

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 331

WHEREAS, the Honorable Lisa Payne Thornton was a dedicated public servant for more than two decades, including most recently as the Assignment Judge in Monmouth County; and

WHEREAS, Judge Thornton, a lifelong resident of New Jersey, was born in 1964 in Long Branch; and

WHEREAS, Judge Thornton attended Long Branch public schools, graduated from Douglass College at Rutgers University in 1986, and earned her law degree from Rutgers School of Law in Newark in 1992; and

WHEREAS, after beginning her career in the private sector, Judge Thornton was appointed as the Neptune Township Municipal Court Judge in 1999; and

WHEREAS, from 2002 to 2006, Judge Thornton served as Special Deputy Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance, where she helped develop significant reforms in the auto insurance market; and

WHEREAS, Judge Thornton became Senior Counsel to Governor Jon Corzine in January 2006, serving in the Authorities Unit and advising the Governor on a variety of issues including health care, education, public finance, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, after serving in the Governor's Office, Judge Thornton became Chief of Staff for the Department of Law and Public Safety, where she served under Attorneys General Stuart Rabner and Anne Milgram; and

WHEREAS, Judge Thornton was appointed as a Superior Court judge by Governor Corzine in January 2008; and

WHEREAS, Judge Thornton was named as the Monmouth County Assignment Judge in 2014, becoming the first Black woman to serve as an Assignment Judge in New Jersey history; and

WHEREAS, prior to her appointment as the Assignment Judge, Judge Thornton also served as the Supervising Special Civil Part Judge and Presiding Judge of the Family Part; and

WHEREAS, Judge Thornton passed away on May 26, 2023 at the age of 59, and is survived by her nephew Kent A. Thornton and his wife Federica, great-nephew Lorenzo Thornton, and great-niece and namesake Lisa M. Thornton; and

WHEREAS, Judge Thornton will be remembered as a dedicated public servant, gifted judge, inspiring trailblazer, and thoughtful mentor; and

WHEREAS, Judge Thornton will be deeply missed by her family, her friends, her colleagues in the Judiciary, former colleagues in the Governor's Office, the Department of Law and Public Safety, the Department of Banking and Insurance, and other organizations in which she served, the people of Monmouth County, and the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, it is with great sadness that we mourn Judge Thornton's passing and extend our heartfelt sympathy to her family and friends; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to honor the exemplary career and achievements of Judge Thornton and mark her passing;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, PHILIP D. MURPHY, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. The flag of the United States of America and the flag of New Jersey shall be flown at half-staff at all State departments, offices, agencies, and instrumentalities during appropriate hours on Friday, June 9, 2023, in recognition and mourning of Judge Lisa Payne Thornton, a devoted public servant.

2. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
6th day of June,
Two Thousand and Twenty-
three, and of the
Independence of the United
States, the Two Hundred and
Forty-Seventh.

[seal]

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Parimal Garg

Chief Counsel to the Governor