

Article 4.

Court of Appeals.

§ 7A-16. Creation and organization.

The Court of Appeals is created effective January 1, 1967. It shall consist initially of six judges, elected by the qualified voters of the State for terms of eight years. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall designate one of the judges as Chief Judge, to serve in such capacity at the pleasure of the Chief Justice. Before entering upon the duties of his office, a judge of the Court of Appeals shall take the oath of office prescribed for a judge of the General Court of Justice.

The Governor on or after July 1, 1967, shall make temporary appointments to the six initial judgeships. The appointees shall serve until January 1, 1969. Their successors shall be elected at the general election for members of the General Assembly in November, 1968, and shall take office on January 1, 1969, to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term which began on January 1, 1967.

Upon the appointment of at least five judges, and the designation of a Chief Judge, the court is authorized to convene, organize, and promulgate, subject to the approval of the Supreme Court, such supplementary rules as it deems necessary and appropriate for the discharge of the judicial business lawfully assigned to it.

Effective January 1, 1969, the number of judges is increased to nine, and the Governor, on or after March 1, 1969, shall make temporary appointments to the additional judgeships thus created. The appointees shall serve until January 1, 1971. Their successors shall be elected at the general election for members of the General Assembly in November, 1970, and shall take office on January 1, 1971, to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term which began on January 1, 1969.

Effective January 1, 1977, the number of judges is increased to 12; and the Governor, on or after July 1, 1977, shall make temporary appointments to the additional judgeships thus created. The appointees shall serve until January 1, 1979. Their successors shall be elected at the general election for members of the General Assembly in November, 1978, and shall take office on January 1, 1979, to serve the remainder of the unexpired term which began on January 1, 1977.

On or after December 15, 2000, the Governor shall appoint three additional judges to increase the number of judges to 15.

The Court of Appeals shall sit in panels of three judges each and may also sit en banc to hear or rehear any cause upon a vote of the majority of the judges of the court. The Chief Judge insofar as practicable shall assign the members to panels in such fashion that each member sits a substantially equal number of times with each other member, shall preside when a member of a panel, and shall designate the presiding judge of the other panel or panels.

Except as may be provided in G.S. 7A-32, three judges shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the court when sitting in panels of three judges, and a majority of the then sitting judges on the Court of Appeals shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the court when sitting en banc.

In the event the Chief Judge is unable, on account of absence or temporary incapacity, to perform the duties placed upon him as Chief Judge, the Chief Justice shall appoint an acting Chief Judge from the other judges of the Court, to temporarily discharge the duties of Chief Judge. (1967, c. 108, s. 1; 1969, c. 1190, s. 3; 1973, c. 301; 1977, c. 1047; 2000-67, s. 15.5(a); 2004-203, s. 16; 2016-125, 4th Ex. Sess., s. 22(a); 2017-7, s. 1; 2019-2, s. 1.)

§ 7A-17: Repealed by Session Laws 1969, c. 1190, s. 57.

§ 7A-18. Compensation of judges.

(a) The Chief Judge and each associate judge of the Court of Appeals shall receive the annual salary provided in the Current Operations Appropriations Act. Each judge is entitled to reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses at the rate allowed State employees generally.

(a1) In addition to the reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses authorized by subsection (a) of this section, and notwithstanding G.S. 138-6, each judge whose permanent residence is at least 50 miles from the City of Raleigh shall also be reimbursed for the mileage the judge travels each trip to the City of Raleigh from the judge's home for business of the court. The reimbursement authorized by this subsection shall be calculated for each judge by multiplying the actual round-trip mileage from that judge's home to the City of Raleigh by a rate-per-mile established by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, but not to exceed the business standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service.

(b) In lieu of merit and other increment raises paid to regular State employees, a judge of the Court of Appeals shall receive as longevity pay an annual amount equal to four and eight-tenths percent (4.8%) of the annual salary set forth in the Current Operations Appropriations Act payable monthly after five years of service, nine and six-tenths percent (9.6%) after 10 years of service, fourteen and four-tenths percent (14.4%) after 15 years of service, nineteen and two-tenths percent (19.2%) after 20 years of service, and twenty-four percent (24%) after 25 years of service. "Service" means service as a justice or judge of the General Court of Justice, as a member of the Utilities Commission, as an administrative law judge, or as the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts. Service shall also mean service as a district attorney or as a clerk of superior court. (1967, c. 108, s. 1; 1983, c. 761, s. 243; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1034, s. 165; c. 1109, ss. 11, 13.1; 1985, c. 698, s. 10(a); 2007-323, ss. 14.21(b), 28.18A(b); 2015-241, s. 30.3(e); 2017-57, s. 35.4(e); 2021-180, s. 16.18(b); 2023-134, s. 16.30(b).)

§ 7A-19. Seats and sessions of court.

(a) The Court of Appeals shall sit in Raleigh, and at such other locations within the State as the Supreme Court may designate.

(b) The Department of Administration shall provide adequate quarters for the Court of Appeals.

(c) The Chief Judge shall schedule sessions of the court as required to discharge expeditiously the court's business. (1967, c. 108, s. 1.)

§ 7A-20. Clerk; oath; salary; assistants; fees.

(a) The Court of Appeals shall appoint a clerk to serve at its pleasure. Before entering upon the clerk's duties, the clerk shall take the oath of office prescribed for the clerk of the Supreme Court, conformed to the office of clerk of the Court of Appeals. The salary of the clerk shall be fixed by the Administrative Officer of the Courts, subject to the approval of the Court of Appeals. The number and salaries of the clerk's assistants, and their bonds, if required, shall be fixed by the Administrative Officer of the Courts. The clerk shall adopt a seal of office, to be approved by the Court of Appeals.

(b) Subject to approval of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals shall promulgate from time to time a fee bill for services rendered by the clerk, and such fees shall be remitted to the State Treasurer. Charges to litigants for document management and the reproduction of appellate records and briefs shall be fixed by rule of the Supreme Court and remitted to the Appellate Courts Printing and Computer Operations Fund established in G.S. 7A-343.3. The operations of the Court of

Appeals shall be subject to the oversight of the State Auditor pursuant to Article 5A of Chapter 147 of the General Statutes. (1967, c. 108, s. 1; 1983, c. 913, s. 4; 2002-126, s. 2.2(k); 2019-243, s. 19(b); 2021-180, s. 16.12(a); 2023-103, s. 5(d).)

§ 7A-21. Marshal; powers; salary.

The Court of Appeals may appoint a marshal to serve at its pleasure and to perform such duties as it may assign. The marshal shall have the criminal and civil powers of a sheriff and any additional powers necessary to execute the orders of the appellate division in any county of the State. His salary shall be fixed by the Administrative Officer, subject to the approval of the Court of Appeals. (1981, c. 485.)

§ 7A-22. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 7A-23. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 7A-24. Reserved for future codification purposes.