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## Law School News: Two RWU Law Alumni Included Among Historic Judicial Nominations 12-08-2020

Michael M. Bowden

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December 8, 2020

## *Law School News*

### Two RWU Law Alumni Included Among Historic Judicial Nominations

Superior Court Magistrate Richard Raspallo '97 and Central Falls Municipal Judge Elizabeth Ortiz '10 were included in a list of nominees nominations that would elevate Black, Latina and Asian-American women to high court seats.

December 8, 2020

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Superior Court Magistrate Richard Raspallo '97 and Central Falls Municipal Judge Elizabeth Ortiz '10.

Two Roger Williams University School of Law alumni figured prominently today when Governor Gina Raimondo announced a number of historic judicial nominations that would elevate Black, Latina and Asian-American women to sought-after court seats.

Raimondo named Central Falls Municipal Judge Elizabeth Ortiz '10 – a “double Hawk,” who also earned her undergraduate degree at RWU in 2007 – to the Family Court bench, making Ortiz the first Latina ever nominated to that court. If approved by the Senate, Ortiz will fill the lifetime seat left open by retiring Judge John E. McCann III.

The governor also named Superior Court Magistrate Richard Raspallo '97 as a Superior Court nominee to replace Judge Allen P. Rubine.

“We are thrilled that the governor has nominated these two talented RWU Law graduates for judicial vacancies,” said RWU Law Dean Gregory W. Bowman. “They’re excellent choices and great examples of success in public service.”

Ortiz is a sole practitioner with offices in North Providence and Pawtucket. Prior to attending law school, she worked as a paralegal for several prominent Rhode Island law firms. While attending RWU Law, she participated in the school's Criminal Defense clinic, where she gained hands-on experience in the courtroom representing indigent criminal defendants. After law school, Ortiz served as in-house counsel to Sakonnet Capital Partners, LLC, a film finance company with offices in Michigan, Louisiana and Providence, Rhode Island.

Raspallo was appointed magistrate in 2017. He was formerly chief counsel to House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello, and before that Chief Legal Counsel to Rhode Island House Majority Leader. He also served as Assistant City Solicitor for the City of Cranston. In addition, Raspallo maintained a solo law practice from 1997 until 2017.

Raimondo made Rhode Island history with three judicial nominations that would raise Black, Latina and Asian-American women into the sought-after posts.

She nominated Superior Court Judge Melissa Long to replace Supreme Court Justice Francis X. Flaherty. Long would be the first Black justice to serve on the state Supreme Court. She also nominated Erin Lynch Prata to replace Justice Gilbert V. Indeglia. If the nominations win House and Senate approval, the Supreme Court would be filled by a majority of women.

In addition, Raimondo nominated Linda Rekas Sloan – who has taught as an adjunct professor at RWU Law – to replace Superior Court Judge Michael Silverstein. If approved, Rekas Sloan would become the first Asian-American appointed to the Superior Court.