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Superior Court Judge Tracy A. Grant to Retire at End of Term

By STEVEN M. ELLIS, Staff Writer

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Tracy A. Grant will retire at the end of her current term after 20 years on the bench, a spokesperson for the court confirmed yesterday.

The court's public information office told the MetNews that Grant, who was formerly Tracy T. Moreno, will not run for election this year and will serve out the remainder of her term, which will conclude in January of 2009.

In other news, a campaign consultant working for Judge Joseph Di Loreto said yesterday that Di Loreto would be filing a declaration of intention to run for election before today's 5 p.m. deadline, which would leave 10 open seats in play on the June 3 ballot. No incumbent judge has been challenged thus far.

Grant, 56, currently sits in the South District at the San Pedro Courthouse.

She was appointed to the Long Beach Municipal Court in 1988 by then-Gov. George Deukmejian, and became a Los Angeles Superior Court judge when the position was converted in 2000.

Former Deputy Sheriff

A former deputy sheriff with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Grant became a lawyer after a work-related injury prompted her transfer to the post of bailiff, giving her the chance to observe court operations firsthand.

She told the MetNews in a 1989 interview that her original career in law enforcement came about "on a fluke" after a police officer friend convinced her that the department offered good opportunities for women.

Grant, who was attending classes at California State University, Northridge at the time, dropped out and joined the department as a deputy in 1974, serving first as a custody officer at the Sybil Brand Institute, and later as a patrol officer working from a station house in Watts.

Her patrol duty was short-lived, however, as she was soon seriously injured when her patrol car collided with a suspect's vehicle during a high-speed pursuit. Grant, the passenger in the patrol car, was assigned to work as a bailiff.

Watching the attorneys in court and thinking to herself, "I can do that too," she enrolled in a night program at Northrop University School of Law in Inglewood. She graduated in 1980, and was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1981.

Two days after receiving her bar exam results, she applied for a position in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. However, not long after her initial

interview the office instituted a hiring freeze as the result of cutbacks, so Grant went into private practice, doing probate work out of her home.

In 1981, at the urging of then-Commissioner Richard Denner, she applied for, and ultimately accepted, a position as a deputy public defender with the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office, despite her initial reluctance to engage in defense work based on her "prosecution oriented" background as a deputy sheriff.

Deputy Public Defender

Grant served as a deputy public defender until her appointment to the bench, handling a broad range of misdemeanor, felony and juvenile court cases over the course of seven years. During most of that time she was assigned to the Long Beach branch office and was an active member of the Long Beach Bar Association and the Long Beach Women Lawyers.

Superior Court Commissioner Harvey Silberman yesterday became the first candidate to file a declaration of intent to run for Grant's seat. He had earlier taken out papers to run for the seat being vacated by the retirement of Judge Dzintra Janavs, but had not returned them, leaving Deputy District Attorney Jared Moses unopposed for the time being.

Hal Dash, president of Cerrell Associates Inc., told the MetNews that the consulting firm will be doing Moses' campaign. Deputy District Attorneys Thomas Rubinson and Hilleri G. Merritt had previously retained CAI to direct their efforts.

In another election-related development, Deputy District Attorney Eduard Abele, one of two members of his agency who have filed for the seat of Judge Michael Duggan—the other is Michael J. O'Gara—said he had taken out papers to run for the seat of Judge Jack Hunt, who said Monday he had decided not to run.

Abele said he is undecided about his final plans, but is inclined not to run another deputy district attorney. If he runs for the Hunt seat, he would be opposed by Superior Court Commissioner Rocky Crabb, along with anyone else who files by Monday, which is the extended deadline for open seats.

State election law permits a candidate to file declarations of intent to run for multiple seats, provided that each declaration is accompanied by a separate filing fee or signatures in lieu of the fee. Candidates who file multiple declarations must commit to a specific race during the nominations period, which will begin Monday and run until March 7.