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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

## News for Immediate Release

May 19, 2022

### **Pennsylvania Supreme Court Opens Symposium to Commemorate 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**HARRISBURG** – The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania commemorated its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary today with the opening of its tricentennial symposium in Philadelphia aimed at highlighting its history and achievements which paved the way for courts nationwide.

“The history of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania is etched into the fabric of not just our state, but our nation,” said Chief Justice Max Baer. “The impact of the decisions made by jurists of this Court for three centuries have moved our democracy forward and impacted the lives of people from all corners of the state and helped to pave the way for the rule of law in Pennsylvania and the nation.”

Created by the Judiciary Act of 1722, the Court is the oldest appellate court in North America, predating even the Supreme Court of the United States by nearly 70 years and for which it served as a model as the federal appellate court was established.

The symposium will open with remarks from Governor Tom Wolf and close with a distinguished panel offering reflections from the bench which will include a video message from Anthony Kennedy (retired), Associate Member of the Supreme Court of the United States.

"Congratulations to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on this incredible anniversary. The Court has undergone many changes over the centuries as Pennsylvania became a state and developed its own constitution, but one thing has never changed, and that is the importance of the judiciary as a co-equal branch of government in a well-functioning democracy, upholding our laws and the rights Americans hold dear," Gov. Wolf said.

"The many excellent jurists who have served on our Supreme Court and across all of Pennsylvania's courts have exhibited courage, thoughtfulness, and wisdom that has changed our commonwealth and our nation forever. It is through their contributions that we have realized one aspect of William Penn's 'Holy Experiment,' an immense accomplishment that I trust will endure for centuries more."

The two-day symposium series will trace the Court's roots from its earliest days, examine the Court's decisions upholding the Pennsylvania Constitution's Declaration of Rights, explore decision-making in state courts, as well as the interplay between state supreme courts, federal courts, and the state and federal constitutions. During panel discussions, panelists will review key aspects of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's jurisprudence, explore broader issues in our republican form of government, and expound on the role of today's Supreme Court as the administrator of Pennsylvania's Unified Judicial System.

In addition, state and federal judicial and academic leaders will discuss how the modern Supreme Court's administrative role serves citizens, judges and the legal profession. The panelists will also cover the importance of judicial independence, the rule of law and the role of the judiciary in American life.

The full symposium agenda with panelist information is available [here](#) and will be livestreamed for media and the public:

### **Wednesday, May 18**

8:30 a.m. -- oral argument session <https://youtu.be/xUSVMydnVfQ>

### **Thursday, May 19 Symposium Sessions**

**Pa Courts YouTube** -- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR7oiMya78lixm8XFjQ3ctQ/featured>

**Pa Courts Facebook** -- <https://www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniacourts>

9:15 a.m. – The Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the Pennsylvania Constitution in America's Early Years

10:45 a.m. – The Supreme Court and the Declaration of Rights

1 p.m. – Judicial Federalism

### **Friday, May 20 Symposium Sessions**

**Pa Courts YouTube** -- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR7oiMya78lixm8XFjQ3ctQ/featured>

**Pa Courts Facebook** -- <https://www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniacourts>

9:15 a.m. – The Modern Supreme Court

10:45 a.m. – Judicial Decision-Making in State Supreme Courts

1 p.m. – Reflections from the Bench

More information about the history of the Court and its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary [here](#) and via Facebook [@PennsylvaniaCourts](#) and Twitter [@PACourts](#) .

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