

# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

*No. 51*

**Approved January 23, 2023**

WHEREAS, As a proud lifelong resident of Providence, Judge Bruce M. Selya attended the Providence public schools and graduated from Classical High School, magna cum laude, in 1951; and

WHEREAS, Judge Selya attended Harvard College on a Smith scholarship where he obtained his B.A. degree magna cum laude in 1955 and was named a John Harvard Scholar. Following his graduation, Selya won a scholarship to Harvard Law School. He matriculated there and received his J.D. degree cum laude in 1958 and was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1960; and

WHEREAS, Judge Selya then returned home and served for the next two years as a law clerk to Chief Judge Edward W. Day of the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island before going into private practice before a variety of federal district and appellate courts; and

WHEREAS, Judge Selya's law practice initially concentrated on litigation matters before expanding into health care, real estate development, and corporate counseling; and

WHEREAS, He was an active member of the Rhode Island Bar Association, the Rhode Island Bar Foundation and the Pawtucket Bar Association; and served a three-year term (1968-1971) as the Rhode Island representative on the First Circuit's advisory committee on appellate rules and practice; and

WHEREAS, In 1982, Judge Selya was nominated to become a United States District Court Judge for the District of Rhode Island. Following his confirmation by the United States Senate, Judge Selya was installed in that position on October 12, 1982. He was the eighteenth person to hold that office since the founding of the Republic and the first person of the Jewish faith to ascend to the federal bench in Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, Four years later, with the advice and consent of the Senate, Judge Selya was elevated to fill a newly crafted seat on the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. He was nominated on September 26, 1986 and confirmed by the Senate on October 8, 1986 - perhaps the swiftest confirmation of a federal appellate judge in the modern era. A seat on the Court of Appeals is the highest judicial office ever held by a Rhode Islander and Judge Selya became only the fifth person from Rhode Island to serve at that level; and

WHEREAS, He took the oath of office on November 24, 1986, and served on active duty until December 31, 2006. At that time, he took senior status and, as a senior circuit judge, continues to hear cases regularly. On July 16, 2008, he became the longest-serving Rhode Islander in the storied history of the First Circuit; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, Judge Selya became the most prolific judge in First Circuit history. On October 10, 2012, the court published his 1,341st signed opinion, an accomplishment that surpassed the record of 1,340 signed opinions held by the late Frank M. Coffin (one of Judge Selya's mentors). Judge Selya eclipses his own record with every opinion that he files; and he filed his 1,763rd signed opinion on February 25, 2022. Academics report that he is the most frequently cited judge in the history of the First Circuit and, by at least one study, the second most frequently cited appellate judge currently serving in the federal courts of appeals nationally; and

WHEREAS, Judge Selya has been involved in community affairs throughout his adult life. Before taking the federal bench, he was a member of the board of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and served as the founding chairman of its Community Relations Council. He was a member of the regional board of the Anti-Defamation League, a member of the board of trustees of The Wheeler School, and active in many other organizations; and

WHEREAS, Judge Selya joined the board of trustees of Rhode Island Hospital in 1989. Four years later, while serving as vice-chairman of the board of trustees of Rhode Island Hospital, Judge Selya and a few of his colleagues formed a vision of a premier healthcare delivery system, with strong academic ties, that could ensure first-rate health care in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, That vision led to the formation, in 1994, of Lifespan - an umbrella nonprofit whose original members were Rhode Island Hospital and Miriam Hospital. Judge Selya became the founding chairman of Lifespan's board of directors and served in that capacity for six and one-half years. During that time, Lifespan grew to include Newport Hospital and the Emma Pendleton Bradley Hospital. It also became Rhode Island's largest non-governmental employer; and

WHEREAS, After stepping down as chairman, Judge Selya remained a member of Lifespan's board of directors and chaired both its compensation committee and its medical affairs committee. He retired from the Lifespan board in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Judge Selya's activities in health care have been widespread. He served for fourteen years, beginning in 2000 as a public member of the board of directors of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island. Moreover, he has, at various times, served as a member of the board of trustees of Miriam Hospital, Newport Hospital, Bradley Hospital, Tufts-New England Medical Center, and Hospice Care of Rhode Island. He is a governor and trustee emeritus of Rhode Island Hospital. He is also a corporator of Butler Hospital and Women and Infants Hospital; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, coincident with the 35th anniversary of Judge Selya's appointment to the federal bench, Roger William University School of Law dedicated the school's signature classroom space as "The Honorable Bruce M. Selya Appellate Courtroom." During the dedication ceremony, Dean Michael J. Yelnosky referred to Judge Selya as "the most influential jurist in the history of Rhode Island."; and



WHEREAS, Judge Selya is a member of Temple Beth El, Providence. He also is a member of the Rhode Island Commodores, the University Club, the Harvard Club, the Harvard Law School Association, the Ronald Reagan Alumni Association, the Trump National Golf Club (Jupiter, FL), the Belmont Beach Club (West Harwich, MA), the Friends of the Metropolitan Opera, the Conductor's Circle of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, the Rhode Island Historical Society, and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum; and

WHEREAS, Through his dedication, hard work, and innumerable contributions to the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island, Judge Selya is deserving of all the praise the City of Providence has to offer.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council requests that the Department of Public Works work to manufacture, install, and maintain one or more honorary signs at prominent and appropriate locations, which shall reflect the "Judge Bruce M. Selya Way" honorary designation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to The Honorable Judge Bruce M. Selya.

IN CITY COUNCIL  
JAN 19 2023  
READ AND PASSED

  
RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT  
  
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

  
Mayor  
Date: 1/23/2023

Leo J. Perrotta  
Director



Jorge O. Elorza  
Mayor

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
*"Building Pride in Providence"*

MEMORANDUM

TO: TINA MASTROIANI, ACTING CITY CLERK  
FROM: NATALE D. URSO, MANAGING ENGINEER TRAFFIC ENGINEERING *NDU*  
SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION CEREMONIAL DESIGNATION OF FULTON ST.  
FROM MEMIORIAL BLVD. TO EXCHANGE ST. AS "JUDGE BRUCE M. SELYA WAY"  
DATE: SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

The Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division has reviewed the Resolution establishing a Ceremonial Designation on Fulton Street between Memorial Boulevard and Exchange Street as "Judge Bruce M. Selya Way." We researched available data and determined there does not currently exist another designation for this section of Fulton St. We therefore are in support of the ceremonial designation of this section of Fulton St. We will make and install the appropriate sign.

700 Allens Avenue Providence, Rhode Island 02905  
Phone 401-467-7950/Fax 401-941-2567  
[www.providenceri.com/dpw](http://www.providenceri.com/dpw)