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IU prof couple may represent judicial history

By The Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON — Sheldon Jay Plager and Ilene H. Nagel might represent U.S. judicial history as the first married couple to serve in the federal judiciary at the appellate level.

Plager, an IU law school professor, was sworn in as a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals on Saturday night. Nagel has served on the U.S. Sentencing Commission since 1985.

Plager said he’s been told he and his wife are establishing a judicial first, but he hasn’t conducted his own research.

Given how recently it has been that women have moved into the higher levels of government, “I suspect it’s true,” he said.

Plager was nominated for the judgeship by President Bush this summer. The U.S. Senate confirmed his appointment Wednesday before recessing, and President Bush signed it Friday. U.S. District Judge Sarah Evans Barker, a close friend, swore Plager in Saturday night in a private ceremony at his home.

Plager, 58, came from the University of Illinois in 1977 and served as dean of the IU Law School until 1984.

Nagel has been on the law school faculty since 1973, teaching various courses in criminal law. She has taught part time since her federal appointment.