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■ THE COURTS

# Adkins, Wright Set Two Firsts

## *Glendening Selections Aid Court Diversity*

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**BY STACEY WINAKUR**

*Daily Record Legal Affairs Writer*

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Gov. Parris Glendening set some judicial firsts yesterday when he appointed Judge Sally D. Adkins to the Court of Special Appeals and Judge Alexander Wright to the Baltimore County Circuit Court.

Adkins, a Wicomico County Circuit Court judge since 1996, is the first Eastern Shore woman appointed to an appellate court in Maryland.

Wright, a Baltimore County District Court judge since 1993, is the first African American appointed to the circuit court in county history.

Glendening has been lauded for the

SEE JUDGE PAGE 4A

# Judge

*Continued from page 1A*

diversity of his appointments to Maryland's courts. About 23 percent of his 75 appointments have been minorities and 37 percent have been women.

"We are pleased the governor has continued his commitment to expanding diversity on the courts by this appointment," said Susan Magazine, immediate past president of the Women's Bar Association.

Adkins, who graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1975, created a child custody mediation program in Wicomico County in 1996 and reviewed all cases involving child custody or visitation.

Past president of the Wicomico County Bar Association and the Eastern Shore Chapter of the Women's Bar Association, Adkins was in private practice in Salisbury from 1976 until she became the first woman judge on the Eastern Shore two years ago.

"Judge Adkins has demonstrated her ability to act in a fair and impartial manner in a wide variety of judicial proceedings," Glendening said in a statement. "In addition, her strong community involvement and dedication to children will bring valuable assets to the Court of Special Appeals."

Judge Irma Raker, the first woman on the Court of Appeals, praised Adkins ap-

pointment.

"In Gov. Glendening's selection of Judge Adkins for the Maryland Court of Special Appeals, not only does he appoint an excellent judge, but she brings the perspective of an Eastern Shore woman to an already outstanding bench," she said.

Adkins will fill the vacancy created by Judge Dale R. Cathell's elevation to the Court of Appeals in January.

Wright, who will fill a new judgeship created by the General Assembly in 1997, worked in the state Attorney General's Office for 14 years, earning that office's Exceptional Service Award in 1992. He also served as an assistant public defender from 1975 to 1979.

A member of the Governor's Commission on Criminal Sentencing and the Baltimore County NAACP, Wright graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1974.

"I have known Judge Wright for many years," Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert M. Bell said. "He is an extremely good District Court judge and I am confident he also will be an excellent judge of the Circuit Court."

Glendening also appointed Robert Steinberg to the Baltimore County District Court. He is a partner in the Towson law firm of Wartzman, Omansky, Blibaum, Simons, Steinberg, Sachs & Sagal, P.A.