

## Federal Courts: A View from the Bench



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This session brings together members of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts for a discussion of the demands and responsibilities of judging in the modern era from the perspective of both seasoned and newer members of the federal bench. This session offers an opportunity for judges to reflect on their shared experiences, explore best practices, and discuss emerging challenges impacting the judiciary—from increasing caseload complexity to maintaining public confidence and institutional integrity.

### Learning Objectives:

1. **Examine shared challenges and effective strategies in federal judicial decision-making**, including managing high-volume dockets, handling novel legal issues, and ensuring consistent application of precedent.
2. **Identify evolving best practices for courtroom and case management**, including approaches to pro se litigants, civility among counsel, and the use of technology to enhance efficiency and access to justice.
3. **Foster judicial self-reflection and peer learning** on maintaining impartiality, judicial wellness, and public trust, while responding to increasing scrutiny and the evolving role of the judiciary in American democracy.

### Speakers:

**Hon. Denise Casper**

**Hon. Margaret Guzman**

**Hon. Jessica Hedges**



**Hon. Patti Saris**

United States District Judge Patti B. Saris served as Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts from 2013-2019. She became Chair of the United States Sentencing Commission in Washington, DC in January, 2011 and served until 2017. She is a graduate of Radcliffe College '73 (Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa) and Harvard Law School '76 (Cum Laude).

After graduating from law school, she clerked for the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. When Senator Edward M. Kennedy became chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, she moved to Washington D.C. and worked as staff counsel. She later became an Assistant United States Attorney, and eventually chief of the Civil Division. In 1986, Judge Saris became a United States Magistrate Judge, and in 1989, she was appointed as an Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court. In 1994, she was appointed to the United States District Court.

She has received awards for judicial excellence from the Boston Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, the Patent Bar Association, and the Massachusetts Bar Association. She is also a recipient of the Harvard Medal. Additionally, she has received an award for her work in reducing federal sentences for drug offenders.