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Newsroom

Judge Smith to Chair Board of Directors

U.S. District Court Chief Judge William E. Smith will be joined on RWU Law's Board of Directors by R.I. Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell and other prominent bar members.



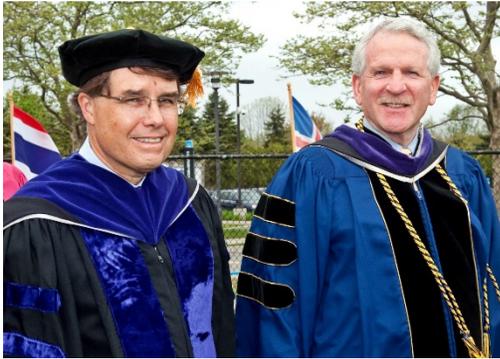
BRISTOL, R.I., June 4, 2014 – Chief Judge William E. Smith of the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island has been elected chair of Roger Williams University School of Law’s Board of Directors.

Five new directors were also named: Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell of the Rhode Island Supreme Court; alumna Nicole Benjamin, Esq. '06, an attorney at Adler Pollock & Sheehan in Providence; Hinna Mirza Upal, Esq. '07, deputy general counsel of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; Kenneth E. Arnold, Esq., senior vice president and general counsel of Lifespan Corporation; and George L. Santopietro, Esq., an attorney at Coia & Lepore, Ltd.

“The law school board is already filled with supremely talented and committed leaders, and this class of new members truly adds strength to strength,” said Dean Designate Michael J. Yelnosky, who will assume the law school’s deanship on July 1. “Chief Judge Smith is not only a respected jurist, he is an innovative leader, and he is keenly aware of the dynamics of American legal education in 2014.”

For his part, Judge Smith said, “I am thrilled to be taking over the helm as board chair of the RWU law school, and particularly to be working with my good friend and colleague Dean Yelnosky. RWU Law is a special institution with an increasingly important role in the legal fabric of Rhode Island. With terrific faculty and staff, enthusiastic and service-minded students and dedicated members of the board, I am confident that we will achieve great things in the years to come, even in these challenging times.”

Judge Smith attended Georgetown University as a George F. Baker Scholar, graduating in 1982. He graduated cum laude from Georgetown University Law Center in 1987, where he was a member of the *American Criminal Law Review*. From 1987 to 2002, he practiced labor and employment law with the leading Providence law firm of Edwards & Angell. While in private practice, Judge Smith served as a municipal court judge for the Town of West Warwick from 1993 to 1998. He also served as the city solicitor of Warwick, R.I. From 2000 to 2001, Judge Smith served as staff director for then-U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee's Providence office.



Upon his 2002 nomination to the federal bench, Chafee noted that Judge Smith “is just the kind of person that we need on our federal courts. He possesses intelligence, integrity, and toughness, tempered with good humor and compassion. He puts his community and public service above personal gain. Above all, he is fair and honorable.” Known for his enthusiastic support of local social-service organizations, Judge Smith has served on the board of directors for the Family Service of Rhode Island, and for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

He succeeds prominent Providence attorney Mark Mandell as chair of RWU Law's Board of Directors, who had chaired the board since 2011. The position was previously held by Rhode Island Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger, who passed away in 2012.

“I can think of no one better suited than Judge Smith to lead the board and to help us build on the successes of his predecessor, Mark Mandell, and my predecessor, Dean David Logan,” Yelnosky said, adding that Roger Williams University President Donald J. Farish “looks forward, as I do, to working with Judge Smith and the School of Law's other new board members.”