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Cooper appoints new Gaston County Superior Court judge

Kevin Ellis The Gaston Gazette

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Gaston County's newest Superior Court judge may have a similar sounding name.

Gov. Roy Cooper appointed Jesse Caldwell IV to serve as a Superior Court judge for Gaston County. He will be replacing his father, Jesse Caldwell III, who retired at the end of May after reaching the state's mandatory retirement age of 72.

“Jess Caldwell has spent his legal career serving the people of Gaston County,” Cooper said in making the announcement Friday. “I am confident that he will be a great asset to the bench.”

Caldwell is the chief juvenile public defender for Gaston County. Previously, he was the assistant public defender in Gastonia. He is also a guest lecturer at Johnson C. Smith University.

Caldwell earned his bachelor of arts degree at UNC Chapel Hill and his law degree at Charleston School of Law.

His father had been a judge in Gaston County for 28 years, and before that an attorney for 20 years in Gaston County. Caldwell III is a Democrat, although it has only been in recent years that judges were elected with a party affiliation.

The seat the younger Caldwell now holds will come up for election in November 2022.

Caldwell IV beat out Beth Stockwell, an assistant district attorney, and Bill Moore, an attorney in private practice in Gastonia, for the political appointment.

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