

NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

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Justice Berch Honored by Arizona Summit Law School

PHOENIX – At its December 20, 2014 graduation ceremonies, Arizona Summit Law School surprised Arizona Supreme Court Justice Rebecca White Berch by granting her an honorary Juris Doctor degree, honoris causa. Justice Berch was the law school’s commencement speaker, delivering the graduation address at Phoenix Civic Plaza on Saturday.

Degrees were conferred on 179 Arizona Summit Law School graduates while an audience of more than 600 friends and family attended in support of the new graduates.

“We were honored to confer our honorary degree upon Justice Berch. She exemplifies the highest standards of achievement to which our students aspire, and truly is a role model for the vision and mission of Arizona Summit Law School,” the school’s Dean, Shirley Mays, said.

The bestowing of honorary degrees dates back to the Middle Ages, but it is a practice that is generally special and rare, reserved for the most distinguished professionals in a given field.

Justice Berch was appointed to the Arizona Supreme Court in 2002 after serving as a Judge on the Arizona State Court of Appeals for District 1. She became Chief Justice and served in that role from 1999 to 2014.

Before joining the state’s highest appellate courts, Berch served as Solicitor General for the State of Arizona, First Assistant (Chief Deputy) Attorney General, and taught law at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law.

Chief Justice Berch serves on the United States Conference of Chief Justices, the Board of Trustees of the National Conference of Bar Examiners, as Vice-Chair of the ABA Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, and in several other public positions. She speaks regularly on law-related topics to students, civic groups, and legal organizations.

Justice Berch served as Arizona's Chief Justice from 2009 to 2014 and has served on the Supreme Court since 2002. Justice Berch chairs or serves on the boards of state and national committees that work to improve the practice of law and the judiciary.

To learn more about Arizona Summit Law School, go to www.azsummitlaw.edu.

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