

## Trump choosing white men as judges, highest rate in decades

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Court, by the end of October. Fifty-three are white, three are Asian American, one is Hispanic, and one is African American. There are 47 men and 11 women. Thirteen have won senate approval.

The numbers stand in marked contrast to those of Obama, who made diversifying the federal bench a priority. White men represented just 37 percent of judges confirmed during Obama's two terms; nearly 42 percent of his judges were women.

Some of Obama's efforts were thwarted by a Republican-led senate that blocked all the nominations he made in the final year of his presidency, handing Trump a backlog of more than 100 open seats and significant sway over the future of the court.

Trump has moved aggressively to name new judges, getting off to a much quicker start than his predecessors. He has nominated more than twice as many as Obama had at this point in his presidency. While there have been clashes in the senate over the nomination process, Republican majority leader Mitch McConnell has signalled that he is committed to moving judicial nominees through.

Many of Trump's white, male nominees would replace white, male judges. But of the Trump nominees currently pending, more than a quarter are white males slated for seats have been held by women or minorities.

Of the eight seats currently vacant that had non-white judges, only one has a non-white nominee.

White House spokesman Hogan Gidley says Trump is focused on qualifications and suggests that prioritizing diversity would bring politics to the bench.

"The president has delivered on his promise to nominate the best, most-qualified judges," Gidley said. "While past presidents may have chosen to nominate activist judges with a political agenda and a history of legislating from the bench, President Trump has nominated outstanding originalist judges who respect the U.S. Constitution."

Trump, who has cited the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch as a key achievement, has focused on judges with conservative résumés. His picks have been welcomed by conservative legal groups.

Leonard Leo, the executive vice president of the Federalist Society who has advised Trump on judges, said the president's judicial picks should be evaluated based on his nominations to the Supreme Court and appellate courts, given that home-state senators traditionally offer recommendations for district courts that carry significant weight when the lawmaker and the president are of the same party.

There have been 19 nominees to those higher courts; more than two-thirds are white men.

And past presidents also have pushed for diversity at the district courts. The Obama White House would make clear that diversity was a priority and "if we found good candidates, we would encourage senators to take a look at them," said Christopher Kang, who worked on judicial nominations in the Obama administration.

Alberto Gonzales, who served as attorney general for George W. Bush, said that when considering nominees "sometimes President Bush would look at the list we gave him and he would say, 'I want more diversity, I want more women, I want more minorities.'"

In his first year, Obama's confirmed judicial nominees were 31 percent white men. Bush had 67 percent, Bill Clinton 38 percent, George H.W. Bush 74 percent, and Reagan 93 percent.

For its analysis, The Associated Press looked at all lifetime appointments to federal judgeships — including all seats on the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeals, U.S. District Courts, and International Courts of Trade — counting nominations to higher courts as new appointments. For the biographical information of each judge, The AP used data from the Federal Judicial Center.

In the case of pending Trump nominees, reporters called each nominee or their representative to collect information on race, gender, and birthdate. In eight cases where nominees declined to give their race, officials familiar with the information confirmed that all identified themselves as white males.

## Rare art from China's 19th-century woman ruler comes to the U.S.

By John Rogers

The Associated Press

SANTA ANA, Calif. — For more than a century she has been known as the woman behind the throne, the empress who through skill and circumstance rose from lowly imperial consort to iron-fisted ruler of China at a time and in a place when women were believed to have no power at all.

But it turns out Empress Dowager Cixi was much more than that. The 19th-century ruler, who consolidated authority through political maneuvering that at times included incarceration and assassination, was also a serious arts patron and even an artist herself, with discerning tastes that helped set the style for traditional Asian art for more than a century.

That side of Cixi comes to the western world for the first time with the unveiling of "Empress Dowager, Cixi: Selections From the Summer Palace" at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana. The wide-ranging collection, never before seen outside China, will remain at the Southern California museum through March 11 before returning to Beijing.

Consisting of more than 100 pieces from the lavish Beijing palace Cixi called home during the final years of her life, "Empress Dowager" includes numerous examples of intricately designed Chinese furniture, porcelain vases, and stone carvings, as well as several pieces of western art, rare in China at the time, that she also collected. Among them are a large oil-on-canvas portrait of herself she commissioned the prominent Dutch artist Hubert Vos to create.

Other western accoutrements include gifts from visiting dignitaries, among them British silver serving sets, German and Swiss clocks, a marble-topped table from Italy with inlaid stones in the shape of a chessboard, and even an American-built luxury automobile. The latter, a 1901 Duryea touring car, is believed to be the first automobile imported into China and as such may have involved the empress in the country's first automobile accident when her driver is said to have hit a pedestrian.

"We already have a lot of scholarship on who she is and how she ruled China. But this show brings you a different angle," said exhibit curator Ying-Chen Peng, as she led a recent pre-opening tour of it through the museum that was kicked off by a raucous performance of Chinese lion dancers accompanied by musicians loudly banging gongs, cymbals, and drums.

"This exhibition seeks to introduce you to this woman as an arts patron, as an architect, as a designer," the American University art historian said.

That's an approach that may



Photo courtesy of the Bowers Museum



AP Photo/Tim Bradbury, Pool

**TRENDSETTING EMPRESS.** A 1901 Duryea Surrey (top photo) and a reception throne set (bottom photo) are shown during the unveiling of the "Empress Dowager, Cixi: Selections From the Summer Palace" exhibit at Orange County's Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, California. The exhibit focuses on Cixi, the mysterious woman who quietly ruled China with an iron fist for 43 years, from the mid-1800s until her death in 1908.

finally have gotten it to the western world. Anne Shih, who chairs the museum's board of directors, noted recently that she spent 10 years trying to persuade the Chinese government to lend Cixi's art.

The Bowers has built an impressive international reputation over the years by hosting exhibitions of priceless, historical, often larger-than-life artworks from Tibet, the Silk Road, the tomb of China's first emperor, and other historic sites.

However, Shih says the Chinese government initially turned her down repeatedly. Officials told her the empress, who outlived two much younger emperors, including one who died mysteriously of arsenic poisoning, was just too controversial. She's been portrayed in numerous films and books and not always positively. Shih finally prevailed, however, when she emphasized this show would focus on art, not politics.

Although it does, it still becomes apparent to visitors what a formidable presence Cixi must have been as they enter a re-creation of her throne room to be greeted by a larger-than-life portrait of her covered in jewels and razor-sharp fingernail protectors as she glares ominously at her audience.

Nearby, however, are objects that quickly make her passion for art clear. Prominent among them is a towering calligraphy work of black ink embossed on a sheet of paper that, stretching to about six feet, is taller than the dowager was. She is said to

have made it by wielding a large heavy brush while standing on a stool as some of the eunuchs who served her stretched out the paper.

Not far away are ink-and-paper drawings of flowers the empress also created, although Peng notes with a laugh that when it came to painting, Cixi was a much better calligrapher.

Placed into the emperor's harem as a low-level teenage consort, she quickly elevated her status by giving birth to his only son in 1856. When the emperor died six years later she installed the boy as his successor and, as the woman behind the throne, ousted opponents, brought in loyalists, and ran the country herself for the next 43 years. She died in 1908 at age 72.

Although she led her country through numerous wars launched by foreign invaders during those years, she also found time to visit with dignitaries from other countries and pursue her own passion for art.

Her real artistic skill, however, lay not in making art but in envisioning works that would stand the critical test of time and then finding skilled artisans to create them.

"Her personal preference actually led to the further development of these very ornate designs," Peng said, observing some of the intricately carved, gold-inlaid furniture and hand-painted porcelain objects. "Nowadays when you go to antique shops, you can see quite a few pieces in this style. You can say she was a trendsetter."

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THAI: ความคุมโรคเบาหวานเพื่อชีวิตของท่าน. GUJARATI: આપના ડયાબિટીસને જીવનભર ઇન્ટ્રમ રાખો. KOREAN: 당신의 당뇨병을 조정하십시오. 일생동안.

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