

**State of New Mexico**  
*Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

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**GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON ANNOUNCES THREE NEW JUDGES FOR  
THE 11 DISTRICT**

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today named three Farmington lawyers to fill vacant seats in the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in San Juan and McKinley counties. They are: John A. Dean Jr., Douglas A. Echols and Thomas J. Hynes.

The new judges were appointed after interviews last week with Governor Bill Richardson and Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish.

“All three candidates have extensive, local legal experience,” said Governor Bill Richardson , who noted that he made the appointments quickly because of the vacancies on the bench.

The seats are vacant because of the resignation of The Honorable George A. Harrison, and the retirements of The Honorable Byron Caton and The Honorable Paul R. Onuska.

The Eleventh Judicial District Nominating Commission submitted the names of four candidates to the governor’s office for review. Governor Bill Richardson appointed three judges today. The fourth candidate, Cindy Lee Gray, of Farmington, was also impressive during her interview, but the governor felt that she needs more trial experience.

“She’s an outstanding candidate,” Governor Bill Richardson said of Gray.

Governor Bill Richardson pointed out that while he ended up with three qualified judges, he strongly suggests that, in the future, judicial nominating commissions should interview and recommend candidates that better reflect the diversity of New Mexico.

“We need more diversity in the judicial selection process,” Governor Bill Richardson said.

Here is more information on the three new judges:

- **John Arthur Dean, Jr.** is a Farmington lawyer and partner in the Curtis & Dean law firm. He is the former chairman of the San Juan County Bar Association. Dean earned his law degree from the University of New Mexico in 1977. He also served as San Juan County commissioner from 1992-96. In addition to his law practice, Dean has served as the Domestic Violence commissioner and Domestic Relations Hearing Officer in San Juan County.
- **Douglas A. Echols** is the assistant city attorney in Farmington. Echols currently serves as the chairman of the San Juan County DWI Task Force, a position he has held since 2001. A graduate of Farmington High School, Echols earned his law degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1979. He was admitted to the New Mexico State Bar in 1980. Before working in the city attorney's office, Echols was a partner in Rosebrough, Thrower & Echols P.C.
- **Thomas J. Hynes** is a Farmington lawyer and partner in Hynes, Hale and Gurley law firm. The former U.S. Marine and graduate of Farmington High School is a member of the New Mexico State Bar Association and the Navajo Nation Bar Association. Before earning his law degree at Georgetown Law School, Hynes served as a legislative assistant in the office of the late U.S. Senator Joseph M. Montoya. Hynes also served two part-time stints as assistant district attorney in San Juan County.

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