

High Court to get four new judges

Supreme Court to have 22 judges after they take office on Sept 30



(Clockwise from far left) Judicial Commissioners Hoo Sheau Peng, Debbie Ong, Valerie Thean and Aedit Abdullah will be appointed as High Court judges. Judicial Commissioner Ong will also be the next Presiding Judge of the Family Justice Courts.

Lim Min Zhang

Four new Supreme Court appointments were announced yesterday, including Judicial Commissioner Debbie Ong as the next Presiding Judge of the Family Justice Courts (FJC).

She will also be appointed as a High Court judge, along with Judicial Commissioners Valerie Thean, Hoo Sheau Peng and Aedit Abdullah, said the Prime Minister's Office.

Judicial Commissioner Ong takes over from Judicial Commissioner Thean, whose term as Presiding Judge of the FJC and judicial commissioner ends on Sept 29.

All four judges were appointed by President Tony Tan Keng Yam, on the advice of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. They will assume office on Sept 30.

When they take up their appointments, the Supreme Court – which comprises the High Court and Court of Appeal – will have a total of 22 judges, including five judges of appeal and the chief justice.

In addition, the Bench also has four judicial commissioners, five senior judges and 12 international judges.

Judicial Commissioner Ong was an associate professor specialising in family law before being appointed a judicial commissioner in 2014.

National University of Singapore law dean Simon Chesterman said: “Though we are, of course, sad not to have her on our campus and in our classrooms, we take comfort in the knowledge that our brilliant colleague will play a leading role in family justice in Singapore, bringing to it the same wisdom and heart that she has brought to her teaching and research.”

She takes over from Judicial Commissioner Thean, who played an active role in the development of family law and practice, both regionally and in Singapore.

Law Society president Gregory Vijayendran congratulated the new appointees.

He said: “During their time on the Bench to date, the quartet have stamped a distinctive mark on Singapore’s jurisprudence in diverse areas such as family law, criminal law and insolvency law.

“Practitioners appearing before them readily attest to their fair judicial temperament and sound judicial decision-making.”

Judicial Commissioner Hoo has served in the legal service for more than 20 years. Before becoming a judicial commissioner, she was Deputy Chief Counsel (Civil Division) at the Attorney-General’s Chambers. She was the first female judge to hear criminal cases in the High Court, presiding over 16 criminal cases last year, five of which were capital punishment cases.

Among other roles, Judicial Commissioner Aedit was the Chief Prosecutor (Criminal Justice Division) at the Attorney-General’s Chambers and a district judge before his current appointment.

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