A Nationwide Jurisdiction

Jimmie Reyna ’75 helps shape legal opinion as a federal judge on the nation’s second-highest court.

By Robin L. Flanigan

JIMMIE REYNA ’75 WATCHED THE LIVE vote on C-Span as 86 senators, one by one, gave a thumbs-up to confirm his nomination as a circuit judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

People he hadn’t heard from in decades started calling. This wasn’t just a proud moment for Reyna and his family, but a historic one for the nation. When Reyna received his commission the next day, on April 5, 2011, he became the first Latino to serve on the country’s second-highest court, which has nationwide jurisdiction to hear appeals in patent law and other specialized cases.

“I didn’t think there were any ‘firsts’ left,” says Reyna, a recognized expert in international trade, trade policy, and customs matters. “I know it’s extremely meaningful, and I’m proud of it, but I don’t walk around as the Latino representative. I walk around as a judge with a position of great influence, one that I approach very seriously because of its importance in the stability and safety of this country.”

Established in 1982 by the merger of the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals and the appellate division of the United States Court of Claims, the court is unique in hearing appeals based on subject
EXPERT OPINION: An expert on international trade law, Reyna is a member of the U.S. court that hears appeals based on patent disputes, trade agreements, and international issues.

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Robin L. Flanigan is a Rochester-based freelance writer.