

New Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Sworn In



John Roberts was sworn in on September 29 as the 17th chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Roberts replaces former Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who died early in September.

The chief justice is the top judge in the U.S. He or she is in charge of the Supreme Court, the nation's highest court. The role of the Supreme Court is to rule on cases involving laws of Congress and the U.S. Constitution. The chief justice also oversees the entire federal court system.

NEWS WORD BOX

Supreme Court judge
nomination chief justice

Roberts was nominated to the Supreme Court by President Bush. He was nominated in July to replace Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who is expected to retire. After the death of Chief Justice Rehnquist, the president asked Roberts to take the top job. O'Connor agreed to stay on until a replacement can be named.

After he was nominated, Roberts spent several days answering questions from members of a special committee of the U.S. Senate. When the committee approved his nomination, all 100 members of the Senate voted. Seventy-eight senators voted for Roberts and 22 senators voted against him.

MORE FACTS ABOUT THE SUPREME COURT

- Roberts is one of nine justices on the Supreme Court. He is the first new Supreme Court justice in 11 years. Once appointed, Supreme Court justices can serve on the court for the rest of their lives.
- On October 3, President Bush nominated Harriet Miers to replace Sandra Day O'Connor. She will go before the Senate Committee in the weeks ahead. The president hopes she will take her seat on the Supreme Court in November.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

If you were on the committee asking a new Supreme Court justice questions, what would you want to know?