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Two New Judges Join the Cayman Bench

Two new judges will begin presiding in Grand Court tomorrow (Thursday, 8 January), following swearing in on Monday (5 January) by HE the Governor Helen Kilpatrick.

Justice Mangatal joins the Cayman judiciary from Jamaica, while Justice Robin McMillan, who assumes an acting position, is well known locally as a senior counsel, currently with local firm HSM Chambers and formerly with Appleby.

Justice Mangatal has extensive experience both as a judge and advocate. She will draw, she says, on this broad-based experience that includes stints here in Cayman as an Acting Grand Court Judge (2009 and 2014). Prior to coming to Cayman, she served as an acting judge in Jamaica's Court of Appeal and as a judge in the Supreme Court of Judicature in its criminal, civil and commercial jurisdictions.

Acting Justice McMillan has had extensive experience in several jurisdictions, being qualified in Cayman, Bermuda, Hong Kong, England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and California. He specialises in international commercial litigation, insolvency trusts, company law, judicial review, and public law.

Welcoming the new justices, Chief Justice Anthony Smellie said: "I am very pleased to be able to welcome justices Mangatal and McMillan as colleagues within the Cayman judiciary."

Commenting on their varied and extensive resumes, the Chief Justice said it was "apparent that they bring with them the depth of knowledge and expertise that is evermore in demand for dealing with the increasing numbers of complex and challenging cases coming before our courts," adding: "Our ability to continue to respond to these demands is assured for the future with the appointment of such dedicated and capable judges."

The Chief Justice said that Justice Mangatal will serve as one of the four resident full-time judges working in the Financial Services, Family, General Civil and Criminal divisions of the Grand Court. Justice McMillan will serve as an acting judge as the need arises from time to time, he said, in the Family, General Civil and Criminal divisions. "The fact that he is also resident on Island will enhance our ability to assign cases to him," Chief Justice Smellie said.

Justice Mangatal, who has been a judge since her first appointment to the bench in Jamaica in 2003, says that serving as a judge has been the "most enjoyable aspect of my career as a lawyer" and looks forward to serving the Cayman judiciary and the people of the Cayman Islands. "I am very privileged and honoured to have been selected and appointed as a judge of the Grand Court here in Cayman and I am hoping for a smooth transition."

She noted that each stage of her career served as an important stepping stone for the next, pointing to her law firm work, from 1987 to 2000, as preparation for her appointment to the Commercial Court in Jamaica. She also served in the public sector as Senior Assistant Attorney General, with responsibility as Director of Litigation (2001-2003). During the period 2007-2014, she was an Associate Tutor at the Normal Manley Law School.

Privately, Justice Mangatal was a former national table tennis champion in her native Jamaica.

Originally from Northern Ireland, Mr. McMillan served as a senior government lawyer for more than ten years in Bermuda, acting on behalf of the Crown in numerous cases before that territory's Supreme Court and Court of Appeal. During his tenure there, he acquired extensive experience advising upon and conducting major prosecutions. As the Attorney General's senior prosecutor in that jurisdiction for a number of years, he led a team of Crown Counsel.

Acting Justice McMillan came to Cayman in 1996 and, after two years as Crown Counsel with the Cayman Islands Government Legal Department, joined Appleby (then "Hunter & Hunter"), where he was involved in the landmark official liquidation of BCCI (the now defunct Bank of Credit and Commerce International). His expertise in the areas of complex commercial litigation and in the areas of human rights and judicial review was drawn on as a member of the Law Society sub-committees that respectively considered the introduction of a commercial court in the Cayman Islands and the Freedom of Information Law. He has been serving as Senior Counsel at HSM Chambers since January 2012.

Acting Justice McMillan was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 1974 (Gray's Inn), Bermuda (1976), Northern Ireland (1983), Hong Kong (1983), California (1992) and the Cayman Islands (1996).

"I am honoured to have been appointed as an Acting Grand Court Judge and I very much look forward to serving the people of the Cayman Islands," the new Acting Grand Court Justice said.

Privately, he is a life member of the MCC, the world's biggest cricket club founded in London in 1787. Locally, he sits on the Complaints Committee of the Cayman Islands Cricket Association.

Editor's Note:

1. Photo caption (below): Two new Grand Court judges were sworn in on Monday (5 January) by HE the Governor Helen Kilpatrick (Centre). Following the swearing in are, from left, Court Administrator Kevin McCormac, Acting Justice Robin McMillan, Governor Kilpatrick, Justice Ingrid Mangatal and Chief Justice Anthony Smellie.
2. A fuller resume for Justice Mangatal is on the Court's website at <https://www.judicial.ky/home/judicial-administration/judicial-officers-judicial-admin/judges>

