

# *News Advisory*

From the Rhode Island Judiciary



## **Statement from Judge Melissa A. Long**

**December 18, 2020:** *Statement of Superior Court Associate Justice Melissa Austin Long on her confirmation by the General Assembly as Associate Justice, Rhode Island Supreme Court.*

“After Governor Raimondo informed me that she would be nominating me to serve on the Rhode Island Supreme Court, the first call I made was to my father, retired Lieutenant Colonel Melvin J. Austin.”

“Born in 1944, my father attended segregated schools alongside other Black children in Nottoway County, Virginia, prior to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. A combat helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, he used the G.I. Bill to become a dentist and made a career in the Army. My father and I spoke about my late mother Carole, who, at the age of 21, left her factory job and everyone she knew in her small town in central Pennsylvania to join the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps. She ultimately became a registered nurse and mother to me and my three siblings, all of whom went on to work as public servants.”

“I wanted my father to understand that I would always remember the hardships he and my mother endured, as well as the sacrifices they made to ensure a life of opportunity for their children. I believe this appreciation makes me a better jurist. Today, I stand on their shoulders.”

“As an Associate Justice of the Superior Court, a nominee to our state Supreme Court, and a woman of color, I have been heartened by the support and testimony of leaders in our community such as Judges Rogeriee Thompson, Ed Clifton, and Melissa DuBose; Senator Harold Metts; Representatives Anastasia Williams and Joe Almeida; Jim Vincent; Matty Lopes; and countless other Rhode Islanders. Today, I stand on their shoulders, too.”

“I thank the Leadership and Members of the General Assembly for their votes. I am honored by the responsibility that has been placed in me. I pledge to the people of Rhode Island always to work hard and with humility, to strive to emulate the qualities of our most admired jurists, and to honor the legacy of those who blazed the trail before me.”

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