



**Honorable Mitchell R. Morrissey**  
District Attorney

Mr. Morrissey is the district attorney for the Second Judicial District. The district attorney is a state official. He is the chief law enforcement officer in the district and is responsible for prosecuting all felonies, misdemeanors, and serious traffic offenses arising in the district. Mr. Morrissey became district attorney in January 2005; his current term will end January 8, 2009.

### THE SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

The State Constitution and State Statutes establish the judicial system in Colorado. The Colorado General Assembly creates judicial districts. The City and County of Denver comprises the Second Judicial District and must be a single judicial district by requirement of the Colorado Constitution.

### DISTRICT COURT

The Denver District Court is established according to the Colorado Constitution as a trial court. It has original jurisdiction in all criminal and civil cases, except those involving probate, mental health, and juvenile matters. It has exclusive original jurisdiction over crimes punishable by death or life imprisonment. When a vacancy occurs on the district court, the Governor selects an appointee from a list presented by the Judicial Nominating Committee for the Second Judicial District. The appointee serves for a two-year term and then is up for retention in the next general election. If retained, the judge serves a six-year term. (District court judges earn \$110,255 per year.)

### PROBATE COURT

Section 9(3) of Article VI of the Colorado Constitution created the Denver Probate Court and defines its jurisdiction. The Probate Court has exclusive jurisdiction over "all matters of probate, settlements of estates of deceased persons, appointment of guardians, conservators and administrators, and settlement of their accounts, the adjudication of the mentally ill, and such other jurisdiction as may be provided by law ...." The judge is appointed, retained and compensated in the same manner as district court judges. The magistrate is appointed by the judge and serves at the pleasure of the judge.

### JUVENILE COURT

The Denver Juvenile Court was created by an act of the Colorado legislature in 1903. It is the only separate juvenile court in the State of Colorado, and is the second oldest juvenile court in the country. The Denver Juvenile Court is part of the state judicial system, and as such, its judges are appointed in the same manner as district court judges. (Juvenile court judges earn \$113,252 per year.)

### COUNTY COURT

The Denver County Court is the largest limited jurisdiction trial court in the state. It hears both city ordinance and state statutory violations. When vacancies on the bench occur, the Mayor selects an appointee from a list of prospective candidates presented by the Denver County Court Judicial Nomination Commission. Newly appointed judges serve a two-year provisional term. Judges who wish to remain on the bench for additional four-year terms must run for retention in the November general election. (All judges earn \$129,156 per year.)