

Ashley Morse Appointed to Rock County Circuit Court

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
Friday, 25 March 2022 10:06 -



MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced Thursday his appointment of Ashley Morse to the Rock County Circuit Court—Branch 4. The appointment fills the vacancy being created by Judge Daniel T. Dillon’s resignation, effective April 5, 2022. Morse will complete a term ending July 31, 2023.



“Ashley Morse is a recognized and accomplished leader whose dedication to improving the legal system, especially the juvenile legal system, and tireless commitment to justice will make her an excellent judge for the people of Rock County,” said Gov. Evers. “I am proud to announce her appointment today, and of the strong, positive impact she will continue to have in the community and in our state.”

Morse has worked for the Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office since 2010, and has been based in Janesville since 2014, representing indigent clients as an assistant state public defender in a variety of criminal and civil proceedings in several counties across the state. Locally, she has served on the Rock County Trauma Task Force, the Rock County Youth Justice Racial Disparities Committee, and has coached the Turner High School Mock Trial Team.

“I am proud that Attorney Ashley Morse will be Rock County’s first woman of color to serve as Judge,” said Beloit City Councilor Regina Dunkin. “I know that her caring, intellect, and

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experience as a public defender will ensure that she applies the law fairly. I am happy to support her appointment and look forward to her many years of dedicated service to the community and rule of law.”

“Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg once said that: ‘real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time.’ I welcome Ashley Morse to the Rock County bench as she takes the next step forward,” said Rock County Circuit Court Judge Barbara McCrory.

Morse lives in Janesville and is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and of the University of Wisconsin Law School. She has worked extensively with the National Juvenile Defender Center (now The Gault Center), including her selection as an Ambassador for Racial Justice. This program, which is jointly sponsored by the Georgetown Juvenile Justice Initiative, is highly selective and seeks defenders committed to challenging racial injustice in the juvenile legal system. As a capstone project, she developed a local training program on the impacts of racial trauma on youth. Her leadership led to her selection as the Racial Disparity Practice Coordinator for the Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office, where she is expanding this training.

“I am truly grateful to Governor Evers for the opportunity to serve Rock County as a circuit court judge,” said Morse. “I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for supporting me in this endeavor, and for their unwavering confidence in my ability to serve as a fair and impartial jurist dedicated to treating all individuals with dignity and respect. I am committed to ensuring the dispensation of justice equally for all by bringing a new perspective, expertise, and extensive experience to the bench.”