

The Appellate Strategist

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Governor Brown Nominates U.C. Berkley Law Professor Goodwin Liu to California Supreme Court

By Matthew A. Reed

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Governor Jerry Brown has acted to fill the California Supreme Court vacancy created by the retirement earlier this year of Associate Justice Carlos R. Moreno by nominating U.C. Berkley law professor Goodwin Liu to the post.

Professor Liu, 40, has never been a judge, but recently garnered headlines as President Obama's nominee for a seat on the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. His confirmation was blocked by Senate Republicans, citing his legal philosophy and despite support from prominent legal conservatives Kenneth W. Starr and Richard Painter. He ultimately withdrew his nomination.

Professor Liu is the son of Taiwanese immigrants. He was born in Georgia, but raised in Sacramento where, according to his CV, he attended public schools. He graduated Stanford in 1991 with a bachelor's degree in biology, then went to Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship, where he took a masters degree in philosophy and physiology. "Upon returning to the United States, he went to Washington, D.C., to help launch the AmeriCorps national service program and worked for two years as a senior program officer at the Corporation for National Service."

Professor Liu's career in the law began upon graduation from Yale Law School in 1998, whereupon he clerked for Judge David Tatel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. He then worked "as Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, where he developed and coordinated K-12 education policy." A U.S. Supreme Court clerkship with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg followed, then a stint in O'Melveny & Myers' appellate litigation practice in Washington, D.C. Since joining the Boalt Hall faculty in 2003, he has ascended to the rank of Associate Dean and Professor of Law while establishing himself as a nationally recognized expert on constitutional law, education policy, civil rights, and the Supreme Court.

He is also a prolific and influential legal scholar. Some of his more recent publications include:

- Keeping Faith With The Constitution (2009) (with Pamela S. Karlan and Christopher H. Schroeder);
- *The Bush Administration and Civil Rights: Lessons Learned*, 4 Duke Journal of Constitutional Law & Public Policy 77 (2009);
- *National Citizenship and the Promise of Equal Educational Opportunity*, in *The Constitution in 2020* (Jack M. Balkin & Reva B. Siegel eds., 2009);
- *Rethinking Constitutional Welfare Rights*, 61 Stanford Law Review 203 (2008).