



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
1 COURTHOUSE WAY  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02210

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**Robert M. Farrell**  
CLERK OF COURT

**PRESS RELEASE**  
NOVEMBER 21, 2013

United States District Court Judge Rya W. Zobel has advised President Obama that on April 1, 2014, she intends to retire from regular active service as a United States District Court Judge. She also advised the President that she intends to continue to serve as a senior judge.

When Judge Zobel was appointed in 1979, she became the first female judge of the District Court in Massachusetts, and remained the only female judge for fifteen years until 1994. A graduate of Radcliffe College and Harvard Law School, she served as a law clerk to Chief Judge George C. Sweeney before practicing law for a number of years with Hill & Barlow. In 1976, she became a partner at Goodwin, Procter & Hoar, specializing in matrimonial law.

Chief Judge Patti B. Saris said: "Judge Zobel is beloved as a trial judge because of her pragmatism, creativity, fairness and sheer intelligence. Back in the days when only thirteen judges of the federal bench nationwide were female, Judge Zobel was a role model for all young female litigators hoping someday to become federal judges. Her appointment has made a huge difference in the perception of equal justice in the courts."

In 1995, Judge Zobel served as the seventh director of the Federal Judicial Center in Washington, DC, until July 1999. The Center trains federal judges and court employees throughout the United States. She has served as chair of the Judicial Conference Committee on Automation and Technology, the Committee on the Operation of the Jury System and the Committee on Judicial Improvements. She was recently appointed to the Committee on Financial Disclosure.

Judge Zobel has been a member of Harvard University's Board of Overseers, a governor of the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, a trustee of the New England Deaconess Hospital, and a director of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay. She was an Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy and Visiting Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. She won the prestigious Margaret Brent Award for leadership in the profession and mentoring other lawyers.

Judge Zobel's family includes her children Andrea, David and Scott, her stepchildren John, David, Libby, and Sarah and several grandchildren.