

DISTRICT FIVE REPORT FL, GA, NC, SC

Hon. Diana S. Eagon Director

FLORIDA: Hon. Myriam Lehr, State Chair

On September the 9th 2016, Judge Lehr, along with nawj member, Judge Linda Singer Stein, hosted a Constitution Day program at the North Dade Justice Center. The keynote speaker was federal magistrate Chris McAliley. The program was attended by over 40 students, the President of the North Dade Bar Association, attorneys and members of the public.

President of NAWJ, Judge Lisa Walsh spoke about NAWJ's mission and the meaning behind Constitution Day.

Federal Magistrate Judge McAliley eloquently spoke about her work and then went on to speak about the Bill of Rights and how it is incumbent on each one of us to be proactive in protecting our liberties and the importance of exercising one's vote. The students asked many questions and the program was a great success.

During the past year the following events were celebrated in Florida:

The year started on October 29, 2015 with the program "Strength in Diversity: Faces of Justice in Florida's courts". The program was held at Akerman LLP, Miami and was hosted by NAWJ Resource Board member Elizabeth Hernandez. The program featured New York Supreme Court Justice and NAWJ Treasurer, Judge Tanya Kennedy, Judge Marcia Cook, US District Court Judge for the Southern District of Florida, and NAWJ President, Judge Lisa Walsh, who were on a panel moderated by Loreal Arscott, GSCBWLA President, and Brendalyn Edwards, GSCBWLA President-Elect.

On November 6, 2015 NAWJ President Lisa Walsh was the keynote speaker at the Palm Beach Florida Association for Women Lawyers in West Palm Beach.

On November 19, 2015 "Securing the Future for Women and Girls" Miami-Dade Florida Association for Women Lawyers. The event was held at the Miami history museum.

On December 3, 2015 the city of Miami's Mayor Regalado hosted Judge Lisa Walsh for becoming the NAWJ President with a cocktail reception inviting judges and local dignitaries.

On February 3, 2016 FSU College of Law hosted a symposium to discuss the issue of political attacks against the judiciary. The symposium featured four state supreme court justices: Peggy Quince and Barbara Pariente from Florida, Robin Hudson from North Carolina, and Debra Stevens from Washington. They discussed the importance of informed voters in judiciary elections. A more complete description is in the midyear report.

On February 19th, 2016 a Color of Justice program was presented at the North Dade Justice Center. The speakers were attorneys Annie Hernandez and Loreal Arscott. The program was outstanding. There were about 40 students in attendance.

On May 6, 2016 Law Day was celebrated at the North Dade Justice Center. The event was planned in conjunction with the various bar associations. The featured speaker was Federal Judge Adalberto Jordan.

The September 9th Constitution Day event was outlined above.

On September 29, 2016 Judge Walsh has planned a good guys event dinner along with FAWL 's President. The dinner is hosted by FAWL and will be moderated by Judge Walsh. There will be many prominent attorneys attending. The good guys event is an ABA program intended to engage men in the advancement of women lawyers and in the quest for gender equality.

GEORGIA: Professor Rebecca Davis, State Chair

Georgia Southern University (with NAWJ member Professor Rebecca Davis) hosted a Constitution Day Poster Competition on Sept. 14. Seventeen student poster competitors displayed their research findings and engaged in an interactive question and answer period with a panel of judges. Prize money for the competition was provided by NAWJ.

Winners William Bobo (1st place), Alison Darby (2nd place) and Anthony Grisby (3rd place) were announced on Sept. 15 at the Constitution Day Celebration, which kicked off with a video presentation of "Fair and Free" featuring Sandra Day O'Connor. Approximately 200 students attended the celebration, which was followed by a dessert reception and a display of the winning poster entries.

1st place - \$300 William Bobo

2nd place - \$150 Alison Darby

3rd place - \$50 Anthony Grisby

"Free and Fair" Sandra Day O'Connor

Other news from around the state.

Judge Kimberly M. Esmond Adams was re-elected to the Superior Court of Fulton County on May 24, 2016. She is a member at large of the 2016-2017 Board of Trustees, Atlanta Bar Association, and was Chair of Programs for the Leadership Atlanta Class of 2016 Opening Retreat.

Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes was re-elected to the Court of Appeals of Georgia on May 24, 2016. She is a board member of Georgia CASA, Inc. (FY 2017).

Judge Kathlene F. Gosselin was re-elected to the Superior Court of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit on May 24, 2016.

Judge Terrinee L. Gundy (Atlanta Municipal Court) is a newly appointed board member for the NBA Judicial Section. She was recently appointed Chair of the Security Committee (Municipal Court of Atlanta). Judge Gundy created and writes a column in Atlanta Tribune Magazine titled "Meet the Judge" and is the editor of the newsletter, The Municipal Quarterly.

Justice Carol W. Hunstein (Supreme Court of Georgia) and Chief Judge Sara Lynn Doyle (Court of Appeals of Georgia) are co-chairs of the NAWJ 2017 Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. They have formed the key committee chairs and are working on scheduling a kick-off reception at the Georgia State Bar's mid-year meeting in January 2017.

Judge Pinkie T. Toomer was re-elected to the Fulton County Probate Court on May 24, 2016. Judge Toomer was the 2016 recipient of the Bensonetta Tipton Lane Award for Commitment to the Family.

During the past year Professor Rebecca Davis held an online course at Georgia Southern University which devoted a week to studying judicial selection. The course featured NAWJ's informed voters fair judges video.

Judge Kimberly M. Esmond Adams has been re-elected without opposition for a third, four year term to the Superior Court of Fulton County GA.

NORTH CAROLINA: Justice Robin Hudson, State Chair

As in states across the country, we in North Carolina have focused a lot of attention on the elections this year. As usual, most of the energy goes to the top of the ballot, with races for President, US Senate, Governor, and a host of others at stake this year. However, there is a lot of important activity in races up and down the judicial branch. This summary will touch on some of these judicial races, and the important context in North Carolina of ever-changing rules for how we vote. Readers may have heard about some of these voting changes, as they have generated much litigation and some national media coverage. One set of changes has been widely referred to as the "Voter ID" bill, but includes more than ID requirements. In addition, it restricts early voting days, eliminates out of precinct provisional ballots, eliminates same-day registration and voting during early voting periods, and drops early registration for 16- and 17-year olds. A federal district court upheld the constitutionality of these changes, but in August, a panel of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals struck them all down as violating the Voting Rights Act and US Constitution. An often-quoted passage from the opinion declares that these laws "targeted with almost surgical precision" voting activities by African Americans. On 31 August 2016, the Supreme Court divided 4-4 over whether to step in, leaving the Fourth Circuit opinion in place, and the voting restrictions on hold for now. Also of importance to the judiciary was litigation over a law passed in 2015, to provide for a retention vote in Supreme Court races only. One seat on the 7-member court is on the ballot in 2016, but a change there could shift the partisan balance on the (officially non-partisan) court. A 3-judge panel of trial judges declared the law in violation of the North Carolina Constitution, and appeal went to the state Supreme Court. One member (the one up for election) recused, and the remaining justices split 3-3, leaving the trial court order intact, and the retention election defunct for this year. Against this backdrop, other seats are up for election to courts across the state, including: 4 four seats on the Court of Appeals, and a large number of seats on the trial courts. Four women running for the Court of Appeals, and nearly 100 women are running for the trial courts, the vast

majority (80) for seats on the district courts. In addition to elections, North Carolina judges and justices have been active in national judicial work. As NAWJ state chair and Co-chair of the Committee on Judicial Independence, Justice Robin Hudson has been very involved in helping to develop the materials for the Informed Voter Project (IVP). The IVP materials have just been finalized and are posted at ivp.nawj.org, and Pres. Lisa Walsh sent emails to NAWJ members to encourage use and sharing of the materials. Included are one-page handouts for download and printing, several PowerPoint programs of different lengths for use with general audiences, and several video and audio public service spots. In addition, technical assistance is available through the website, if any member wants to adapt any of the programs for a particular state. Justice Hudson will be inaugurating the presentations in North Carolina for Constitution Day programs at Barton College in Wilson, NC (Sept. 19), and at NC State Univ., in Raleigh (Sept. 26). She will also be making them available to judges attending the NC Assn. of Women Attorneys Conference Sept. 23-24, and at the Southeast Inter-Court Conference in Asheville, Sept. 28-30. Justice Hudson has agreed to serve, along with Co-chair Justice Barbara Pariente (FL), another year leading the Judicial Independence Committee. Florida has also been instrumental in getting these programs up and running, through Justice Pariente, and by partnering with the Florida Bar, including IVP co-chairs Annette Pitts and Linda Leali. The third IVP Co-chair, Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye (CA) rounds out the leadership to the west coast. The programs and materials have gotten very positive feedback thus far, and the Committee hopes to expand their use around the country in upcoming years.

SOUTH CAROLINA: No state chair has volunteered. No news has been reported.