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## **Gov. Perry Names Jefferson Chief Justice of Texas Supreme Court**

### *Historic Announcement Brings New Leadership to High Court*

SAN ANTONIO – Gov. Rick Perry today appointed Wallace Jefferson as the new Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court. Jefferson, a lifelong resident of San Antonio, was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court in 2001 by Perry and won election to the court in 2002.

“With the well-earned respect of his colleagues, the trust of 22 million Texans, and a philosophy that the bench is not the place to make laws but interpret them, Wallace Jefferson will be a strong new leader of the Texas Supreme Court,” Perry said. “Justice Jefferson has written more than 40 opinions, has earned a stellar legal reputation as an appellate lawyer and a member of the court, and has demonstrated he has the intellect and legal mind to not only serve on the court, but to lead it.”

Jefferson has written 20 signed majority opinions, and has shown courage in dissent when his principled view of the law requires dissent. In addition to authoring five dissenting opinions, Jefferson has written numerous unsigned and concurring opinions. A graduate of James Madison College at Michigan State University and the University of Texas School of Law, he practiced law with Groce, Locke and Hebdon in San Antonio and later helped found Crofts, Callaway & Jefferson. He served as San Antonio Bar Association president and was named Outstanding Young Lawyer by the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association.

“I have chosen Wallace Jefferson because he has demonstrated great scholarship and a keen legal mind time and again,” Perry said. “I believe no one is more prepared to lead this court as it renders decisions of extreme importance to a great many Texans.”

Jefferson is the first African-American to serve as Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court and became the first African-American on the state’s highest court when Perry appointed him in 2001.

“Some may see this appointment as a barrier removed, but I see it as a door propped open,” Perry said. “Millions of Texans can know that if they work hard, pursue their dreams, and fulfill their potential, the door of opportunity is open to them, and to future generations, in ways their ancestors never dreamed possible.”

Perry also paid tribute to former Chief Justice Tom Phillips and commended the work of the justices currently on the court.

“There are many leaders on this court who have distinguished themselves for many years, showing a kind of rare legal brilliance that truly sets them apart,” Perry said. “So, while the seating chart will change a little bit, it remains a strong bench filled with brilliant scholars who are rendering the kind of justice Texans demand.”

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