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7 Names in Contention for Chief Judge

By SEWELL CHAN

Judith S. Kaye, New York State's chief judge since 1993, is retiring this year. (Photo: Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times)

The New York State Commission on Judicial Nomination on Monday morning nominated seven prominent lawyers and jurists as potential successors to Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, who will step down at the end of this year, having reached the mandatory retirement age of 70.

Gov. David A. Paterson must pick Judge Kaye's successor from among the seven names by Jan. 15. The chief judge leads the Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, which is responsible for interpreting New York's Constitution, and Mr. Paterson's selection will be one of his most significant appointments.

The names of the seven nominees, along with links to their biographies, follow. (Note that in New York, the State Supreme Court is the basic trial court, with the Appellate Division above the trial level and the Court of Appeals at the apex of the state judicial system.)

George F. Carpinello, a partner at the law firm OF Boies, Schiller & Flexner in Albany and a former professor at Albany Law School.

Evan A. Davis, a partner at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton in Manhattan, who was counsel to Gov. Mario M. Cuomo from 1985 to 1990 and was president of the New York City Bar from 2000 to 2002.

Steven W. Fisher, associate justice in the second department of the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court, who has been a judge since 1983.

Theodore T. Jones Jr., associate judge on the Court of Appeals, who was a State Supreme Court justice in Brooklyn from 1990 to 2006, when Gov. Eliot Spitzer elevated him to the high court.

Jonathan Lippman, presiding justice in the first department of the Appellate Division, who was the state's chief administrative judge from 1996 to 2007.

Eugene F. Pigott Jr., associate judge on the Court of Appeals, who was a State Supreme Court justice from 1997 until 2006, when Gov. George E. Pataki elevated him to the high court.

Peter L. Zimroth, a partner at the law firm of Arnold & Porter, who was corporation counsel from 1987 to 1989, under Mayor Edward I. Koch.