

## **The Hon. Marie Ward named Chief Judge of the Second Judicial District Court**

**Albuquerque, New Mexico, September 10, 2021** — The Honorable Marie Ward has been elected Chief Judge of the Second Judicial District Court. Judge Ward will succeed the Honorable Stan Whitaker, who recently announced his intention to step down after serving as Chief Judge since October 2018.

Judge Ward currently is Presiding Judge of the Second Judicial District's Children's Court. Her term as Chief Judge will begin on October 1, 2021.



**Judge Marie Ward**

Judge Ward graduated from UNM School of Law, magna cum laude, in 1998 and worked in private practice and as a Special Assistant Attorney General before joining the Second Judicial District Court as a Family Court Hearing Officer and Trial Court Staff Attorney. She was appointed to the bench in March 2014.

During her tenure on the bench, Judge Ward has been responsible for the formation of many innovative programs, such as the Peter H. Johnstone Pro Bono Family Law Program, the Court's annual Spring Adoption event and the launch of New Mexico's first Indian Child Welfare Act Court.

Judge Ward also serves on a variety of state and national committees focused on improving outcomes of youth and families involved in Juvenile Justice and Abuse and Neglect systems. Judge Ward is the Chair of the Children's Court Improvement Commission.

"The judges and staff of this court are the finest the New Mexico judiciary has to offer. It has been my honor and privilege to serve the New Mexico Judiciary and the Albuquerque community with them for these past three years," said Chief Judge Stan Whitaker, who will remain a member of the Court's Criminal Bench. "I look forward to seeing the Court continue to advance under Judge Ward's leadership."

"Since starting my work here at the Second Judicial District Court in 2004, I have been honored to work with the best of the judiciary and have been inspired by the work of our outstanding employees," Judge Ward said. "As the in-coming Chief Judge of the largest court in the state, I will work diligently and tirelessly to ensure that all the rights of the people of Bernalillo County are protected, that disputes are resolved fairly and expeditiously, and ensure access to justice for all."