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## NEWS RELEASE

# CHIEF JUSTICE ADDRESSES GSU COMMENCEMENT

*Johnson, state's first African American female chief justice, scheduled to speak at Dec. 16 graduation*

GRAMBLING, La. (December 7, 2016) Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson will deliver Grambling State University's 2016 fall commencement speech. The ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. December 16 in the Fredrick C. Hobdy Assembly Center on the university campus.

"As one of the first African American women to attend the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University (LSU), she is a trailblazer for women and men in the judiciary," said GSU President Rick Gallot. "Chief Justice Johnson has always advocated for civil rights, social justice and empowering communities. She has practiced at all levels of the judiciary, and has provided services to clients in socio-economically deprived neighborhoods. We are so honored to have her as our commencement speaker."



Johnson is a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, where she earned her a bachelor's in political science in 1964. In 1969, she earned her juris doctorate from LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center.

Her career path emphasizes principles of justice, fairness, equality and a life of service. Johnson chairs both the Louisiana Supreme Court's Judicial Council and the Human Resources Committee. She has served as a member of the Court's Legal Services Task Force and the National Campaign on Best Practices in the area of racial and ethnic fairness in the court system. She is an active member of the Women in Prison Project, the National Bar Association, the American Bar Association and the Louisiana State Bar Association.

Johnson was awarded the American Bar Association's (ABA) Spirit of Excellence Award from the ABA's Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession in 2010. That same year, she was inducted into the National Bar Association's (NBA) Hall of Fame.

Johnson is an active member of the New Orleans Chapter of Links Inc. and the Omicron Nu Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. Johnson is the proud parent of two adult children. Her son, David, is an accountant living in Atlanta, Georgia, with his family. Her daughter, Rachael, is an attorney licensed to practice law in Florida and Louisiana.

### About Grambling State University

Grambling State University (GSU), located in Grambling, Louisiana, is a historically black university founded in 1901. The University has been accredited by 13 accrediting associations and holds accreditations in all programs required by the Louisiana Board of Regents. The 590-acre campus offers 43 undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Grambling State University is a member of the University of Louisiana System.

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