Chief Justice Jean Hoefer Toal

Chief Justice Jean Hoefer Toal began her service as an associate justice on the Supreme Court of South Carolina on March 17, 1988. She was re-elected in February of 1996 and was installed as chief justice on March 23, 2000, for the balance of the term of her predecessor, which expired June 30, 2004. She was re-elected again in February 2004 and was installed as chief justice on June 9, 2004, for a 10-year term.

Born Aug. 11, 1943, in Columbia, she was graduated from Dreher High School in 1961 and was recognized as the state’s top debater. Toal received a B.A. in philosophy in 1965 from Agnes Scott College, where she served on the Judicial Council and the National Supervisory Board of the U.S. National Student Association and played goalie for the field hockey team. She received her J.D. in 1968 from the USC School of Law, where she served as managing editor, leading articles editor and book review editor of the South Carolina Law Review. She is a member of the Order of the Coif, Mortar Board and Phi Beta Kappa.

Toal practiced law for 20 years prior to her state Supreme Court election, as an associate with Greenville’s Haynsworth Law Firm and as an associate and partner with Columbia’s Belser, Baker, Barwick, Ravenel, Toal & Bender. She was the first woman, first native Columbian and first Roman Catholic to serve as a justice of the state Supreme Court.

Ann Mickle

Ann Mickle completed her undergraduate studies at the University of South Carolina in 1982, earning a bachelor of science degree. She then went on to USC’s School of Law, earning her Juris Doctor in 1985.


Mickle is active in numerous professional associations, including serving as president of the South Carolina Black Lawyers Association and on the Board of Governors of the S.C. Bar Association. She is also a member of the S.C. Trial Lawyers Association, the Injured Workers’ Association and the Columbia Lawyers Association. Mickle is also active in her community through the Columbia chapter of Links Inc., Jack and Jill of America and various church organizations, as well as being a former board member of the Columbia Urban League.
Sarah Leverette
Born in the Upstate town of Iva, Sarah Leverette, one of the first women lawyers in South Carolina, graduated magna cum laude from the University of South Carolina School of Law and was admitted to the South Carolina Bar in 1943. After postgraduate work at Columbia University, Leverette returned to the USC School of Law as a librarian and instructor, becoming the school's first female faculty member, where she taught for a quarter century. She left the university in the 1970s to serve as commissioner and chairman of the South Carolina Industrial Commission, from which she retired in the 1980s.

Her commitment to volunteerism has kept her active with community organizations such as Common Cause of South Carolina, the Community Relations Luncheon Club, Richland Foundation, American Association of University Women and Education First. Her involvement with the League of Women Voters has been one of dedication and leadership. She served as its president from 1958 to 1961 and was presented with the Barbara W. Moxon Award, which recognizes those dedicated to advocacy.

Judge Alison Renee Lee
Judge Alison Renee Lee was born in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 17, 1958. Her parents are James Joseph Lee, deceased, and Juanita Bacote Lee, a retired schoolteacher. She attended Vassar College, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree from the Science, Technology and Society Program, urban studies division. She received her law degree from Tulane University School of Law in 1982, where she was a member of the National Appellate Moot Court Team and the Moot Court Board.

Upon graduation, she served as law clerk to the Honorable Israel M. Augustine Jr. of the Louisiana Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. She then moved to Columbia, S.C., to clerk for the Honorable C. Tolbert Goolsby Jr. of the South Carolina Court of Appeals. In September 1984, she began employment at the McNair Law Firm, practicing in the Litigation Section. In December 1989 she joined the South Carolina Legislative Council, drafting legislation for members of the General Assembly. Areas of specialization included transportation, criminal laws, corrections and judiciary.

One of the first administrative law judges, she was elected in February 1994 to a one-year term and took office on March 1, 1994. She was re-elected to a five-year term in 1995. In February 1999, she was elected by the General Assembly to the position of Circuit Court Judge, At Large. She is a member of the Texas, Louisiana and South Carolina Bars. Other professional memberships in South Carolina include the S.C. Women Lawyers Association and the Richland County Bar Association.