, including elected officials, attorneys, judges from around the region, community leaders, and members of the public.

Thursday's attendance was quite a step up as far as attendance and production. When Judge Rivera was sworn in to the Edmonds Municipal Court during the pandemic, her

ceremony was conducted with only two other judges, wearing masks, and standing six feet apart.



The honorable judges attending the swearing in of Whitney M Rivera, Snohomish County's newest Superior Court Judge, on Thursday, May 10, 2024. Lynnwood Times | Kienan Briscoe.

In attendance on Thursday was Washington State Senator June Robinson, Snohomish County Sheriff Susanna Johnson, Edmonds Mayor Mike Rosen, Lynnwood City Council President George Hurst, Edmonds City Councilman Will Chen, Snohomish County Clerk Heidi Percy, Snohomish County Prosecutor Jason Cummings, Lynnwood City Councilman David Parshall, Arlington Mayor Dan Vanney, and Mountlake Terrace City Councilman Steve Woodard, to name a few.

Before Judge Rivera swore her oath, and was subsequently robed by her best friend Jenni, her brother D.J., and her mother Carol. Judge Linda Coburn shared a few words about her experience working Rivera when working for the [Snohomish County Public Defender Association](#).

“Every step of her [Rivera’s] professional career she has worked and tried to make the system better,” **said Judge Coburn.** “She has always demonstrated a passion for the law, getting it right, making sure other people got it right – whether she was defending the indigent or presiding over trial.”

Washington State Governor Jay Inslee first [announced last month](#) that Judge Rivera, who was serving as Edmonds Municipal Court Presiding Judge, had been appointed to the Snohomish County Superior Court to replace Judge Farris.

“Whitney Rivera is a tireless, well-respected and experienced judicial officer and lawyer, and she is well prepared to serve the Snohomish County community in this role,” **said Gov. Inslee.** “I’m pleased that she will bring her integrity, work ethic, experience and compassion to the Snohomish County Superior Court bench.”



The honorable Judge Whitney M Rivera being roped by her family on Thursday, May 10, 2024. Lynnwood Times | Kienan Briscoe.

Judge Rivera had served as the sole Edmonds Municipal Court Judge since November of 2020, hearing all criminal matters, traffic infractions, and administrative appeals, as well as leading the management of the court’s operations in the city. She also helped

bolster the city's Community Court, which seeks to address many underlying issues that can cause an individual to become involved in the court system in the first place.

Before Judge Rivera was appointed to Edmonds Municipal Court, and subsequently winning an election in 2021 to retain her seat, she served as a public defender with the Snohomish County Public Defender Association for 12 years, handling misdemeanor and felony cases, while holding a supervisory role in the misdemeanor unit.

Judge Rivera also served as an attorney at law for the Washington Appellate Project, representing indigent individuals on their direct appeals from convictions.

"Throughout her career, Rivera has been recognized by various organizations for her outstanding contributions, including the most recent Presidential Award in 2023 from the District and Municipal Court Judges Association," **Gov. Inslee's Office wrote in a press release Tuesday.**

In addition to her career in law and justice, Judge Rivera served on the Edmonds College Foundation Board since 2021, where she focused her volunteerism on student scholarships and grant requests.

In 2022, Judge Rivera was appointed to the Board of the Hazel Miller Foundation, which provides grants to organizations focused on a broad range of services, including education, youth services, diversity, and poverty alleviation. And, in 2023, she was appointed to the Edmonds Food Bank Board, which partners with the Edmonds Community Court to assist with food insecurity.

Judge Rivera's interest in law began at an early age. She shared Thursday that she wanted to be an attorney since being a child not knowing "that's just what people tell kids who are annoying and talk too much," she joked.

While enrolled in an introduction into law class at Edmonds Woodway High School, where she was also Captain of her soccer team, she attended a mock trial where she sat behind the bench at south district court in Judge Brian's courtroom.

"Judges have the ability to change people's lives and not just in our decisions in the courtroom but in what they choose to do," **said Judge Rivera.** "I just want to thank everyone. I'm looking forward to serving with humility. I do see this as not just as a privilege but also a place of service, to serve with empathy, while recognizing humanity."

She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington and her law degree from Boston College Law School.

Judge Rivera thanked everyone in attendance at Thursday's ceremony, particularly her former peers at the Edmonds Municipal Court, her fellow board members at the Edmonds Food Bank, and the Hazel Miller Foundation.