Karol Mason to Be Next President of John Jay College

Former assistant attorney general in Obama administration to take up post Aug. 1

By Mike Vilensky
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Karol Mason, a former assistant attorney general in President Barack Obama’s administration, will be the next president of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, school officials said Sunday.

Ms. Mason, 59 years old, will succeed Jeremy Travis, who was at the helm of the City University of New York school for 13 years.
The CUNY Board of Trustees is expected to announce her appointment on Monday.

She will be the first woman and first African-American to serve as president of the college when she begins Aug. 1.

“I think John Jay is on a wonderful trajectory and is a prominent voice on criminal-justice issues,” Ms. Mason said on Sunday. “The students I’ve met were smart and inquisitive, and I look forward to working with them.”

A CUNY spokesman couldn’t immediately provide her salary details.

Ms. Mason is a New York native and a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School. She was an attorney for nearly three decades at the international firm Alston & Bird, where she headed the Public Finance Group. She joined the Obama administration’s Justice Department in 2009.

“Karol Mason has established herself as a bold, visionary leader in the fields of law and criminal justice reform and she will be ideal for continuing the history of excellence and inspiration at John Jay College,” said CUNY Chancellor James B. Milliken, in a statement.

John Jay was founded in 1964 as a liberal arts school with a focus on criminal justice. Located in Midtown Manhattan, the school has about 13,000 undergraduate students, 2,000 graduate students and an endowment of roughly $7 million.

Ms. Mason lived across the hall in law school from Valerie Jarrett, who became Mr. Obama’s senior adviser.

“Her unwavering commitment to justice is both the hallmark of her brilliant career and the definition of her character,” Ms. Jarrett said in a statement.