

TIME LINE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE MAGISTRATE JUDGES SYSTEM

1968

The Federal Magistrates Act (the Act) is signed into law by President Lyndon Baines Johnson on October 17.

1969

The Judicial Conference establishes the magistrates system in five pilot districts: District of Columbia, New Jersey, Virginia Eastern, California Southern, and Kansas.

1970

The Judicial Conference authorizes 83 full-time magistrate positions, 450 part-time magistrate positions and 13 combination clerk-magistrate or referee in bankruptcy-magistrate positions to replace over 700 commissioners.

1971

By July 1, the magistrates system is fully operational, replacing the commissioner system in all district courts.

TIME LINE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE MAGISTRATE JUDGES SYSTEM

1976

The Act is amended to authorize magistrates to hear and determine non-case-dispositive motions, and to hear case-dispositive motions and prisoner cases, and issue findings and recommended dispositions.

1979

The Act is amended to authorize magistrates to try civil cases with consent of the parties and to order entry of judgments, to expand their criminal jurisdiction to include all misdemeanor cases, to establish a merit selection process for magistrates and to authorize law clerks for magistrates.

1980

Chief Justice appoints the first magistrate to serve on a Judicial Conference committee.

1986

The Act is amended to authorize the recall of retired magistrates.

TIME LINE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE MAGISTRATE JUDGES SYSTEM

1988

The Act is amended to link the salary of a full-time magistrate to 92 percent of the salary of a district judge. A new retirement system established providing a full salary annuity at age 65 with 14 years of service.

1990

The title of office is changed by statute to United States magistrate judge.

1996

The Act is amended to eliminate the consent requirement in most petty offense cases to permit oral consent in Class A misdemeanor cases and mandate that all appeals of magistrate judge decisions in civil consent cases be to the courts of appeals.

2000

The Act is amended to expand magistrate judge contempt authority to eliminate the consent requirement in all petty offense cases and to expand magistrate judge authority in cases involving juveniles.

2004

The Judicial Conference agrees to invite one magistrate judge, selected by the Chief Justice, to attend Judicial Conference sessions in a non-voting capacity.