

# Gov Shumlin Appoints Judge Harold Eaton To Supreme Court

MONTPELIER – October 13, 2014 - Gov. Peter Shumlin announced today that he will appoint Judge Harold “Duke” Eaton, Jr., to serve on the Vermont Supreme Court. Judge Eaton fills the seat left open by Justice Geoffrey Crawford’s appointment to the federal district court.

Judge Eaton has served as a trial court judge since 2004, when he was appointed by former Gov. Jim Douglas. Previously, he was in private practice for 21 years, where he handled a variety of civil matters, including commercial litigation, insurance defense, and workers compensation cases. He began his legal career as a deputy state’s attorney in Chittenden County. After leaving the state’s attorney’s office and practicing in Rutland, he and his law partner started the firm Eaton & Hayes in Eaton’s hometown of Woodstock.

“Duke is a person of remarkable compassion with a deep understanding of our Judiciary at all levels,” said Gov. Shumlin. “He comes from a proud family tradition of ensuring that our legal system serves the needs of all Vermonters. His deep sense of fairness and long-standing commitment to our courts make him an excellent addition to our Supreme Court.”

Born in Windsor, Eaton grew up in Woodstock and attended Woodstock Union High School, the University of Vermont, and Vermont Law School. He is the first graduate of Vermont Law School to serve on the Vermont Supreme Court. His father served as an Assistant Judge for Windsor County for eight years and his mother served as the first director of what is now known as the Vermont Judicial Bureau in White River Junction.

“I am greatly honored that Gov. Shumlin has chosen me to serve on the Supreme Court,” said Eaton. “Vermont is a special place and Vermonters are a special people. I look forward to meeting the challenges that are ahead and am humbled by this opportunity to serve the people of my home.” Judge Eaton is known for his efforts to make Vermont’s legal system more accessible to the public and to inspire more Vermonters to embrace the responsibility of jury service. He has also been praised for working compassionately with young children involved in custody and Department for Children and Family cases.

Eaton is a member of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the American Law Institute. He has served on numerous judicial committees, including the Judiciary Advisory Council and committees devoted to family division oversight, civil division oversight, ethics and professionalism, court interpreters, and Assistant Judge education. He and his wife live in Woodstock and have one son and three step-children.