

## Chief Judge to Step Down

King Is Praised For Reform Efforts

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Rufus G. King III, who is credited with improving **D.C. Superior Court** operations in nearly eight years as chief judge, said yesterday that he will step down from that job in the fall.

King, 66, made the announcement at a retreat for the court's judges, administrators and staff members. King's decision is expected to set off a race to succeed him among other judges in the courthouse. The panel that picks the chief judge typically announces its choice by mid-September.

As chief judge, King was called upon to show administrative know-how, legal acumen and the ability to lead dozens of judges in the court's criminal, civil, family and other divisions. King, the fifth chief judge since the court was founded in 1970, isn't leaving the court entirely. He will assume senior judge status after Oct. 1, at the conclusion of his term.

A court spokeswoman said King was unavailable for comment.

King prevailed over six other contenders in 2000 when he was named chief judge by the seven-member D.C. Judicial Nominations Commission. He replaced Eugene N. Hamilton. In 2004, King was reelected chief without opposition.

King, who is known for his bow ties and baritone voice, joined the Superior Court bench in 1984 and has worked in almost every division. He assumed the court's top spot after years of turmoil over spending, court operations and relations with Congress. He won praise for his work in revamping the court's probate and family court divisions.

King also oversaw efforts to improve public access to information about the D.C. courts through the creation of a Web site, and he helped establish a database that keeps tracks of Superior Court cases, hearings, filings and orders. The public can find information in the database through terminals in the courthouse.

By year's end, the court officials hope that computer users will be able to download information on criminal, small claims, probate, landlord-tenant and other types of cases.