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Courier Journal

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Women take the lead as Ky. Supreme Court majority

Hannah Pinski
Louisville Courier Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

For the first time in Kentucky's history, women will make up the majority of the state's Supreme Court. But that's not the only way women are making history in the commonwealth's judicial branch.

Newly elected Pamela Goodwine is also the first woman to serve at every level of Kentucky's judiciary and is the first Black woman to be elected a justice in the state. Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Justice Debra Hembree Lambert will lead the seven-member court as the first female chief justice starting in January.

Both Goodwine and Lambert said they hope gains will inspire others — especially women in the legal field.

"I just want them to realize their dreams are attainable and that they must stay focused and work for it," Goodwine told The Courier Journal.

Goodwine has served as a judge for 25 years at various levels, including district, circuit and appeals courts. She won the race for the 5th Supreme Court District seat in November with 77.1% of the vote, defeating challenger Erin Izzo.

Goodwine said the win was a "45-year dream in the making," and she wants to "make a difference" in her time on the Supreme Court.



Goodwine



Lambert

She said her accomplishments were possible because of the women who came before her, who "overcame obstacles" and laid a path for others to reach their goals. She hopes her story and making history will also inspire others to

know their dreams can be achievable.

Goodwine said she had to persevere through many challenges, including some related to her health and family, to get where she is today.

"I stayed steadfast and focused and had that vision, and now that I'm here ... I don't intend to be a flower on the wall," Goodwine said.

Lambert was first elected to the Kentucky Supreme Court in 2018 and said it was an honor to be elected by her colleagues as chief justice.

"As far as being the first women chief justice, I am very excited about that ... and

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Toxic tire pollution persists in Kentucky



Russ Miller and other volunteers gather for a photograph after hauling dozens of tires out of the upper Red River in 2023. PROVIDED BY MIKE WILKINSON

State efforts fall short, leaving it to volunteers

Connor Giffin
Louisville Courier Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Every year, Kentucky generates 4 million waste tires, roughly one tire for every person in the state.

Most are diverted toward recycling or reuse programs. But many are unaccounted for.

These tires are illegally dumped off bridges, rolled off into the woods or washed out of open dumps by floodwaters. Over time, they nestle into stream banks and riverbeds, where they pose a lasting, toxic threat.

Tires not only disrupt natural beauty and recreation along Kentucky's waterways — they also contain harmful, cancer-causing chemicals, which can leach into the water or land around them.

Over recent decades, organized

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Abandoned tires sit in and along the Cumberland River in Daniel Boone National Forest on Nov. 10. CONNOR GIFFIN/THE COURIER JOURNAL

Several Trump nominees hit by 'swatting'

Jonathan Limehouse and Josh Meyer
USA TODAY

Several of President-elect Donald Trump's Cabinet nominees this week were on the receiving end of bomb threats and a form of criminal harassment called "swatting," his camp said.

According to a statement from Trump transition spokesperson Karoline Leavitt, the bomb and swatting threats were made on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.

"Law enforcement and other authorities acted quickly to ensure the safety of those who were targeted," Leavitt said. "President Trump and the entire Transition team are grateful for their swift action."

An FBI official told USA TODAY the agency is aware of the incidents and is actively investigating.

"We take all potential threats seriously, and as always, encourage members of the public to immediately report anything they consider suspicious to law enforcement," the official said.

Among the nominees saying they were targeted were New York Rep. Elise Stafanik, Trump's pick to be the next ambassador of the U.N.; former Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz, Trump's initial attorney general selection; and former Rep. Lee Zeldin, who was tapped to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.

The FBI describes "swatting" as a crime designed to draw an emergency law enforcement response to a hoax victim, often creating a situation where a SWAT team arrives ready for a possible violent encounter.

"The individuals who engage in this activity use technology to make it appear that the emergency call is coming from the victim's phone," stated one FBI public announcement in 2013. "Sometimes swatting is done for revenge, sometimes as a prank.

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