

Putting Your Own Oxygen Mask on First: An Approach to Judicial Wellness



In the past, the well-being of judges has not received much attention or consideration. Yet, we know that judges are human and not immune to the stresses of making weighty decisions, multiple deadlines, heightened public scrutiny, concerns about safety, exposure to trauma, heavy dockets, work-life balance, and more. Thus, it is vital for judges to put their own oxygen masks on first—address their own well-being—so that they can best perform their important duties of serving the public. This session offers an opportunity for judges to reflect on the stressors judges face, the negative impact of those stressors, and discuss movement and strength training as tools for judicial well-being. This session will also provide an overview of efforts by the United Nations, by our courts, and judicial organizations to emphasize judicial well-being.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and examine stressors that judges face;
- Understand the negative impact of stress on the health of judges and on judicial decision-making;
- Learn the benefits of movement and strength training, and tips for incorporating strength movements into your daily life;
- Discuss various institutional efforts to promote judicial well-being; and
- Foster commitment to putting your own oxygen mask on first.

Speakers:



Hon. Helen C. Adams

Helen C. Adams has served as a U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Southern District of Iowa since February 13, 2014. She served as Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge from 2017 to 2024. Judge Adams is the President-Elect of the Federal Magistrate Judges Association and a frequent speaker on topics of interest to the Judiciary.

Judge Adams received her undergraduate degree in Sociology from the University of Iowa in 1985, and her law degree from the University of Iowa

in 1988, with high distinction and Order of the Coif. She began her legal career as a law clerk to U.S. District Judge Harold D. Vietor in the Southern District of Iowa from 1988 to 1990.

From 1990 to 2009 she practiced with the firm of Dickinson, Mackaman, Tyler & Hagen, where she served as President of the firm on two occasions. In 2009 she joined the corporate legal department of Pioneer Hi-Bred International (now Corteva) as associate general counsel, an international agricultural company.



Hon. Nancy Joseph

Nancy Joseph was appointed United States Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin in 2010. Judge Joseph is a past president of the Federal Magistrate Judges Association. Judge Joseph frequently participates in panels and lectures for lawyers and judges, both domestically and internationally.

Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Joseph worked as a trial and appellate attorney with the Federal Defender Services of Wisconsin, Inc.

She earned her B.A. from Howard University (magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa), her juris doctor from Rutgers University School of Law, and her Master of Judicial Studies (LLM) degree from Duke University School of Law.