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NEWS RELEASE

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Immigration Judges Take Oath of Office In El Paso

EL PASO, Texas – The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) in Falls Church, Va., announced that Robert S. Hough and Thomas C. Roepke were sworn in today as immigration judges during an investiture ceremony at 10 a.m. at the El Paso County Courthouse. Chief Immigration Judge Michael J. Creppy administered the oath of office.

Judge Hough and Judge Roepke join the ranks of more than 200 immigration judges located in 53 immigration courts throughout the nation. Immigration judges are responsible for conducting formal administrative proceedings to determine whether foreign-born individuals who are charged with violations of federal immigration law should be removed from the United States or may be granted relief from removal. Immigration judges decide each case independently and their decisions are final unless appealed or certified to the Board of Immigration Appeals. In the past year, immigration judges completed more than 300,000 matters. They also are authorized to administer oaths of citizenship to candidates for naturalization.

Robert S. Hough was appointed as an immigration judge in January 2005. He received an undergraduate degree in 1979 and a juris doctorate in 1982, both from Tulane University. From February 1989 to January 2005, Judge Hough served as assistant chief counsel at the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service). He served in the U.S. Army on active duty from 1982 to 1989, and in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1989 to the present. Judge Hough is a member of the Louisiana State Bar.

Thomas C. Roepke was appointed as an immigration judge in February 2005. He received a bachelor of arts degree from Morningside College in 1972, and a juris doctorate from Texas Tech University in 1976. From 1988 to 2005, Judge Roepke served as a special assistant U.S. attorney while working for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Chief Counsel, in El Paso. From 1987 to 1988, he worked as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Texas in Houston. From 1976 to 1987, Judge Roepke served as an assistant district attorney for the 34th District of Texas in El Paso. He is a member of the Texas State Bar.

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EOIR is responsible for adjudicating immigration cases. Specifically, under delegated authority from the Attorney General, EOIR interprets and administers the federal immigration laws by conducting immigration court proceedings, appellate reviews, and administrative hearings. EOIR consists of three components: the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge, which is responsible for managing the numerous immigration courts located throughout the United States where immigration judges adjudicate individual cases; the Board of Immigration Appeals, which primarily conducts appellate reviews of immigration judge decisions; and the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer, which adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to providing the fair, expeditious, and uniform application of the nation's immigration laws in all cases.

Information about EOIR immigration proceedings is available on EOIR's website at <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/press/subject.htm>. □