Judge nominated for federal court

by Greg Moran

SAN DIEGO - President George W. Bush on Monday nominated the presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court for a seat on the San Diego federal court.

Judge Janis Sammartino was nominated to fill the vacancy created by the death of Judge Judith Keep in September 2004. The Senate must confirm her nomination before she could take the seat.

Judge Janis Sammartino

She was one of 11 federal judges for both the district and appellate courts that Bush nominated Monday.

"I'm honored for this nomination from this president and happy," Sammartino said. She declined to comment further.

Sammartino, 56, is in the middle of a two-year term as the presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court. Her colleagues elected her in 2006.

The San Diego court is the second-largest in the state, with 154 judges and court commissioners. Gov. Pete Wilson appointed her to the bench in 1994. She has also worked as a civil judge and in family courts, among other assignments.

Before becoming a judge, she worked in the San Diego City Attorney's Office from 1976 to 1994. She eventually rose to the position of senior chief deputy city attorney.

Former City Attorney John Witt, who was Sammartino's boss, said Monday that she is a "worthy choice" for the position.

It was unclear how soon the Senate would vote on Sammartino's nomination.

The Senate Judiciary Committee first reviews nominations before the full Senate votes on them, and that could be a lengthy process.

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