

To the People of Ohio,

It has been a great honor to serve you for 23 years, 7 as a trial judge in Franklin County, and 16 on the Ohio Supreme Court. During that time, I have been privileged to help make many positive changes, both locally and nationally, especially in the areas of court security, adoption, mental health, prison reform, juvenile justice and most recently by helping our returning veterans in need. I have worked on these issues with wonderful partners in Ohio and nationally and also serve on several related national committees and boards that advance these causes.

As a trial judge in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, I was troubled by the lack of mental health services available to offenders who became entangled in the criminal justice system because of their illnesses. After joining the Supreme Court as a Justice, I created a statewide advisory committee to address mental health issues. At that time, Ohio had only 2 mental health courts. Today, Ohio leads the nation with 34 mental health courts and 144 specialized dockets, and the number is growing. We also lead the country in training police with Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT).

Many of our veterans have sacrificed for our country but may have been wounded mentally and physically. As a result, they sometimes face a revolving door through the criminal justice system. Jails and prisons have become the de facto mental health system for many of these brave men and women. We must reverse this trend and help troubled veterans before they become involved in the criminal justice system, or if they are already involved, to help them benefit from the many valuable resources the Veterans Administration provides through veterans courts and other programs.

These criminal justice issues occupy a place of growing importance in my life and I have decided to dedicate myself to them even more so,

not only here in Ohio but also on a national level. Therefore, after a great deal of thoughtful deliberation, I have decided to pursue a different course in my life. My heart tells me this is the right decision. For this reason I will be tendering my resignation as Justice at the end of this year.

I have been very privileged to serve with dedicated and talented jurists who truly care about the law and justice. It has been a joy to work with some of our brightest minds. I shall miss the court and the camaraderie of my fellow jurists. I have always given top priority to my responsibilities as a justice, but the demands of the job limit my ability to work on these important criminal justice issues more fully. I hope that by passing the baton to the next Justice, I will be able to spend more time on these causes, both here in Ohio and elsewhere.

I have been very blessed to serve as an Ohio Supreme Court Justice for over two decades. I thank the people of Ohio for giving me the opportunity to serve on the Ohio Supreme Court and look forward to being of continued service to our state and country in a different role.

Evelyn Lundberg Stratton

Justice, Supreme Court of Ohio