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GOVERNOR PATRICK NOMINATES TWO EXPERIENCED FAMILY LAW PRACTITIONERS TO PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT

BOSTON - Tuesday, January 22, 2008 - Governor Patrick announced today that he has nominated Linda S. Fidnick as an Associate Justice to the Hampshire County Division of the Probate and Family Court and Richard A. Simons to become a Probate and Family Court Associate Circuit Justice.

"Linda Fidnick possesses the legal acumen, energy and compassion to fairly and efficiently address the compellingly important legal issues currently evolving in our Probate and Family Court," Governor Patrick said. "Richard Simons is a highly respected member of the bar who will offer patience and wisdom to the families of Massachusetts seeking well-reasoned and impartial dispensation of justice."

Fidnick, 54, of Leverett, is a partner of the Amherst law firm of Burres, Fidnick & Booth and an accomplished advocate and expert in the field of domestic relations. Fidnick is the immediate past President of the Massachusetts Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. She has contributed widely to both the statewide and regional bars, and has been recognized for her extensive pro bono service and volunteer teaching of continuing legal education. Fidnick graduated from Smith College and the University of Connecticut School of Law. She will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Chief Justice Sean M. Dunphy in September of last year.

Simons, 48, of Pittsfield, is a partner of the Pittsfield law firm, Simons, Smith & Gerrard, P.C. Simons' legal background includes an extensive domestic relations practice, as well as pro bono work representing indigent criminal defendants and service as guardian ad litem in various probate matters. He will bring to the bench considerable experience as a mediator and arbitrator in family law disputes and as a hearing member of the Board of Bar Overseers. He graduated from Union College and the Boston University School of Law. He will fill the vacancy created by the November 9th appointment of Judge Anne M. Geoffrion to the Hampden County Division of the Probate and Family Court.

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