Manitoba Jurist Glenn Joyal nominated to the Supreme Court of Canada

June 24, 2026

On June 22, 2026, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced the nomination of the Honourable Glenn D. Joyal, Chief Justice of the Manitoba Court of King's Bench, to the Supreme Court of Canada.
His appointment is intended to fill the Western Canada seat vacated by Justice Sheilah Martin and reflects the continued importance of both regional representation and functional bilingualism in the composition of the highest court in Canada.

Key takeaways

- **Manitoba representation**: Chief Justice Joyal's nomination marks the first Manitoba appointee in 20 years and the first time in more than 10 years that Manitoba has been represented on the top court. The last judge from Manitoba to serve on the Supreme Court was The Honourable Marshall Rothstein, who served from March 2006 to August 2015.
- **Western Canada seat preserved**: Chief Justice Joyal replaces Justice Martin as one of the two justices traditionally drawn from Western Canada, maintaining the longstanding convention of regional representation on the Court. This convention is not a constitutional requirement, but rather a well-established practice. The only formal requirement for regional representation is that at least three Supreme Court justices be from Quebec.
- **Functional bilingualism maintained**: Chief Justice Joyal has Franco-Manitoban roots and his nomination aligns with the Government of Canada's commitment to appointing functionally bilingual judges.

Background and career

Chief Justice Joyal was called to the Manitoba Bar in 1987 after completing law school at the University of Manitoba and McGill University. He has studied at numerous institutions including Simon Fraser University, Paris-Sorbonne University, and Oxford University, as well as institutions in Italy which enabled him to become trilingual. He began his career as a Crown prosecutor in Manitoba, later working as a federal prosecutor and litigation counsel with the Federal Department of Justice, and spent a year doing criminal law in private practice.

Chief Justice Joyal was appointed to the bench in 1998 and has accumulated more than 25 years of judicial experience over the course of his career, serving at all three levels of court in Manitoba: the Manitoba Provincial Court, the Manitoba Court of King's Bench and the Manitoba Court of Appeal. He has been Chief Justice of the Manitoba Court of King's Bench since 2011.

Chief Justice Joyal has particular expertise in criminal and constitutional law, though he also regularly presided over civil and administrative law cases. He presided over a number of high-profile cases in Manitoba, including matters involving physician-assisted death, Charter challenges, and serious criminal proceedings including:

- ***Patient v. Attorney General of Canada et al***, **2016 MBQB 63** granting an application for physician-assisted death based on the *Carter* criteria while anticipated federal legislation had yet to be put in place.
- ***Gateway Bible Baptist Church et al. v. Manitoba et al***., **2021 MBQB 219 and 2021 MBQB 219** upholding the constitutionality and administrative validity of Manitoba's COVID-19 public health orders. These decisions were affirmed by the Manitoba Court of Appeal (2023 MBCA 56).
- ***R. v. Skibicki***, **2024 MBKB 113** presiding over the trial of an accused serial killer who had confessed to the killings of four vulnerable Indigenous women. The accused was found guilty on all four counts of first-degree murder.
- ***Al-Bakkal v. de Vries et al***, **2016 MBQB 45** granting summary judgment in an action where the dispute was essentially academic in nature. This decision has been relied on in several cases involving private actions against universities, including in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Nomination process

As part of the nomination process, Chief Justice Joyal will participate in a public question-and-answer session, reported to be taking place on June 29, 2026. Members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and a member of the Green Party of Canada will be invited to attend.

While Chief Justice Joyal's upcoming public question-and-answer session reflects Canada's gradual move toward greater transparency in judicial appointments, it differs significantly from the nomination process for the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States.

In the U.S., the president makes a nomination with the advice and consent of the Senate, in a process which now involves hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Senate confirmation process is a genuine hurdle as nominees must secure senate approval to be appointed.

In Canada, the judicial appointment power is formally vested in the Governor General, who acts on the advice of the Prime Minister. Parliament has no power to defeat a nomination and Canadian hearings serve no constitutional function.

For a more detailed comparison of the two systems, see Appointment processes for judges of the SCC and SCOTUS.

By

Nadia Effendi, Laura M. Wagner, Teagan Markin, Chanel Maillet Glas

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BLG Offices

Calgary

Centennial Place, East Tower
520 3rd Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB, Canada
T2P 0R3

T 403.232.9500
F 403.266.1395

Ottawa

World Exchange Plaza
100 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON, Canada
K1P 1J9

T 613.237.5160
F 613.230.8842

Vancouver

1200 Waterfront Centre
200 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V7X 1T2

T 604.687.5744
F 604.687.1415

Montréal

1000 De La Gauchetière Street West
Suite 900
Montréal, QC, Canada
H3B 5H4

T 514.954.2555
F 514.879.9015

Toronto

Bay Adelaide Centre, East Tower
22 Adelaide Street West
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5H 4E3

T 416.367.6000
F 416.367.6749

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