

# Pioneer Episcopal priest named to top judgeship: Emily C. Hewitt

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President Obama has named Emily C. Hewitt, one of the first women to be ordained a priest by the Episcopal Church, as chief judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

The White House hailed Hewitt as “a leader of the effort to open Episcopal ordination to women,” according to a statement issued on March 23. Hewitt, who turns 65 in May, was one of the first 11 women ordained to the Episcopal priesthood in 1974, two years before the Episcopal Church formally allowed the ordination of women.

She later taught at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, Massachusetts, before embarking on a legal career. Hewitt is married to Eleanor Dean Acheson, formerly director of public policy and government affairs for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, according to Hewitt’s biography on the Web site of the Court of Federal Claims.

The court is responsible for cases involving monetary claims against the U.S. government. Hewitt has served on the federal court since 1998, when she was confirmed by the Senate. Her appointment as chief judge does not require Senate approval. –*Religion News Service*