

Selby was formally introduced by state Budget Director Jean S. Blackwell, who attended law school with her at the University of Michigan in the 1970s. Blackwell spoke to the fact of Selby's "firsts" as a woman and black on the court. "Some feel this shouldn't matter, but it really is a giant step for Indiana," she said.

Harry T. Edwards, a federal appeals judge in Washington who once was Selby's law professor, said the new justice's career has been characterized by "intellect, experience and commitment."

"She will be a wonderful addition to this distinguished court," he said.

Selby was appointed by Gov. Evan Bayh, who administered the oath of office with a Bible held by her husband, Bruce Curry.

Her father, attorney Ralph Selby, and mother, Archie, of Bay City, Mich., and her 9-year-old daughter, Lauren, helped Selby don the black robes of a justice.

The five-member court then stood in recess. When the justices returned to the courtroom a few minutes later, Givan was absent and Selby sat to Shephard's left.

[From the Indianapolis News, Dec. 22, 1994]

SELBY WINS HIGH COURT SEAT

Congratulations are in order to Myra C. Selby, the first woman and first African-American to be appointed to serve on the Indiana Supreme Court.

Selby, 39, who has served as Gov. Evan Bayh's director of health care policy since July 1993, was one of three female finalists for the seat. The other two women were Indiana Court of Appeals Judge Betty A. Barteau and Charlestown attorney Anne M. Sedwick.

Selby said she hopes her historic appointment will help all children "reach for that highest star" and dream of lofty accomplishments.

"I hope to be able to become a symbol for young girls and boys of all colors, shapes and sizes," added Selby, who, before working for Bayh, served at Ice Miller Donadio & Ryan for 10 years as a private attorney specializing in health care cases.

Selby will replace Justice Richard M. Givan, scheduled to retire at month's end. She will be the youngest justice on the five-member court.

Some have criticized the governor for choosing for the third time in as many appointments a close aide as an Indiana Supreme Court justice. Bayh appointed his personal attorney, Jon Krahulik, to the high court in 1990. When Krahulik resigned, Bayh appointed Frank Sullivan Jr., his executive assistant for fiscal policy, to take his place.

But Bayh said he selected Selby for the \$81,000-a-year post because of her record of excellence in academics, intellect, practice of law and ethics. Additionally, he long has expressed his intent to diversify the all-white, male court.

We particularly applaud Selby's sentiment that the Indiana Supreme Court should hear more oral arguments of cases and better educate the public about its role in state government.

We welcome the opportunity she will have to promote this philosophy and wish her a successful term in office.

[From the Indianapolis Recorder, Dec. 24, 1994]

SELBY WANTS TO SET EXAMPLE ON HIGH COURT

(By Stephen Thomas)

Traditions pertaining to culture and gender have been erased and diversity has been injected into Indiana's highest court.

Gov. Evan Bayh appointed attorney Myra C. Selby to fill a vacancy on the Indiana Supreme Court, Monday. Selby has become the first woman as well as the first African-American to serve on the high court, as the replacement for retiring Justice Richard M. Givan.

The 39-year-old Selby said she has understood the ground-breaking significance of her appointment and that she would hope to set a shining example for young people who have dreamed of venturing into high-prestige career paths.

"I hope to become a symbol for young children, girls and boys (of) all colors, shapes and sizes," Selby said, "so they, too, can reach for that highest star that they might dream of."

Selby has exemplified excellence in the legal profession, as evidenced by her consideration by the Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission, which named Selby one of three finalists for the governor's contemplation. Selby has started her judiciary career at the top of the state's ladder, for she has not served as a judge hitherto her historic appointment.

"Two elements that have impressed me most about Myra would be her intelligence and her thoughtful, considered demeanor," said Bayh, "I'd even go so far as to say her judicial demeanor. I believe she is the kind of person who will hear all parties, weigh all the evidence and look to the law and do what is just."

Selby, the 103rd justice and youngest member of the high court, has been the governor's health care policy director for more than a year. Professional skepticism for her lack of bench experience, her political ties to the governor who appointed her as well as attention magnified by her race and gender would not become performance obstacles, Selby said.

"I hope I'll handle it well," Selby said. "I think that anticipating that it will occur will make it a little easier. Whenever one is in public life, one realizes that one has a responsibility to the public for the role that you're in. I'm fully aware of that and appreciate it."

Selby would not necessarily be remembered solely for her appointment's obvious diversification of the high court. Bayh was impressed with Selby's zeal to be recognized for those aspects of her life over which she has had control, notably her accomplishments as a lawyer.

"I want to be chosen for anything I accomplish because of what I am and because of my accomplishments and my abilities," Bayh said Selby once told him. "It seems to be that that is what we honor (in Selby's appointment)."

"The fact that she agreed to an enormous cut in pay to step down as the partner of one of the most prestigious law firms, not only in our state but in the country, to serve the people of Indiana is not something that should be held against her."

Selby was a partner in the law firm of Ice Miller Donadio and Ryan, a position she took after serving as an associate in the Washington-based law firm of Seyfarth Shaw Fairweather and Geraldson. She has specialized in health care law and labor law.

Selby in 1993 and '94 has served as an associate professor of health sciences at the Finch University of Health Sciences, Chicago Medical School, one of her several academic positions.

The 1980 University of Michigan Law School graduate has written articles for numerous legal journals, also. She earned a

bachelor's degree in 1977 from Kalamazoo College.

Selby, perhaps prophetically, was honored as "A Breakthrough Woman" in 1990 by the Coalition of 100 Black Women.

Selby, her husband of 16 years Bruce Curry and their daughter Lauren reside in Indianapolis.

[From the Indianapolis Star, Jan. 5, 1995]

NEWEST JUSTICE TAKES HER PLACE, BREAKS BARRIERS

Ever since Indiana became a state in 1816, the Supreme Court has looked very much the same: all white and all male. On Wednesday, Myra C. Selby changed all that.

Selby, a former law firm partner and government lawyer, took the oath of office to become the 103rd justice to sit on the high court—and its first woman and first black member.

While mindful of her role in Indiana history, Selby said she did not seek to be distinguished as a jurist by her race or gender.

"What I did seek was the opportunity to serve the citizens of the state of Indiana on this esteemed court," she said moments after taking her place on the Supreme Court bench in the north wing of the Statehouse.

The courtroom was jammed with hundreds of well-wishers, including members of Selby's family, friends, law and government colleagues and state lawmakers who had come to the Capitol for the first 1995 working day of the Indiana General Assembly.

Selby pledged that her service on the court would be marked by "diligence, thoughtfulness, fairness and patience . . ."

She replaced Richard M. Givan, who retired after serving two days short of 26 years, including 13 years as chief justice.

"It's been a lot of fun," said Givan. Gesturing to Selby, who was seated in the audience below the bench before she was sworn in, he added: "Myra, I wish you well."

At 39, Selby is the third-youngest justice to serve, after Justice Roger O. DeBruer, who joined the court in 1968 at 34, and Chief Justice Randall T. Shepard, who was a few months younger than Selby when he joined the court in 1986.

Selby was formally introduced by State Budget Director Jean S. Blackwell, who attended law school with Selby at the University of Michigan in the 1970s. Blackwell acknowledged Selby's "firsts" as a woman and black on the court. "Some feel this shouldn't matter, but it really is a giant step for Indiana," she said.

Harry T. Edwards, a federal appeals judge in Washington and former law professor of Selby's, said Selby's career has been characterized by "intellect, experience and commitment."

Selby was appointed by Gov. Evan Bayh, who administered the oath of office with a Bible held by her husband, Bruce Curry.

Her father, attorney Ralph Selby; mother, Archie, of Bay City, Mich.; and her 9-year old daughter, Lauren, helped Selby don her black robe.

The five-member court then stood in recess. When the justices returned to the courtroom a few minutes later, Givan was absent, and Selby sat to the left of Shepard. "I'm a little bit nervous today," she said. "I hope that means I'm ready."