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Chief Justice G. Richard Bevan to Retire This Year

Idaho Supreme Court Justice G. Richard Bevan will retire from the Court this October.

His retirement will cap a four-decade legal career culminating in nearly six years leading this state's highest court. He has led treatment courts, was the first state judge in Idaho to pilot electronic court records, and became a significant voice for the security of courtrooms and the safety of those who conduct business in them amid a nationwide increase in threats against judges.

Above all, he has focused on strengthening a professional court system that provides fair, impartial decisions for the public it serves. He has done so with a calm, thoughtful leadership that became a hallmark of his time on the bench.

"Our place is to resolve disputes," and when the public seeks that help, "they can trust our courts," he said.

Chief Justice Bevan, 66, was born and raised in Twin Falls. He studied at Brigham Young University, where he obtained his law degree in 1987, and returned to Twin Falls to spend 16 years in legal practice. During that time, he served a term as the Twin Falls County prosecutor and became president of the Fifth District Bar Association.

Appointed as a district judge in 2003, he presided over two treatment courts and served for eight years as the administrative district judge, overseeing the operations of courts across south-central Idaho. Twin Falls County was the first to adopt the electronic case management system that Idaho's state courts use today, and Chief Justice Bevan was the first judge to use it as it rolled out statewide.

His experience led to his appointment to the Idaho Supreme Court in 2017. Four years later, his fellow justices chose him to lead the Court as chief justice. He has remained in that role ever since and plans to do so until he retires Oct. 30.

"Serving the people of Idaho in the Judicial Branch for nearly 23 years has been one of the great honors of my professional life," he wrote to Gov. Brad Little in a letter announcing his retirement.

In his current role, Chief Justice Bevan has advocated for continued improvements in court technology and for appropriate compensation to attract and retain high-quality judges. He has focused on the need to improve judicial security, noting the dramatic change in the threats judges face today compared to when he first took the bench. He led through much of the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on keeping courts safe places for the public to conduct their business. And he has emphasized general education on courts and the rule of law.

He has also focused on the partnership between the state Judicial Branch and Idaho's counties, which provide court facilities and certain employees such as court clerks. Throughout the years, he has encouraged ways to improve collaboration across court personnel — one cohesive group focused on the mission of the justice system.

“The rule of law is the guiding star of our civil society. We are its servants,” he told lawmakers in his State of the Judiciary address in January.

One of Chief Justice Bevan's most meaningful experiences was as a district judge, leading treatment courts that help people with significant substance abuse or mental health issues find stability while holding them accountable for the reasons they ended up in court. From the bench, he watched people change their lives right in front of him through their participation. “Those days were the best time of the week as a trial court judge,” he said.

“Chief Justice Bevan will leave a legacy defined by his deep, abiding commitment to the rule of law and his innate sense of fairness,” said Justice Robyn Brody, vice chief of the Court. “He has dedicated his career to serving our community with integrity, ensuring that every person is treated with respect and dignity in the courtroom.”

Under state law, Gov. Little will appoint a justice to succeed Chief Justice Bevan from a list of applicants provided by the Idaho Judicial Council. The new justice will serve the rest of Justice Bevan's term, which ends in January 2031. A nonpartisan election for the next six-year term will be held in May 2030.

The justices of the Supreme Court will choose the next chief justice from among themselves as provided for by Idaho's Constitution.

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