

Federal judge to be honored as Wenonah's hometown hero

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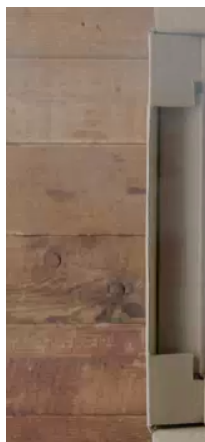


Renee Bumb speaks during the swearing-in ceremony for Mary Beth Kramer at the Gloucester County Courthouse, Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015. Kramer was appointed to the Superior Court bench. (Stephanie Maksin | For NJ.com) (Stephanie Maksin)

Renee Bumb, a federal judge who has presided over thousands of cases, including patent disputes that sometimes had hundreds of millions of dollars in economic impact, will be honored as Wenonah's Hometown Legend during the town's Fourth of July festivities.

The Wenonah Hometown Legend award recognizes a current or former resident who "inspires legends, instills pride, and serves as a role model for the people of Wenonah," said Carl Hausman, who chairs the Hometown Legend selection committee.

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Judge Bumb, who was nominated by President George W. Bush in 2006 and confirmed unanimously by the United States Senate, is a Judge of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey and serves in Camden.

"I love the law and feel that every decision results in an important difference in people's lives," she says. "The job has an enormous amount of responsibility but also a great sense of purpose and fulfillment."

Judge Bumb never set out to be a lawyer, she says. Her early years were spent on her family's farm in Ohio. But when she joined a student exchange program to Peru, she developed an interest in foreign services. As part of her studies, she became fluent in Russian and Spanish, and eventually earned a master's degree in International Relations from the University of Chicago.

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During an internship at the United Nations she took a job as a paralegal to pay the bills and, she says, discovered what she says was her true calling. She graduated from Rutgers School of Law with honors in 1987 and after serving a clerkship to a federal judge, went into private practice. In 1991, she was appointed as an assistant United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey, where, among other duties, she prosecuted high-profile corruption cases.

But in 2006, she received a call that changed her life.

"I checked my office voicemail and there was a call from the White House asking if I would be interested in a federal judgeship," Judge Bumb recalls. "I sent my resume, was asked to come to Washington for a series of interviews, and before I knew it I was sitting in my office in Camden watching my confirmation vote on CNN."

Judge Bumb works as a volunteer feeding the homeless population in Camden and Atlantic City and helps with a volunteer group that aids families with children who have Down Syndrome. She also works with an organization founded by her daughters Katrina and Elizabeth that solicits donations of used dancewear for disadvantaged children.

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She is also an active member of the Order of Secular Franciscans, Christ the King Fraternity.

Judge Bumb has lived in Wenonah since 1999. She and her husband, Kevin Smith, a Superior Court judge, have three children, Elizabeth, 19, Katrina, 17, and Liam 13.

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