

# COUNTERBALANCE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES

## Fairness, Bias & Access

NAWJ Committees  
working for  
fairness, equity  
and equal access  
to justice

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**MISSION**

NAWJ's mission is to promote the judicial role of protecting the rights of individuals under the rule of law through strong, committed, diverse judicial leadership; fairness and equality in the courts; and equal access to justice.

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
of  
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# President's Message



“ Our efforts at increasing diversity on the bench have been rewarded with the confirmation of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson to the United States Supreme Court.

This issue of Counterbalance is dedicated to you the members. The news is sometimes grim and it seems as if we're not progressing in the right direction but we at NAWJ have stayed focused on our mission statement and achieved much in the last year.

After navigating the pandemic, we successfully held two in person meetings, the Annual Conference in Nashville, which was great fun and so inspiring, followed by our midyear meeting in Washington DC at which we celebrated Women Judges Day and honored three Afghan Women Judges with NAWJ memberships. Efforts are ongoing to help these women get fellowships to LLM programs or pursue other opportunities in the legal profession.

Our committees are focused on improving fairness and equity in the law. Our Domestic Violence Committee has been working cooperatively with the American Law Institute seeking to revise their proposed Model Penal Code to adopt a definition of “consent” in sexual assault cases which does not put the burden of proof on the victim to show lack of consent.

Our efforts at increasing diversity on the bench have been rewarded with the confirmation of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson to the United States Supreme Court. In addition, women of color continue to rise to positions of prominence. Justice Patricia Guerrero, a daughter of immigrants became the first Latina to join the California Supreme Court, and Justice Lisa Holder White became the first Black woman to serve on the Illinois Supreme Court.

NAWJ's Master Calendar was launched on April 1 and a review of the activities

of our members, Districts and Committees demonstrates just how active our organization is. I encourage you to check out the calendar and become a part of the amazing work NAWJ accomplishes through its Districts and Committees.

We have also been active in producing webinars: “Pathways to the Administrative Judiciary” by our Administrative Judiciary Committee, “Immigration Update” by our Immigration Committee and “Racial Disparity in the Courts – Strategies to Combat Racial Inequality in the Courts and Criminal Justice System” by our Access and Fairness Committee thanks to a grant from the State Justice Institute.

We are initiating a collaboration with the National Judicial College to share educational programs and sponsorships.

Make sure to register for our 44th Annual Conference to be held at the Westin Book Cadillac Detroit to be held from October 19-22. The conference promises to offer amazing educational programming, opportunities to network not to mention dance to the Motown music!

I am grateful to all of you for the work that you do and for continuing to remain positive as we seek to promote the judicial role of protecting the rights of individuals under the rule of law through strong committed, diverse judicial leadership, fairness and equality in the courts and equal access to justice.

**Hon. Elizabeth White**  
President



# Vice President of Publications Message



“ I encourage each of our members to share activities, scholarly articles, and ideas with us so that NAWJ’s Counterbalance issues will continue to inspire and help our organization maintain its high standards of publication excellence.

**T**hank you to all who submitted articles for this issue of Counterbalance. The Summer Counterbalance issue embodies NAWJ President Judge White’s theme of inclusivity as a means of effecting change. We’ve focused this issue on the grassroots work our members are doing through committee engagement. With more than 25 active groups covering everything from the needs of “Women in Prisons” and Human Trafficking, to Rural Courts and Diversity and Inclusion, our judges are leading their communities and improving access to justice for all.

This issue presents an article by Hon. Heidi Pasichow, Committees Liaison to the NAWJ Board. As she explains, the Committees provide a framework and an opportunity for all association members to contribute dynamically toward fulfilling the Association’s mission to “promote the judicial role of protecting the rights of individuals under the rule of law through strong, committed, diverse judicial leadership; fairness and equality in the courts; and equal access to justice.” This issue spotlights the Fairness and Access Committee and member Hon. Diana L. Leyden, Special Trial Judge, U.S. Tax Court, writes about the role that empathy plays in the practice of law and in the courtroom. She presents the thesis that practicing empathy makes us better judges, which is a key mission of the Fairness and Access Committee. Finally, in this issue, Supervising Deputy Attorney General for the California Department of Justice, Hon. Jodi Cleesattle, provides a profile of the work of retired San Diego Superior Court Judge Susan Finlay. As she explains, through contacts

Judge Finlay made 50 years ago, she has launched a global partnership serving the needs of villagers in a remote region of Tanzania. This story is inspirational and reveals the meaningful work that NAWJ judges continue doing once they turn their attention away from the bench activities.

It is my distinct honor to edit this Counterbalance issue, and to keep you informed and connected across our districts and across the country. It is a joint effort, and impossible to achieve without the steady leadership of Laurie Denham, NAWJ’s Executive Director, and her skilled team including Janelle Mihoc. I encourage each of our members to share activities, scholarly articles, and ideas with us so that NAWJ’s Counterbalance issues will continue to inspire and help our organization maintain its high standards of publication excellence.

**Hon. Mimi Tsankov**  
Vice President of Publications

*DISCLAIMER: The author is the President of the National Association of Immigration Judges. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the official position of the United States Department of Justice, the Attorney General, or the Executive Office for Immigration Review. The views represent the author’s personal opinions, which were formed after extensive consultation with the membership of NAIJ.*

# Executive Director Message



*“We continue to seek grant opportunities and welcome your ideas. If you have a potential project with a national exposure, please contact me.”*

**I**t has been exciting to experience in-person national and district events. As you will read in this issue of Counterbalance, the Midyear Meeting was a great time of education and fellowship. We also encountered every season in three days, from hot and sunny, to rain and on the last day snow!

Many Districts have begun their in-person programming and making an impact in their communities. The 2022 Annual Conference Committee is meeting regularly to bring you the cutting-edge education NAWJ is known for, and a diverse selection of entertainment!

Internally, we have developed a much-requested Master Calendar to give you access to committee meetings. Simply click this [link](#) and contact the committee chair of any meetings you would like to attend. An online form is coming soon to make it simpler for you to join a committee. Now that the courts have re-opened, we know that you are busier than ever, and we want to make volunteer opportunities as seamless as possible.

The NAWJ Legacy Society launched this spring, and I am grateful to those of you who are already participating. This program will ensure NAWJ is sustainable into the future. We continue to seek grant opportunities

and welcome your ideas. If you have a potential project with a national exposure, please contact me.

This month marks my one-year anniversary as your permanent executive director. I am thankful for your support and encouragement and for the opportunity to serve NAWJ.

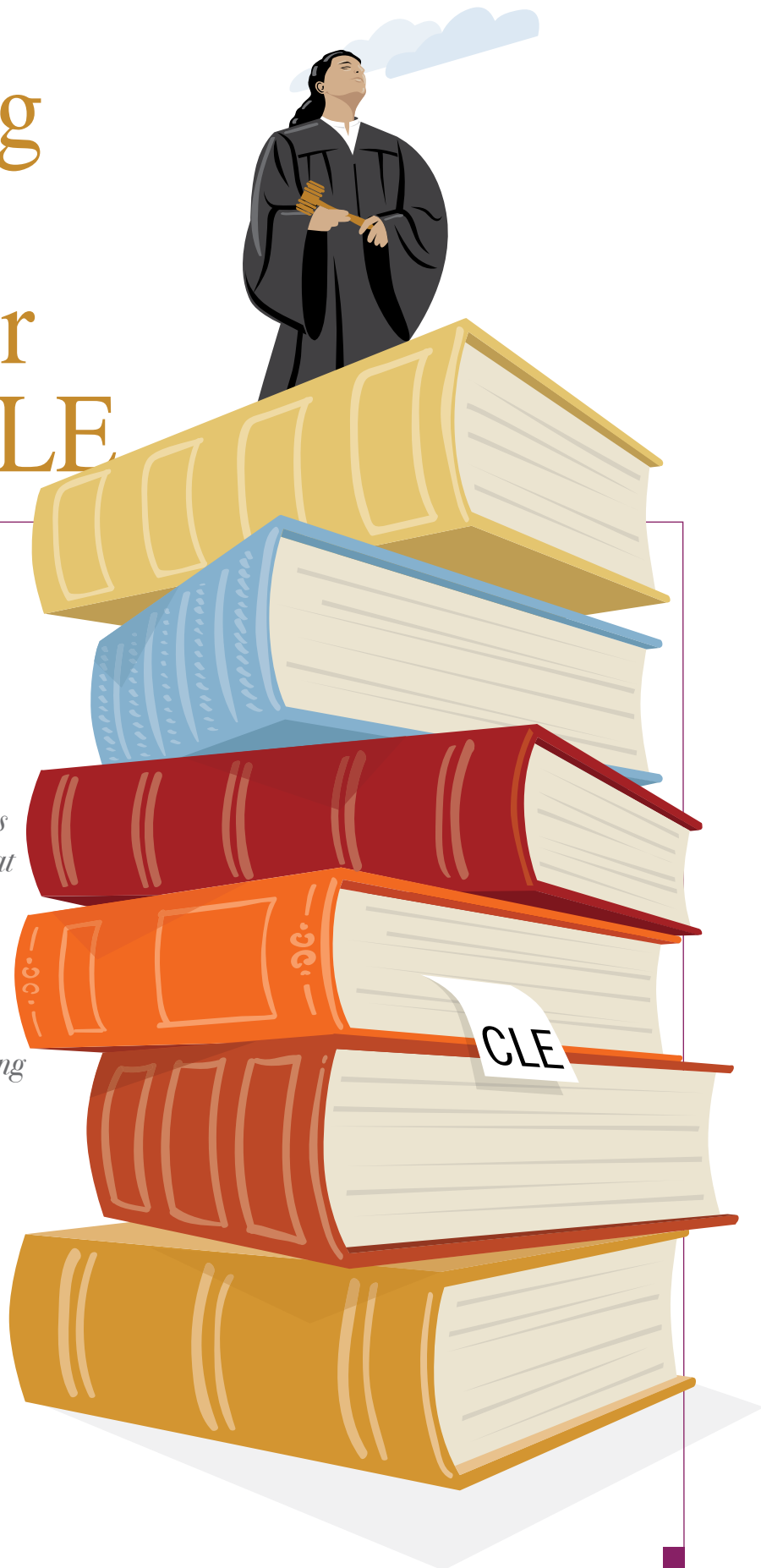
**Laurie Hein Denham, CAE**  
Executive Director

# Understanding Implicit Bias Is a Matter for Mandatory CLE

*I recently co-chaired the National Association of Women Judges' committee on Racial Disparities in the Courts and had a chance to interview the Honorable Judge Bernice Donald on the 6th Circuit United States Court of Appeals who was invited to speak. I met Judge Donald over 12 years ago when she was presenting a breakout session on implicit bias at a joint Alaska Bar / Judicial Conference at the Dena'ina Center. Hundreds of lawyers and judges attended the conference but less than a dozen people attended Judge Donald's breakout session on this important and emerging topic. I thought then as I do now, "how do you get lawyers and judges to realize the impact of implicit bias in the legal profession?"*



**By Hon. Pamela Scott Washington**  
Anchorage District Court Judge  
Vice President of Districts, NAWJ



I am an advocate for implicit bias education and a proponent of mandatory continuing legal education on implicit bias. In my 25-plus years as a member of Alaska's legal community, I have personally experienced how implicit biases can narrow a person's vision and influence their behaviors. I also became keenly aware of my own biases and remain vigilant and intentional to eliminate them from my judicial discretion and decisions. As co-chair of the Alaska Supreme Court's Fairness, Diversity, and Equality Commission and member of the Cultural Competency subcommittee, I am involved with a team of judicial officers working to ensure ongoing implicit bias education and training is provided to all Alaska judges. It is not just the judiciary, but the integrity of every part of our system of justice is under scrutiny. As members of the legal profession, this should concern us.

I believe there are two main barriers to making mandatory CLE credits for cultural competency, diversity, inclusion, and implicit bias education. One barrier is "race." The other barrier is "mandatory."

The issue of race has always been difficult to talk about, especially for those who are members of the predominant group. The predominant group that makes up 93.4% of the Alaska Bar membership may be adversely triggered by words like race, critical race theory, white privilege, and racial injustice, and may think of implicit bias in the same way. Implicit bias is not an accusation of racism. In fact, implicit bias is not about racism, or sexism, or ageism, or any other "isms." It is about your subconscious brain and mental associations. Judge Donald explained that implicit bias is the process by which the brain uses well established mental associations to operate without our awareness, without intention, or control. "It is that human computer program that is working in the background that is

influencing our actions and our thoughts even when we are not aware of it and it is contrary to our announced and deeply held values." These associations are a product of our backgrounds, lived experiences, our in groups, and our out groups. As members of the Bar, even when we believe we are fundamentally fair at our core, we cannot disregard the fact that bias is baked in. Unbeknownst to us, our brains are sorting information and making conclusions that compromise the good judgment of fundamentally fair, well intentioned people. Consider that an adverse reaction to training on implicit bias may well be an indication of implicit bias at work in us.

In the introductory statement of the Alaska Rules of Professional conduct, we are reminded that lawyers should seek improvement of the law, access to the legal system, the administration of justice, and the quality of service rendered by the legal profession. If we know the influence of implicit bias creates deficiencies in the administration of justice, then we should act to minimize these deficiencies in the interests of living up to the ideals of equal justice for all. We are all vulnerable and when we know we have a blind spot that can be obstructing our view, we must be intentional about removing the obstruction so we can see clearly.

The other barrier to overcome in support of imposing a mandatory CLE on implicit bias is "mandatory." Members of the Bar would probably not oppose voluntary CLEs addressing such topics, but prefer to retain the right to choose. However, this is more than a matter of personal choice. It is a matter of professional competency.

Mandatory requirements reflect what we value as members of the legal community. We value education and professional competency. It is the reason why it is mandatory that lawyers graduate from an accredited law school, pass a Bar Exam,

and engage in mandatory continuing legal education. Rule 1.1 of the Alaska Rules of Professional Conduct articulates this value—a lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires effective communication with a very diverse population. Effective communication requires a level of cultural competency and a sensitivity to that human computer program working in the background unconsciously influencing our actions and thoughts.

We already recognize the importance of removing bias from the law. When a judge knows they have a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party or a party's lawyer, Canon 3E(1)(a) of the Code of Judicial Conduct, states the judge shall disqualify himself or herself when a judge's impartiality might be reasonably questioned. Unconscious biases are more important because they may have an impact on impartiality yet never be recognized in lawyering or judicial decision-making. We value professional competency and we make what we value "mandatory." Unconscious bias is an ethical issue and should be a mandatory part of continuing legal education.

Other professions are recognizing the need for mandatory implicit bias and cultural competency education and training. Professional organizations such as Joint Commission and Liaison Committee on Medical Education require training in implicit bias for accreditation. Implicit bias training is mandatory for all nurses in California and Michigan. Mental and behavior health clinicians are required to complete mandatory education and training hours on cultural competency for licensure. As of November 15, 2019, Missouri requires attorneys to complete three (3) Ethics credits every year, one (1) of which must cover topics addressing Cultural Competency, Diversity, Inclusion,

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*“As judges we have privileges— wealth, education, status- that most who appear before us do not. If we perceive the circumstances of a case from our privileged vantage point, how can we truly be neutral?”*

# Fairness and Access Start with

Recently, I had a conversation with a dear colleague, Nell Newton, who is the current interim dean of the University of Miami Law School. Nell has been a dean in several other schools, and we were discussing the role of empathy in practicing law. She mentioned that she keeps on her desk a sign that says, “It’s not all about me.” I realized that such a saying really is about reminding us to practice empathy.

me a better judge because it: (1) helps me remain neutral; (2) helps me adhere to my ethical duty to be impartial; and (3) aids me from jumping to conclusions that are comfortable but may ignore how a litigant sees the law and the circumstances that brought him/her/them before me. Some may incorrectly believe that

I began thinking about how practicing empathy makes us better judges. In researching articles about the topic, I stumbled upon Professor Rebecca K. Lee’s article “Judging Judges: Empathy as the Litmus Test for Impartiality, 82 U. Cin. L. Rev. 145 (2013). From her article I concluded that practicing empathy makes



By Hon. Diana L. Leyden,  
Special Trial Judge, U.S. Tax Court





practicing empathy is ruling with emotion. As Professor Lee points out empathy consists of both mental and emotional components. Thus, empathy is not pure emotion but rather a form of cognitive understanding. It provides us

# Empathy

with the capacity to better comprehend another's perspective through both knowledge and feeling. It is more than just noting your similarities with and differences from the person who appears before you.

Practicing empathy requires work on our parts. Empathy is the ability to perceive the view of the world or situation from another person's perspective. As Professor Lee writes, empathy's goal "is not to encourage conscious generosity toward one side, per se, but rather to ensure that a litigant does not unfairly benefit from unconscious or automatic credibility simply because a judge better understands, or is more familiar with, that party's story." 82 U. Cin. Rev. at 153. Practicing empathy allows us to

strive to be neutral because we see the circumstances of the case before us from a different vantage point. As judges we have privileges- wealth, education, status- that most who appear before us do not. If we perceive the circumstances of a case from our privileged vantage point, how can we truly be neutral?

Empathy also assists us in remaining impartial. Looking at our involvement in a case from the lens of Joe and Jane Public might show us that they perceive our involvement as assisting one side over another, thereby assisting us in stepping away from a case and remaining impartial.

Empathy may assist us in making better summary adjudications. We may default to deciding a summary judgment motion based on how we have decided similar issues before. Practicing empathy helps us consider the facts in a summary judgment motion anew by considering the facts in the motion from different lenses and avoid an automatic application of the law.

Professor Lee's article suggests that practicing empathy tamps down being

affected by similarities and differences with litigants and instead taps into shared feelings and aspirations which allows us to see disputes through a different lens. I recommend Professor Lee's article to all judges and hope that our committee may be able to develop training materials or panels to explore how judges can practice empathy and how doing so may assist them in being the best judges they can.

**Diana L. Leyden** is a Special Trial Judge. Born in New York; Union College, Schenectady, NY, B.A. magna cum laude, 1978; UConn Law School, Hartford, CT, J.D. 1982; Georgetown University Law Center, LL.M. Taxation 1984. Admitted to Connecticut Bar (1982), District of Columbia Bar (1982, inactive) and Massachusetts Bar (1985, inactive); Admitted to U.S. Court of Federal Claims (1983); United States District Court for the District of Connecticut, 2001; United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, 2003; Member of the American Bar Association, Tax Section; Recipient of the American Bar Association Tax Section Janet Spragens Pro Bono Award (2005); former chair of the ABA Tax Section Low Income Taxpayer Committee; Connecticut Department of Revenue Services (1995-1997); UConn Law School Tax Clinic (1999-2015); New York City Department of Finance Taxpayer Advocate (2015-2016). Appointed Special Trial Judge of the United States Tax Court on June 20, 2016.

## Understanding Implicit Bias Is a Matter for Mandatory CLE

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or Implicit Bias. These organizations found value in having their members recognize and address their implicit biases, build cultural competency, and appreciate the importance of diversity and inclusion, so they made training mandatory.

Our failure as a profession to acknowledge our own deficits has had its share of unfortunate consequences. In 1978, the Indian Child Welfare Act was enacted to correct the most longstanding and egregious removal practices specifically targeting Native children. It was not just social

workers and case workers, but also judges, lawyers, and guardians-ad-litem were preferring non-Native placements for Native children. Presumably these were all good hardworking professionals. Could that human computer working in the background lead a person to conclude that only a non-Native placement was in the best interests of a Native child? It is clear unconscious biases played a role in system abuses directed at Native children. Mandatory continuing legal education on cultural competency, diversity, inclusion, and implicit bias will give the legal profession an opportunity to regain some

of the ground the legal profession has lost through the years to unconscious biases and move towards regaining and building the public trust in the justice system.

*Originally published in the January – March 2022 Alaska Bar Rag*

**Judge Pamela Scott Washington** is co-chair of the Alaska Supreme Court's Fairness, Diversity & Equality Commission and serves on the Cultural Competency Committee. Judge Washington presides over the Coordinated Resource Project (Mental Health Court) in Anchorage and the Criminal and Civil calendar in Sand Point, Alaska



# 22nd Annual Midyear Meeting

**Day 1 of the conference kicked off with a Board Meeting, followed by the “Planting the Seed” program to mentor law students. Over 23 students participated from five law schools.**



**By Kelsea Jeon**

**M**embers and supporters of the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) gathered from March 10–12, 2022 for the 22nd Annual Midyear Meeting at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel. It was a joyous occasion, and for many judges, the first time they got to see one another since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the previous in-person NAWJ gathering, the 2021 Annual Meeting in Nashville, President Hon. Elizabeth A. White (ret.) shared that NAWJ’s theme of the year is “Effecting Change: Drawing from our Past and Embracing our Future.” The events at this year’s Midyear reflected that theme.

Day 1 of the conference kicked off with a Board Meeting, followed by the “Planting the Seed” program to mentor law students. Over 23 students participated from five law schools. During

the mentoring session, judges shared their reflections about joining the bench, working in private practice and public interest, and balancing motherhood and a successful career. Students came away from the session with insight from pioneers in the legal profession and contact information to follow up if they wished to continue the conversation.

Following the Law Student Mentorship Program, the conference transitioned to its Opening Reception, celebrating the International Day of Women Judges. President White shared remarks to begin the conference, giving attendees a preview of the events to follow, and Judge Lisa Walsh introduced special guests, three Afghan Women Judges. Each of the three Afghan Women Judges themselves delivered heartfelt remarks briefly describing their stories and expressing their gratitude for NAWJ members.

## “Effecting Change: Drawing from

The next morning Jen Klein, the Executive Director of the White House Gender Policy Council, joined President White for a Fireside Chat. They discussed the work of the Gender Policy Council and shared insight into how plans for greater gender equality are turned into progress. A few notable highlights: On March 16, 2022, Congress and President Biden reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was enacted in 1994 but expired in 2017. Notably, NAWJ was instrumental in helping pass VAWA in 1994. NAWJ was the only judicial organization to support the legislation and joined the Senate Judiciary Committee staff and Legal Momentum to refine the provision's language to meet the concerns voiced by legislators and judges. Following the fireside chat, conference attendees asked questions, ranging from support from the federal government for increased child and elder care funding and further efforts to

evacuate women judges in Afghanistan.

The Fireside Chat was followed by the session, "Access to Justice in a Virtual World: Strategies to Address Procedural and Substantive Impact and Build Community Trust." This panel discussed the role of digital innovation and experimentation within the courts during the pandemic and the importance of research in ensuring that these digital policies do not have an inappropriate substantive impact. Judge Samantha Jessner and Judge Catharine Easterly provided perspective about how their respective courts in Los Angeles and Washington D.C. have transitioned to remote hearings in 2020. Ms. Malia Brink reflected the research angle of the transition to digital strategies and shared resources from organizations like the American Bar Association and the National Center for State Courts.

During the Plenary Luncheon, NAWJ presented Judge Vanessa Ruiz with the Lady Justice Award for Humanitarian Aid to recognize her dedication and ongoing efforts to help evacuate women judges in Afghanistan and many who are still unable to leave the country.

The speaker for the Plenary Luncheon was Ms. Julia Olson, the Executive Director and Chief Counsel for Our Children's Trust, the world's only non-profit public interest law firm that exclusively represents youth in constitutional climate lawsuits. She discussed the organization's appellate advocacy efforts and reviewed opinions and outcomes from recent cases across the U.S. Despite the direness and immediacy of the warming planet, Ms. Olson's presentation left the audience, who all rose and delivered a standing ovation, with a feeling of hope and optimism for the future.



our Past and Embracing our Future.”



The afternoon sessions began with “Judges in Transition: What’s next after a satisfying career on the bench? Will it be ADR, non-profit work, being a grandparent, or perhaps an author?”. Retired judges shared their perspectives about the post-bench transition and opportunities. Judge Mary White shared insights about the joy of spending more time with her grandkids. Judge Randa Trapp reflected on joining private judging with JAMS. Judge Beverly Cutler described how she discovered purpose while doing pro bono work to help non-citizens who had served in the military obtain justice. Finally, Judge Barbara Levenson detailed her journey to becoming an author of fiction novels. During the question-and-answer session, judges shared their concerns about starting anew after a fulfilling career on

the bench and turned to one another for support and camaraderie.

The last session for the day was a panel discussing “Self-Representation as Part of the Civil Justice Reform Landscape: New Opportunities for Judicial Leadership.” Ms. Katherine Alteneder of the Self-Represented Litigation Network, who also moderated the access to justice in a virtual world panel, framed the discussion by focusing on the importance of reforms around self-represented litigations in the larger civil justice reform movement. Judge Doreen Boxer provided insights and guidelines about ethical considerations for judges when encountering self-represented litigants. Ms. Maha Jeweid also contextualized reforms within a broader global legal empowerment movement and its goal of

helping individuals and communities know, use, and shape the law. The day closed with the Resource Board meeting and informal dinner gatherings around Arlington.

On Saturday, a snowstorm brewed in Washington, but the conference continued. The last day began

with breakfast in which District 4 honored Judge Irma Raker with the Edna Parker Award. The final education session on “Racial Disparity in the Courts: Strategies to Combat Racial Inequality in the Courts and Criminal Justice System.” This training was funded by a grant from the State Justice Institute and organized by Judge Pamela Washington, Judge Pennie McLaughlin, Judge Cheryl Rios, Judge Maria Puente-Porras, and Judge Edwina Mendelson.

All in all, the 2022 NAWJ Midyear Conference was a wonderful event that captured President Judge White’s theme of Effecting Change by Drawing From our Past and Embracing our Future perfectly. Be it through the fireside chat with Ms. Jen Klein that recognized NAWJ’s past efforts in helping pass VAWA and the recent news about VAWA’s reauthorization; the plenary luncheon where Ms. Julia Olson shared her efforts in fighting for our youths’ future by tackling climate change in courts; the judges in transition panel where women gave their fellow sisters-in-law candid advice and comfort about a life beyond the bench; or the access-to-justice panels about how our courts have adapted amidst COVID-19 and how judges can adapt to the growing number of self-represented litigants in court.

Thank you for the successful Midyear Conference, and NAWJ hopes to see you at NAWJ’s 44th Annual Conference “All Rise: Standing up for Global Justice in the City that Moved the World” in Detroit, Michigan this October.



*Kelsea Jeon is the Richard Zorza Fellow at the Self-Represented Litigation Network. She also serves as an assistant to NAWJ President Hon. Elizabeth A. White and was her former judicial intern at the Los Angeles Superior Court. Kelsea is a graduate of Yale University (2020, B.A. in History, magna cum laude) and the University of Oxford (2021, M.Phil. in Socio-Legal Research). This fall she will be a 1L at Stanford Law School.*



# A Life-changing Experience

Memorial Day week, 1994, I flew to Harare, Zimbabwe to begin my three-month experience as a Fulbright Scholar teaching on the Law Faculty of the University of Zimbabwe. I got to know the law students and some of their families. I got to work with the Zimbabwean Supreme Court on land redistribution and heredity issues and with nongovernmental agencies on issues important to the women of the country and I got to travel the whole of Zimbabwe. It was a life-changing experience.

I am told that I was the first sitting judge to complete a Fulbright. That is not hard to believe since we judges do not get sabbaticals. However, in 2001, the Fulbright Program initiated a new program under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). On the website, it is described as “a unique opportunity for U.S. academics and established professionals to engage in two-to-six-week, project-based exchanges at host institutions across the globe.” And it is indeed unique because now, both sitting and retired members of the judiciary have the opportunity within the time frame of a summer vacation to share their expertise in other countries while learning about those countries, their people and their culture.



**Hon. Cynthia Ackron Baldwin**  
(ret. PA Supreme Court)  
Chair, Fulbright Association  
Board of Directors

Fulbrighters are often described as citizen diplomats because that’s exactly who we are. Online Oxford Languages defines a diplomat as a person who

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## COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT



# Fairness & Access committee

**W**hat do you think of when you hear the words “Fairness” and “Access” in the context of courts? Our ability to discern fairness and access derives largely from our own personal experiences, our environments, and our various degrees of privilege. It stands to reason, then, that our ability to recognize barriers to fairness and access may sometimes require someone to shine a light on it and raise awareness. That is the focus of the NAWJ Fairness and Access Committee’s work.

The NAWJ Fairness and Access Committee recommends steps necessary to ensure diversity in the justice system primarily with respect to women, but also as to people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and other underrepresented communities, and ensures that the system provides fair and equal access, opportunity and treatment to all sectors of the community.

The Committee, comprised of judges and lawyers from across nine states, identified potential barriers in court during the first meeting of the year. These included:



By Renee N.G. Stackhouse

## Assumption Barriers

**Gender/Personal Pronouns.** The legal system, and forms used within it, often include binary language requiring a person to identify as male or female which can exclude those who identify as non-binary meaning they identify as a third gender, more than one gender, no gender, or gender fluid.

The birth gender of a person in the courtroom might not correspond with the gender identity of the person, so the person appears differently in court than on paper, sometimes with a different name.

Some jurisdictions have held that courts do not have the power to compel another litigant to use a ‘preferred’ pronouns in court. Some judicial officers have noted that motions are too confusing when using ‘they’/non-binary pronouns or that it can be grammatically incorrect.

The courtroom is a venue that deserves respect, but so do all who access it. It takes little energy or time to ask what a person’s pronoun is if unsure (you can start the conversation by sharing yours), or to ask for clarification if there is pronoun or name confusion. For those who struggle with how to address non-binary attorneys or litigants, you can try a method California attorney Sutter Selleck teaches and use “Attorney Stackhouse” or “Plaintiff Stackhouse”

focusing on the role and not the gender. While some jurisdictions may not be able to compel litigants to use a person’s pronouns, common courtesy stands for the proposition that it is the right thing to do, and judicial officers can lead by example in doing so.

**Roles.** There are a number of stories across

## 2022 Committee Members

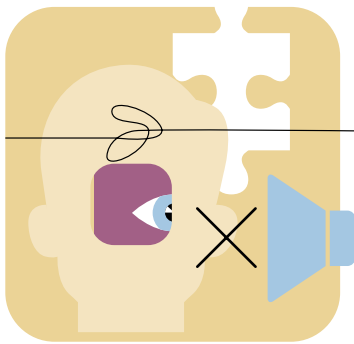
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Patricia Taitano-Valdovinos



the country of attorneys of color being mistaken for Defendants in the courtroom and women attorneys being confused with the court reporter or translator.

Judicial officers can overcome some of these issues by simply asking counsel to make appearances, instead of directing comments to someone who is presumed to be counsel. Courts can further train courtroom staff on how to overcome implicit bias and avoid making assumptions based on a person's appearance and instead ask questions like "What is your role in court today?" or "How can I help you?" instead of "Defendants aren't allowed in yet."



### Invisible Barriers

While progress is being made to increase access for persons who are hard of hearing, there are still many barriers to justice that cannot be seen, including mental health issues. According to a 2006 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics more than half of those incarcerated in the United States have mental health issues. These individuals are more likely to have previous convictions and to serve a lengthier sentences than those who do not have mental health needs. Litigants with autism, likewise, are not often given the support they need during police questioning or in court. It is very likely that the ability of a person with Autism Spectrum Disorder to communicate will be impaired, especially in times of high stress.

The difficulty lies in the fact that very few litigants who come to court can or do identify these invisible barriers. Police, social workers, and lawyers need to help identify these issues

for litigants as best able before appearing in court. Even with large caseloads, judicial officers should maintain heightened awareness about concerning behavior or strained communications, especially when involving pro se litigants.

Several courts now have mental health programs which allow criminal defendants to avert legal penalties by participation in these programs.



### Language Barriers

**Lack of Translators.** In California, for instance, over 220 languages are spoken, and 44% of residents speak a language other than English in their homes. The inability to understand proceedings directly impacts a litigant's rights. It can impact their ability bring a case, defend themselves, appropriately answer questions, or even process through the legal system. One judge on the Committee shared that an individual was placed on a psychiatric hold for twice as long as required because no translator was available.

Limited interpreters make it difficult to provide fairness and access to justice; but some would argue that a bad interpreter is the same, or worse, than no interpreter at all. Courts should make every effort to cast a wide net for interpreters who can help move justice forward. The new virtual world may open up more opportunities for providing interpreters that don't need to be physically present in the courtroom.

**English-Only Communications.** Whether it is the forms, court communications, or

the website, litigants need to be able to understand their role in the system, to be able to bring a claim, understand a claim brought against them, and to respond to communications from the court.

Courts may look to creating collaborations with undergraduate programs in linguistics or local diversity bar associations to help translate documents. Technology allows for quick translation of websites which should be readily available to end-users.



### Remote Access/Technology Barriers

In 2021, the Committee sent out a survey to the NAWJ Membership about the remote access which has had positive impacts since the onset of the pandemic but also creates new forms of barriers. In terms of self-represented litigants, uncertainty, unfamiliarity with technology, access to stable internet, and lack of understanding of virtual remote court practices were all cited as potential issues that courts, attorneys, and litigants now face.

Most respondents recommended keeping remote access but pairing it with in-person and telephonic appearances, as well, to ensure equal access.

Each of these topics could be stand-alone programs or articles and, hopefully, they will be as we explore, and try to overcome, barriers to fairness and access in our legal system. We hope that you will be a part of that journey. What barriers do you see? How have you overcome barriers in your courtroom? Reach out and let us know. We'd love to hear from you.

**Renee Stackhouse**, in her years as a practicing lawyer, has successfully represented clients in civil matters ranging from business disputes to construction defect and personal injury cases, while also growing a significant criminal defense practice. In addition, Renee has a strong military defense practice, and is recognized for her understanding of military

processes and protocols, and the nuances involved in representing service members in various matters. Her knowledge and understanding of the United States Military stems from her work as a civilian employee working in Marine Corps Community Services at Southern California's largest base, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, from 1997-2007.

Her substantial volunteer experience also has included leadership roles with the San Diego County Bar Association, serving as the 2020 President-Elect on the Board of Directors, and inaugural Chair of the Association's high-profile Law and Technology committee. She is Chair of NAWTJ's Mothers in Court Committee.

<sup>1</sup> For transgender people, the use of a 'dead name' or birth name prior to transition can be very painful and is disrespectful.

<sup>2</sup> While some use the phrase 'preferred pronouns' this is not best practice. The term 'preferred' stands for the proposition that someone likes one option better than another, but any are viable. (I prefer chocolate ice cream over vanilla, but I will eat both.) In the case of pronouns, if someone's pronouns are she/hers it would not be viable to refer to that person as he/his.

<sup>3</sup> Doris J. James and Lauren E. Glaze, Special Report: Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates, U.S. Department of Justice (December 14, 2006), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/mhnpjji.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Bernadine Racoma, Why Does California Face a Shortage of Courtroom Interpreters?, Day Translations (27 November 2017), <https://www.daytranslations.com/blog/california-shortage-court-interpreter/#:~:text=The%20state%20courts%20handle%20around,t%20speak%20English%20very%20well>

## A Life-changing Experience

Continued from page 12

can deal with people in a sensitive and effective way and in that sense, judges are already diplomats. Under the Fulbright Specialist Program, U.S. faculty and professionals serve as expert consultants on curriculum, faculty development, institutional planning and related subjects. The program allows overseas universities, cultural centers, nongovernmental organizations and other institutions abroad to develop collaborative projects. These projects support critical priorities identified by the host institutions and supported by U.S. embassies and binational Fulbright Commissions abroad. There are over 150 participating countries. Applicants can indicate preferences and any foreign language proficiency when applying, but this will not guarantee placement in the desired country(ies). All Fulbright Specialists receive roundtrip economy airfare, a one-time transit allowance (\$100), enrollment in a health benefits program and a daily honorarium (\$200). The program also covers lodging, meals and in-country travel expenses.

While specialists represent a wide range of academic disciplines and professions, Fulbright Specialist candidates must have

significant experience in their respective professional fields and be a U.S. citizen at the time of application. ECA works to ensure that its programs reflect and value the diversity of U.S. society and societies abroad. Applicants who have participated in Fulbright exchanges are eligible to participate in the Specialist Program, but preference will be given to candidates who have not previously received a Fulbright grant or had significant overseas experience. The process requires that you complete an online application, that your references complete online reference forms and that the application be evaluated by a Peer Review Panel. The next two specialist deadlines are July 6, 2022 and September 7, 2022. Your completed application and at least two completed reference forms must be received by the deadline. Once you have applied and been accepted into the Fulbright Specialist Program, your name will be placed on the Fulbright Specialist Roster. Tenure on the Roster is three years and can be renewed.

Hopefully, this brief article whets your appetite for such a unique experience because once you become a part of any Fulbright Program, you, too, will affirm that it is life-changing.

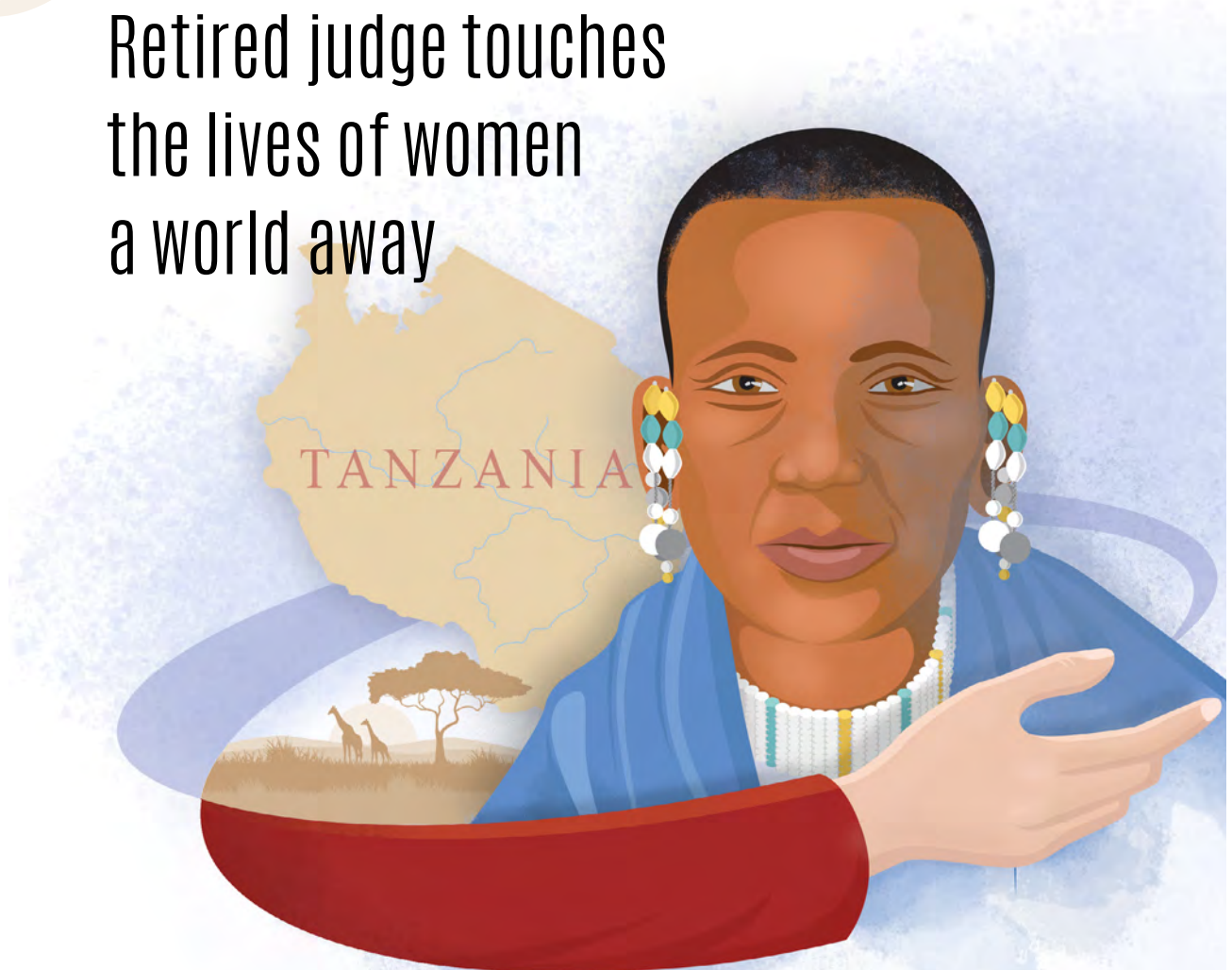
**The Honorable Cynthia A. Baldwin** was the first African-American woman elected to the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas and only the third African-American and the second African-American woman to serve on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. She retired from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 2008. After her retirement from the Court, she became a partner with Duane Morris and also served as the first General Counsel for the Pennsylvania State University. Justice Baldwin is currently serving a second term on the Fulbright Association Board in Washington, D.C., where she was elected Chair of the Board for 2022-2024.

A Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania, she was the first woman and the first person of color to be elected to the corporate board of Koppers, Inc. She is a member of the Vibrant Pittsburgh Board of Directors where she currently co-chairs the Governance and Nominating Committee. She also served on the Advisory Board of the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University. She is a member of the International Women's Forum and received their Women Who Make a Difference Award in 2009. A member of the International Association of Women Judges, she has traveled to their conferences on four continents.

In recognition of outstanding contributions to her profession and the Marquis Who's Who community, Justice Cynthia A. Baldwin is featured on Marquis Who's Who Lifetime Achievers website.

# Our One Community

Retired judge touches  
the lives of women  
a world away



**By Jodi Cleesattle**  
Supervising Deputy Attorney  
General for the California  
Department of Justice

**F**or retired San Diego Superior Court Judge Susan Finlay, a friendship formed in 1959 led to the launch of a global partnership serving the needs of villagers in a remote region of Tanzania 50 years later.

Finlay and her friend, Diane Raleigh, met during a study

abroad program – Experiment in International Living – in Italy in 1959. Finlay went on to become a lawyer and a judge, serving on the bench from 1980 to 2000 and presiding over cases as an assigned judge for another 12 years. Raleigh joined the Peace Corps, became a psychologist, and helped found the graduate school of psychology that



became Palo Alto University. The two remained friends and stayed in touch over the years.

In 2009, Raleigh reached out to Finlay with an idea. She had been visiting Tanzania, in a remote area on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, when she came across some Maasai women trying to make bricks. She asked them what they were doing, and they told her that they hoped to build a medical clinic. A midwife named Yaya told Raleigh that the Maasai women had no easy access to healthcare and gave birth in primitive, unsanitary conditions, leading to needless deaths.

“Diane came back to the U.S. and called me,” Finlay said. “We sat down at the kitchen table and figured out how we could build a clinic for these women and get help for them and their babies.”

That brainstorming session led to the formation of Our One Community, a nonprofit foundation that, just a year later, opened the Olmoti Clinic and Health Center, which serves the Maasai people of northern Tanzania.

Raleigh set up a trust in Tanzania, the Olmoti Tanzanian Organization. She serves as its executive director, and Finlay serves as a trustee. All other members of the Trust are Tanzanian. In the U.S., Raleigh and Finlay formed Our One Community ([www.olmoticlinic.org](http://www.olmoticlinic.org)), a 501c3 corporation. Raleigh serves as CEO, and Finlay serves as president of Our One Community.

When the 10-room, 3,000-square-foot clinic opened in June 2010, it was the first-ever health facility for the isolated Maasai population, and

it operated primarily as a maternity clinic for women and their babies. The Maasai donated the land for the clinic, and the Longido District Government provided a medical officer and two nurses, a staff that would eventually grow with the clinic to three doctors and a medical staff of ten. In 2019, the Tanzanian government took over the responsibility for the clinic, thus fulfilling a goal of Our One Community, the Olmoti Tanzanian

to programs including HIV/AIDS testing and education, Hepatitis B education and outreach, family planning and hygiene education, fistula information and care, and a laboratory for blood testing and analysis. In 2017 and 2018, the clinic opened a surgical facility and patient wards, earning the clinic designation as a full-fledged Health Center.

“We originally focused on maternity

**“Diane came back to the U.S. and called me,” Finlay said. “We sat down at the kitchen table and figured out how we could build a clinic for these women and get help for them and their babies.”**

Organization, and the Maasai of Olmoti.

“I went to the clinic opening when we cut the ribbon in 2010,” Finlay said. “It was wonderful. The Maasai came in from the hills by the hundreds.”

Finlay said the Olmoti Clinic staff and founders soon realized that there were more medical needs to be served. Many Maasai suffered from cataracts, blindness and other vision problems, and the clinic soon established the Olmoti Eye Care Outreach to provide vision care. Clinic services grew from basic health care

issues,” Finlay said. “Then we started a vision clinic, and then it just kept growing. Now we have a full-service surgical operatory, a ward for men, and a ward for women. We have four doctors and six or seven nurses. We have

*Hon. Susan P. Finlay (ret.) is president of Our One Community, a nonprofit that has built a clinic and school serving the Maasai people in a remote area of northern Tanzania.*



a wonderful laboratory with well-trained lab technicians who test for HIV, malaria, typhoid and other diseases.”

Our One Community’s projects have expanded beyond health care to include education programs and needed infrastructure. Finlay said the Maasai women – including YaYa, an elder of the Maasai village of Olmoti and head midwife for the clinic – have driven the growth of the programs.

“We always meet with the women,” Finlay said. “The women said our little ones can’t go to the government school because it’s too far away. There are no roads; there are wild animals; it’s dangerous. ... So, we started a primary school. ... There are about 500 children now in school in grades one through five.”

The government provides four teachers for the school, and the Olmoti Tanzanian Organization assists by providing books and supplies and funding for a teacher-training program. Our One Community also subsidizes secondary education for about 40 students, as well as a young woman attending college.

Finlay said the opening and expansion of the school led to a realization that many young girls were not getting educated, despite the new school. One reason was child marriages that took place as early as age 12. But there was another practical reason as well.

“The girls were needed to tote water,” Finlay said. “The nearest water was nine kilometers away. The girls were charged with getting water, and that took most of the day.”

So, Our One Community embarked on a project to build a fresh-water pipeline to

bring water to the clinic and neighboring communities. Finlay said the Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter of Engineers without Borders adopted the project, sending a survey team and drawing up the plans for the pipeline; Our One Community provided funding; and the Maasai people dug the ditch. The pipeline was finished in 2015. Women and girls became liberated with clean water within reach, Finlay said, and more young girls could go to school.

“Now there is running water,” Finlay said. “It means more girls can go to school. And, of course, there’s better sanitation.”

Finlay said that Our One Community began by fundraising from people she and Raleigh knew, but

*Hon. Susan P. Finlay (ret.), third from left, meets with the staff of the Olmoti School in northern Tanzania.*

now it often draws contributions from major corporations. She said Tesla’s nonprofit organization, Give Power, sent a team to install solar equipment, providing power for the clinic, and

*YaYa, left, is a Maasai midwife, village elder, and certified medical assistant who serves as head midwife at the Olmoti Clinic and Health Center. Mary, right, is head teacher at the Olmoti School and has supervised its growth.*





the International Medical Equipment Corporation donated about \$150,000 in medical equipment in the clinic's early years.

"The contacts happen in such different ways," Finlay said. "It could be that you read an article about a company that makes solar lanterns, so you write a letter and ask the price and tell them you're trying to help a village. You hear back

safaris for which Our One Community receives the profits. The 11-day safaris are a complete cultural experience and include a visit to the Olmoti Clinic and the school, opportunities to visit the Maasai village, as well as scenic wonders like Mount Kilimanjaro, the Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, and Lake Manyara National Park. The itinerary can be found at [www.olmoticlinic.org](http://www.olmoticlinic.org). For more information

bushmen located in central Tanzania. ... A couple of times we've experienced the great migration. That's one of the most awesome experiences anyone could have. It's when the animals are on the move. They start heading north to the Mara River. The landscape is filled with thousands of animals. The predators, like the leopards, are just lounging around in the trees looking over this moving buffet of herds of animals."

**"Being as blessed as we are comes with a duty to help others. You don't just live for your own comfort - that's a shallow life. You live more deeply and leave the world a better place, in whatever way you can do it. It may be a small way or a big way, whatever way you have to give. We're all connected..."**

from them, not just with the information, but with an offer to contribute."

Another important source of fundraising comes from safaris. Wilbard Chambulo – a trustee of the Olmoti Tanzanian Organization, owner of Kibo Guides and Tanganyika Wilderness Camps, and chairman of the Tanzania Association of Tour Operators – provides custom

about the safaris, contact Diane Raleigh at [dlraleigh@yahoo.com](mailto:dlraleigh@yahoo.com).

"We do animal observations," Finlay said. "The wildlife is phenomenal. We have dinner around the campfire. We visit the Maasai village and the clinic. We visit the Hadzabe, who are

Finlay said – pandemic-willing – the next safaris are scheduled for June 13 and June 15, 2022. And she added that the portion of the cost that is donated to Our One Community is tax deductible.

She said she has considered organizing a safari that includes meetings with

*Children crowd into the primary school built by Our One Community and the Olmoti Tanzanian Organization.*

*Children at the Olmoti School show off their new chalkboards.*





the women judges of Tanzania. She noted that Tanzanian villages often use a system of restorative justice – “The village elders determine, if one person steals from another, what’s an appropriate thing to happen. Well, that person has to work for the other one, or give them two bags of rice.”

Finlay said she has learned much from working with Our One Community and

*Guests on a Kibo safari, benefiting Our One Community, enjoy an up-close and personal view of a curious cheetah.*



*The Maasai Giraffe, spotted here on one of the safaris benefiting Our One Community, is the national animal of Tanzania.*



the Tanzanian people, as have others involved with the clinic projects. She cited a pediatrician who volunteered at the clinic, who told her that, freed from computers and a strict schedule, she could just spend time with her patients and learn from them. The pediatrician told Finlay it made her remember why she went to medical school.

“It reminds all of us why we’re here, and why we have the skills we have,” Finlay said. “Being as blessed as we are comes with a duty to help others. You don’t just live for your own comfort – that’s a shallow life. You live more deeply and leave the world a better place, in whatever way you can do it. It may be a small way or a big way, whatever way you have to give. We’re all connected. This is a global community. That’s why we call our nonprofit ‘Our One Community.’”

She added that everyone has the ability to help make life better for others, in their own neighborhoods or around the world. “If you see a need, whether it’s here in this country or wherever you happen to be, if

you have the desire to help, it is doable,” Finlay said. “The most meaningful thing to me about this whole experience is how willing people are to help. They are happy to help if they are made aware of the need. That’s what has been so gratifying. I think people at heart are generous and want to help, but just don’t know what the needs are.”

From friends who pitched in with contributions when Our One Community was first getting off the ground, to the companies that donated supplies and funds to the clinic and its growing programs, to the Maasai who put in labor and services and provided inspiration for expanded projects, many individuals came together to create the clinic, schools and programs that have made life better for the Maasai community.

And it all started with two women who identified with other women who needed a hand.

“It’s really just two women friends identifying with women in a very remote place who had no place to have their babies or get prenatal care or any care,” Finlay said.

**Jodi Cleesattle** is a Supervising Deputy Attorney General for the California Department of Justice, where she works in the Employment and Administrative Mandate section in the San Diego office. She has been a litigator for 28 years and previously was a partner with a national law firm. She currently serves as first vice president of California Women Lawyers and chairs CWL’s amicus committee, and she also serves on the board of the Tom Homann LGBTQ Lawyers Association. She previously served on the boards of the San Diego County Bar Association and Lawyers Club of San Diego and served in leadership positions with the State Bar, including as chair of the Public Law Section and as co-chair of the Council of State Bar Sections. She has been a member of NAWJ for several years and is currently a member of the Judicial Independence and LGBTQ committees.

# COMMITTEES! COMMITTEES! COMMITTEES!



**N**AWJ Committees provide a framework and an opportunity for all Association members. Committee participants contribute dynamically toward fulfilling the Association's mission to "promote the judicial role of protecting the rights of individuals under the rule of law through strong, committed, diverse judicial leadership; fairness and equality in the courts; and equal access to justice." By participating in Committees, members proactively choose and commit to share their interest, expertise, and focus on issues the Association has prioritized, through meetings, program development, presentations, and panels, which are available to all members and to the greater community as appropriate.

Today we see that proactive contribution aplenty among our Committee members and activities. Most of the Committees submitted full reports for the Midyear Board Book. I am hopeful that other Committees will also submit their reports for the Annual Board Book in October. Our Midyear Board Book included some especially notable Committee-oriented activities focused on communications, operational efficiency, and web site enhancements, major elements of the Strategic Plan.

We have seen in the reports submitted by Committees a wealth of cooperative efforts between and among Committees on programs and webinars; this is a valuable tradition in NAWJ, and has continued

enthusiastically. We are considering ways to further enhance this cooperation by having Committee members share their special expertise and experience in using technology for creating webinars, videos, etc., with other Committees in need of such expertise. Also, we continue to see Committees actively working with other Committees and with outside organizations on a variety of topics, such as the recent work with the Illinois State Bar Association (Human Trafficking Committee), the American Law Institute (Human Trafficking Committee and Domestic Violence Committee), the American College of Trial Lawyers (Judicial Independence Committee), and the ABA Standing Committee on Armed Forces Law (Military and Veteran Judges Committee), to name a few.

Several Committees are focusing on redefining and rewriting their mission statements. Several are looking for new recruitment options to enhance and broaden their membership. To that end, we have begun discussing a simple web tool to enable existing members, and applicants for new Association membership, to express their interest in serving on specific Committees. This enhancement will allow the President, Executive Director, and Committee chairs to be fully and currently informed of such member interest and importantly to encourage increased interest and participation by all members.

We hope and plan to increase



**By Judge Heidi M. Pasichow**  
Superior Court of the District of Columbia  
Heidi.Pasichow@dcsc.gov  
NAWJ Committees Liaison



Committee presence in both publications, Counterbalance and the Monthly Update, such as a regular section in every Monthly Update that presents a synopsis of some Committee activities and a Committees News section in Counterbalance just as there is a District News section in Counterbalance. We are looking at ways to increase this presence without additional burden on Committee chairs and members.

Some Committees are planning events

for the 2022 Annual Conference, and some are already planning events for the 2023 Annual Conference. We are pleased to see that Committees are beginning to use the new web site calendar tool (<https://www.nawj.org/join/nawj-master-calendar>), thereby enabling members to see weeks ahead when Committees are planning to meet and the events they are convening.

I look forward to our continued work together. I thank our Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members, of

course, for the opportunity to support their work in any way that I can. I have been honored to participate as the Committees Liaison.

**Judge Pasichow** is a D.C. Superior Court Associate Judge presiding over civil matters and trials in the Civil Division. She is currently the Co-Director and faculty member of the District of Columbia Next-Level Trial Advocacy Program for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA). Judge Pasichow is an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University Law School and at The Washington College of Law, The American University.

# District News



## DISTRICT ONE (MA, ME, NH, PR, RI)

Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island

## DISTRICT DIRECTOR:

**Hon. Mary Dacey White (ret.)**

Brookline District Court, Massachusetts  
Email: [mdacey.white@gmail.com](mailto:mdacey.white@gmail.com)

**Hon. Joan N. Feeney (ret.)** was the coach for the Suffolk Law School Moot Court Team at the Hon. Conrad Duberstein Moot Court Team in NYC the weekend of February 25, 2022.

Women's History Month is off to a great start at the Chelsea District Court. **First Justice Matthew Machera** and **Chief Probation Officer Carmen Gomez** are holding the



*Hon. Joan N. Feeney (ret.) is 3rd from the right with her moot court team.*

second annual virtual celebration to honor, recognize, and hear from women who have influenced society by Providing Healing and Promoting Hope. The honorees include **Hon. Dalila Arguez Wendlandt**, Associate Justice, **Hon. Julie Bernard**, District Court Judge and **Hon. Angel Kelley**, USDC Massachusetts. **Hon. Amy Nechtem** is one of the event speakers as well. Judges Bernard, Kelley and Nechtem are NAWJ members. The event is being held at 11AM virtually on March 1, 2022.

**Hon. Joan Feeney (ret.)**, **Hon. Amy Nechtem**, **Hon. Helen Brown Bryant** and **Hon. Mary Dacey White (ret.)**, all NAWJ members are did a Law School Outreach program with the assistance of **Hon. Mary Lou Muirhead** on March 8, 2022 at Suffolk Law School at 5:30 PM both in person and virtually. The topic was *Women in the Law*.

**Hon. Paula Carey**, **Hon. Judith Frabricant**

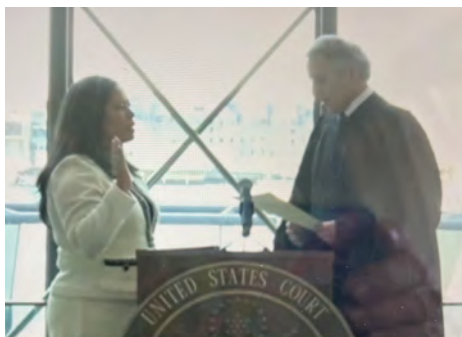


*From left to right: moderator: 3L and President of the Suffolk Women's Bar Association Sofia Martinez Guasch, Atty. Safa Osmani of Hogan Lovells, Hon. Mary Dacey White (ret.), Hon. Joan N. Feeney (ret.), Hon. Helen Brown Bryant and Chief Justice Amy Nechtem.*

and **Hon. Amy Nechtem** all members of NAWJ were part of a panel sponsored by the Massachusetts Trial Court in March 18, 2022. The topic was *Women on the Bench, Being Prepared to Navigate Gender Related Experiences*.



**Hon. Angel Kelley** was officially sworn in as a U S District Court Judge for the District of Massachusetts on April 4, 2022. She had several NAWJ members present both in person as well as virtually. **Hon. Tony Leoney (ret.)** was the moderator of the festivities and did a fabulous job. We send her our congratulations and best wishes to her. Judge Kelley had a great career as a Massachusetts District and Superior Court Judge. She will be a fantastic Federal Court Judge!



*Hon. Angel Kelley being sworn in by Judge Saylor at the Moakley courthouse in Boston, MA and her giving her speech, which was AWESOME!!!!*

On April 13, 2022, **Judges Amy Blake, Marguerite Grant, Catherine Ham and MaryLou Muirhead** presented a NAWJ Law School Outreach program with New England Law Boston.

On August 24, 2022 at 5:30 PM District One is planning an in person reception. The reception is to honor those newly appointed judges, those recently retired and those who have been elevated to higher courts. I will be sending



invitations to those Judges in this month. If you know anyone who has been recently appointed or elevated or retired please send me their name and email address in order that they may be invited. A donation of \$25.00 will be collected at the door to help defray the costs. I hope to see you all there!!



*From the left Professor Natasha Varyani, Justice Marguerite Grant, Judge Catherine Ham, Justice Amy Blake, Professor Monica Teixeira-DeSousa, Judge MaryLou Muirhead, Professor Caryn Mitchell-Munavar.*



**DISTRICT TWO (CT, NY, VT)**  
Connecticut, New York, Vermont

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Leslie A. Stroth**  
New York City Civil Court, NY County  
Email: [lastroth@nycourts.gov](mailto:lastroth@nycourts.gov)

CONNECTICUT  
NEW YORK  
VERMONT 2

## SUCCESSFUL NAWJ-NY SPRING RETREAT "I DISSENT"



*Chautauqua Lake*

The NAWJ-NY Chapter held its Spring Upstate Retreat on beautiful Chautauqua Lake in Jamestown, New York on May 1-3. Attending were NAWJ members from across the state, Buffalo to New York City, as well as our NAWJ Executive Director,



*NAWJ-NY Chapter Members*

**Laurie Denham.**

Speakers included **Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson**, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, who gave a presentation about the 5 divisions of the Office for Justice Initiatives; implementation of the Equal Justice in Courts Initiative; the Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts 2020 survey and

implementation.

Also speaking was **Kristan McMahon**, of the Robert H. Jackson Center. Robert H. Jackson was a U.S. Supreme Court Justice and Chief U. S. Prosecutor at Nuremberg. The Center's mission is to advance public awareness of the principles of justice and the rule of law as embodied in the achievements and legacy of Justice Jackson.

**Dean Aviva Abramovsky** of the University of Buffalo Law School showed the video of Ruth Bader Ginsberg's 2019 visit to Kleinhan's Music Hall in Buffalo and the law school and provided commentary on some of RBG's cases and famous dissents. She also spoke on

the topic of Women and the Law.

**Professor Amanda L. Tyler** from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, a former RBG Law Clerk and co-author, with RBG, of the book, *Justice, Justice, Thou Shalt Pursue: A Life's Work Fighting for a More Perfect Union*.

In addition to the formal program, our judges enjoyed visiting downtown Jamestown, New York, home of Lucille Ball, and the Lucille Ball-Desi Arnez "Lucy Desi" Museum, as well as the National Comedy Center. We had a wonderful dinner at the famous Jamestown Chop House, where we were entertained by the lovely vocal talents of our chef.

### THE POWER OF WOMEN'S VOICES: Women's History Month 1st and 2nd Departments

On Thursday, March 24, 2022, NAWJ-NY Chapter held its program for the 1st and 2nd Departments in recognition of Women's History Month 2022.

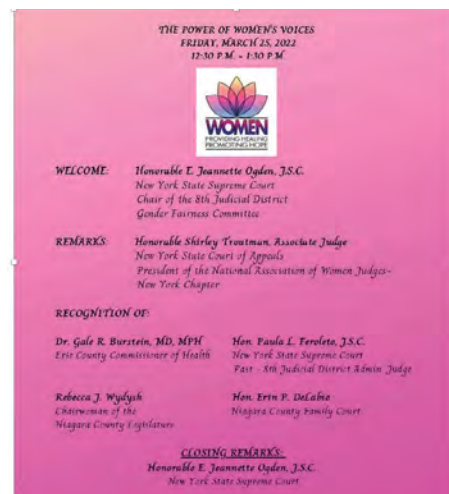


On Friday, March 25, 2022, NAWJ-NY Chapter and the NYS Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts Eighth Judicial District, 4th Department Gender Fairness Committee held



### #Break the Bias

The NAWJ-NY 3rd Dept. held a Women's History Month presentation on the power of a woman's voice. The panel members were the **Hon. Keri Savona**, Ulster County Family Court; **Hon. Susan Kushner**, Albany County Family Court and Acting Supreme Court Justice; **Hon. Jill Kehn**, Rensselaer County Family Court and the **Hon. Andra Ackerman**, Albany County Court. These judges discussed the power of a woman's voice in their specialty courts.



### NAWJ-NY Chapter Celebrated Women's History Month

As New Yorkers, we are proud to recognize so many women in leadership positions in NY State government and in our Judiciary. We celebrate the following New York leaders: **Governor Kathy Hochul**, our first woman governor; New York Court of Appeals **Chief Judge Janet DiFiore** and **Associate Judges Shirley Troutman** and **Madeline Singas**; **Deputy Chief Administrative Judges Edwina Mendelson** and **Tamiko**

**Amiker**, New York **Attorney General Letitia James**; **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**; **Majority Leader of the Assembly, Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes**; **NYC Corporation Counsel Sylvia O. Hinds-Radix**, **Dean of the Judicial Institute Kathie Davidson**, and countless newly appointed and elected women judges. Clearly, New York has taken to heart the following words of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made".

### MENTORJET - Speed Mentoring Event

On February 8, 2022, the NAWJ-NY Second Department held another successful MentorJet program. The February program was co-sponsored by the Queens County Women's Bar Association (QCWBA) and three student groups at St. John's Law School: the Women's Law Society (WLS), the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) and the Immigration Law Society (ILS).



### 2022 Women of Distinction Ceremony United Progressive Democratic Club

On March 27, 2022, NAWJ-NY Secretary **Hon. Wendy Li** and fellow judges **Hon. Joy Campanelli** and **Hon. Lillian Wan** were honored at the 2022 Women of Distinction Ceremony of the United Progressive Democratic Club.







### DISTRICT THREE (DE, NJ, PA, VI)

Delaware, New Jersey,  
Pennsylvania, Virgin Islands

#### DISTRICT DIRECTOR:

**Hon. Sandra Ann Robinson**

State of New Jersey

Email: [kwras@yahoo.com](mailto:kwras@yahoo.com)

DELAWARE  
NEW JERSEY  
PENNSYLVANIA  
VIRGIN ISLANDS

3

I'd like to recognize all our District III State Chairs for their hard work.

#### **Hon. Vivian L. Medinilla**

Superior Court of Delaware  
Wilmington, DELAWARE

#### **Hon. Barbara McDermott**

District Court of Common Pleas  
Philadelphia, PENNSYLVANIA

#### **Hon. Siobhan Teare**

Superior Court of New Jersey  
Newark, NEW JERSEY

#### **Hon. Maria Cabret**

Supreme Court of Virgin Islands  
Fredereiksted, St. Croix, VIRGIN ISLANDS

#### **Hon. Lourdes Santiago**

Superior Court of New Jersey  
Jersey City, NEW JERSEY

#### **Hon. Denise Francois**

Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands  
Saint Thomas, VIRGIN ISLANDS

#### **CONGRATULATIONS to Avis Bishop-**

**Thompson, JSC** – New Jersey, on her temporary assignment to the Appellate Division. **Judge Robinson** will assume all current responsibilities of the District III Directorship.

District III goals continue to be: Reconnect, Reenergize, and Reclaim members. Ideas for attraction of new members include:

1. In-person or virtual Receptions in each District III State;
2. An in-person or virtual meetings with State Chief Justice(s);
3. In-person or virtual meetings with State Law School Deans (University of Delaware Law School, Seton Hall Law School, Rutgers Law School, Pennsylvania State University Law

School, and other schools. 4. Hold an overnight District meeting in Philadelphia or Dover before attending the annual meeting in Detroit.

The Executive Director of Community Relations, **Anita E. Rivers**, MA has invited NJ/NAWJ to consider having the next in-person COJ program at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Of course, the success of this idea is strongly dependent on the reduction of coronaviruses, inflation of everything- food, transportation costs - gasoline, trains, busses, hotel rates, and most of all "availability" during the "Age of Zoom" and court closings. Meantime, New Jersey State Chairpersons are gearing-up for the next Color of Justice Program at a facility that can accommodate a significant number of student representatives from schools and colleges in northern, central and southern New Jersey.



### DISTRICT FOUR (DC, MD, VA)

District of Columbia, Maryland,  
Virginia

#### DISTRICT DIRECTOR:

**Hon. Gwenlynn D'Souza**

District of Columbia Department of Employment Services

Email: [gwdsouza@outlook.com](mailto:gwdsouza@outlook.com)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
MARYLAND  
VIRGINIA

4

Thank you all for joining us at the many District 4 events. The District continues to collaborate with the District of Columbia Department of Corrections to create a series of podcasts.

#### **Housing Conditions**

Sharon Goodie, Anthony Epstein, and Yewande Aderaju

#### **Reentry Job Search and Expungement**

Kenia Seoane-Lopez, Paula Thompson, Keisha Robinson, and Kaitlyn Mason

#### **Mental Wellness**

Tanya Jones Bosier, Tanya Kwaye, and Robin Kenney

#### **June 28, 2022, Mental Health Court**

Heidi Pasichow, Ann Keary, and Marina Sabett

The Mid-Year Conference was held on March 10-12, in Crystal City, Virginia. The three Afghani judges, who resettled in Virginia, joined us for the conference. There the NAWJ Board voted for them to become honorary members. Welcome **Lida Kharooty**, **Vida Qayoumi**, and **Kamila Noori** to District 4!

During the conference, special recognition was given to **Vanessa Ruiz**. She received the NAWJ Lady Justice Award for Humanitarian Aid for her ongoing efforts to advocate, protect,

counsel, guide, and connect the Afghani women judges to credible sources to ensure their safe transport out of Afghanistan. Locally, we applaud members **Lili Khozeimeh** and **Dania Ayoubi** for welcoming and mentoring two of the Afghani judges who are refugees in our area. If you are aware of employment opportunities for them, please reach out to me.

On Saturday, March 12, District 4 presented the Edna G. Parker Award to **Irma Raker** for her dedication and service. It was good to see so many of our District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia Judges together.





*District 4 Members with Irma Raker*

On April 12, **Joan Churchill** moderated the NAWJ Immigration Update Webinar. Carrie Bland participated as a panelist at the webinar Paths to the Administrative Judiciary: Many Roads, Many Destinations on April 21.



In May 2002, the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia recognized **Anita Josey-Herring** as the 2022 WBA Woman Lawyer of the Year. When she was elevated as Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court in October 2020, she became the first woman to hold the position.

**Congratulations** to our members and other local judges for their recent appointments and elevations:

**Anne Albright**, Maryland Court of Special Appeals  
**Bibi Berry**, Circuit Court for Montgomery County  
**Monise Brown**, Circuit Court for Charles County  
**Loren AliKhan**, District of Columbia Court of Appeals  
**Dominique Callins**, Virginia Court of Appeals  
**Doris Causey**, Virginia Court of Appeals  
**Vernida Chaney**, Virginia Court of Appeals  
**Theresa Chernosky**, Circuit Court for Montgomery County  
**Ana De la Hoz Hernandez**, District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City  
**Kathleen Dumais**, Circuit Court for Montgomery County  
**Angela Eaves**, Maryland Court of Appeals  
**Lydie Glynn**, District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City  
**Rondelle Herman**, Circuit Court of Henrico County  
**Jamilah LeCruise**, Norfolk General District Court  
**Rian Lewis**, Newport News General District Court  
**Lisa Lorish**, Virginia Court of Appeals  
**Tameika Lunn-Exinor**, District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City  
**Rachel McGuckian**, Circuit Court for Montgomery County  
**Theresa Morse**, District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City  
**Florence Pan**, United States District Court for the District of Columbia  
**Rupa Puttagunta**, District of Columbia Superior Court

**Julie Rubin**, United States District Court for the District of Maryland

**Kenia Seoane López**, District of Columbia Superior Court

**Jennifer Shupert**, Virginia Beach Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

**Rosalyn Tang**, Maryland Court of Special Appeals



Welcome to our newest members: **Adrianne Bennett**, Virginia Beach Juvenile Court; **Carrie Bland**, Department of Labor, Office of Administrative Law Judges; **Jill Dash** of the American Constitution Society, a past bar president of the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia; **Sephora Grey**, Georgetown Law Student; **Carolyn Lerner**, United States Court of Federal Claims; **Jaqueline Lucas**, Prince William County Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court; **Tiffany Cruz Oates**, District of Columbia Department of Employment Services, Administrative Hearings Division; **Nicole Opkins**, District of Columbia Office of Administrative Hearings; and **Alecia Watson**, University of the District of Columbia Law Student.



**DISTRICT FIVE (FL,GA,NC,SC)**  
 Florida, Georgia, North Carolina,  
 South Carolina

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Tanya Brinkley**  
 11th Judicial Circuit Court, Miami, Florida  
 Email: [tbrinkley@jud11.flcourts.org](mailto:tbrinkley@jud11.flcourts.org)

FLORIDA  
 GEORGIA  
 NORTH CAROLINA  
 SOUTH CAROLINA

5

## MEMBERSHIP CONNECTION

Regularly emailing welcome/retention letters to all new/expiring members, outlining the plan for the year, encouraging participation, and

welcoming ideas.

We are directly soliciting and engaging our members to participate in District 5 events.

We have 90 current members and growing.

## RECRUITMENT

We are using a membership team to recruit

new members throughout each state by using direct requests and event platforms. Our State Chairs are soliciting membership from their colleagues in their respective states.

### PROGRAMMING

In January, along with Wilkie D. Ferguson Black Lawyers Association, we co-hosted, "Get your

House in Order".

During March through April 2022, along with the Florida Bar, we co-hosted an art display featuring a diverse group of Florida legal legend's portraits. The display was featured in the lobby of the Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse in Miami-Dade County, Florida. This was a

historic display because Judge Thomas was the first Black Judge in the South in the 1950s. This program was held in conjunction with Florida Bar Standing Committee on Diversity and Inclusion Path to Unity.

A Bar to Bench and Color of Justice program will be held by the end of the year.



**DISTRICT SIX (AL, LA, MS, TN)**  
Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi,  
Tennessee

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Jennifer Smith**

Division IV, Criminal Court, 20th Judicial District, Nashville, Tennessee  
Email: [jennifersmith@jnsnashville.gov](mailto:jennifersmith@jnsnashville.gov)

ALABAMA  
LOUISIANA  
TENNESSEE

6

In 2021, as a part of its criminal justice reform efforts, Tennessee allocated funds to develop and implement the Women's Residential Recovery Court (WRRRC), a program serving female felony offenders with substance use disorders. The WRRRC is a post-plea court-supervised residential recovery court for non-violent justice-involved women from across the state of Tennessee who have a greater need for intensive substance abuse treatment and/or co-occurring services and supervision.

**Honorable Judge Angelita Blackshear Dalton** of the Davidson County Criminal Court, 20th Judicial District, presides over the program, which provides an alternative to prison for a high-risk, high-need felony offender population.



*Tennessee's Women's Residential Recovery Court, Presiding Judge Honorable Angelita Dalton, NAWJ District 6*

The program incorporates residential and other ancillary services on a centrally located campus in Nashville, Tennessee. Services which cannot be provided on the WRRRC campus are sourced through partnerships formed within the Nashville community. Participation in the program is voluntary and lasts approximately twelve months. A modified therapeutic community, gender and trauma-specific treatment, and a 12-step recovery foundation provide a framework to address participants' needs while being mindful of public safety.

Program participants are transferred by court order from their home recovery courts from across the state of Tennessee to the WRRRC. Upon completion of the program, the

individuals return to their originating courts for ongoing recovery court requirements. Although still in its infancy, the program has the capacity to serve a up to 42 women.

Programs like WRRRC save taxpayer dollars, free up more expensive prison beds for violent offenders and help participants gain the tools to address substance use disorders, prepare them to transition back into the community, and continue their recovery journey.







**DISTRICT SEVEN (MI, OH, WV)**  
Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Michelle Rick**  
Michigan Court of Appeals  
Email: [mricks@courts.mi.gov](mailto:mricks@courts.mi.gov)

MICHIGAN  
OHIO  
WEST VIRGINIA

7

## MICHIGAN:

Michigan continues to work on the 2022 annual conference. The conference theme is: All Rise: Standing up for Global Justice in the City that Moved the World. October 19-22, 2022.

Save the dates:



NAWJ is coming to Detroit!

Preparations continue for the 2022 Annual Conference in Detroit. We are pleased that **Tonier Cain** is confirmed as one of our keynote speakers. Tonier is a worldwide speaker on the intersection of trauma, criminal conduct, and substance abuse. She will candidly discuss her own life from being trafficked by her mother, to her battle with addiction, to a life which began as a revolving door to the criminal justice system. She broke the cycle thanks to innovative court programming. She was able to reclaim her life and now uses her experiences to help others. If you would like a preview of her remarkable story, here is a [link](#) to the documentary chronicling her journey from despair: "Healing Neen". For a preview of the talented Detroit Youth Choir, performing at the Party With a Purpose, click [here](#).

Educational sessions are being finalized. They include topics including Accountable Language, Wrongful Convictions and the work of Conviction Integrity Units, a historic look at the unjust treatment of First Nations members, a look into management of the complexities of the Flint Water federal actions, how Detroit emerged from bankruptcy, Pride and Pronouns from the NAWJ LGBTQ Committee, and many other topics

that align with the theme of the conference: All Rise: Standing Up for Global Justice in the City that Moved the World.

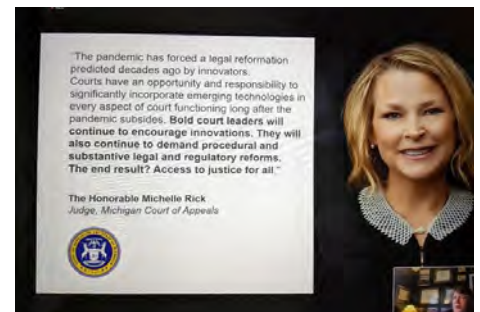
We are thrilled that many sister judges have expressed great enthusiasm about this year's (international) annual conference in Detroit. In addition to dynamic educational sessions there are many optional things explore in Detroit. For a list of optional side trips that you can plan, including shopping, Motown Museum, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Eastern Market, Windsor, Canada, Ann Arbor, etc, go to [Visit Detroit](#)



Michigan NAWJ member and co-chair of the Education Committee, **Judge Debra Nance**, hosts a weekly radio program. It is called 'Your best chance with Judge Nance'. It airs on Saturday evenings from 6-8 pm on Detroit radio 910 am Superstation. On February 19, 2022 Judge Nance was joined by **NAWJ President Elizabeth White** and District 7 Director **Judge Michelle Rick** to discuss the annual conference plans for Detroit 2022. Thank you, Judge Nance, for offering your show as a platform! Judge Nance graciously extended an invite to come back closer to the time of the conference. We gladly accept! Thank you, Judge Nance!

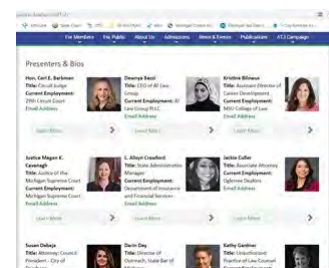
On February 18, 2022, **Judge Michelle Rick** and several law students continued their shared passion to promote expungements. They appeared

on a broadcast on WHPR TV Detroit to discuss the recent changes in Michigan's expungement laws. After the students presented on the changes in the law, Judge Rick was then joined by **Attorney Ticara Hendley** from the Detroit Law Department and a former client of hers, Antoine. They discussed the city's Clean Slate program, and the relief efforts to assist low-income Detroiters with cleaning up their records. You can watch the hour-long program here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20RrL63D\\_Qk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20RrL63D_Qk)



On January 13, 2022, the software company, Relativity held a virtual event entitled "The Predictions Webinar". Judge Rick was asked to provide a court specific prediction for 2022, which was highlighted and discussed by the presenters.

Since then, Relativity has signed on to the NAWJ Resource Board. We welcome **David Horrgan** and his expertise in the areas of AI, electronic data, and privacy.



On March 22, District 7 co-hosted a virtual MentorJet at Michigan State University School of Law.





### DISTRICT EIGHT (IL,IN,KY)

Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky

### DISTRICT DIRECTOR:

**Hon. Ann Breen-Greco**

Chicago Administrative Hearing  
Department, Illinois

Email: [annbreen-greco@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annbreen-greco@sbcglobal.net)

**Hon. Patrice Ball-Reed**

Circuit Court of Cook County, Chicago, Illinois

Email: [patballreed@aol.com](mailto:patballreed@aol.com)

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### District 8 Announces Appointment of Justice Lisa Holder White



District 8 is thrilled to announce that **Justice Lisa Holder White**, has been appointed to

serve on the Illinois Supreme Court, making her the first Black woman to serve on the state's highest court, which will be effective July 7, 2022.

Justice Holder White received her bachelor's degree from Lewis University in Romeoville, IL in 1990, and her juris doctor from the University of Illinois College of Law in Champaign, IL in 1993. She began her legal career as an assistant state's attorney before going into private practice.

Justice Holder White's judicial career has been

comprised of several historical appointments. She first made history when she was named as an associate judge in the Sixth Judicial Circuit in 2001, making her the first Black judge to sit in that circuit. She made history again when she was appointed to be a circuit judge in 2008. Thereafter, in 2013, she was appointed to the Fourth District Court of Appeals, making her the first Black judge in the appellate district; she was later elected to that seat in 2014.

Congratulations, Justice Holder White!



### DISTRICT NINE (IA, MO, WI)

Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin

### DISTRICT DIRECTOR:

**Hon. Celene Gogerty**

Judicial District 5 Court, Iowa

Email: [celene.gogerty@iowacourts.gov](mailto:celene.gogerty@iowacourts.gov)

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The **Honorable Laura Stith** retired in March 2022 on her 20th anniversary as a judge of the Supreme Court of Missouri. She was the second woman to be appointed to the Court, replacing Ann Covington in 2001. Her replacement was **Robin Ransom**, the first black woman and only the third black person to serve on the Supreme Court of Missouri. The other two female judge on the Court are **Patricia Breckenridge** and **Mary Russell**.

On January 28, 2022, Recalled U. S. Magistrate **Judge Celeste F. Bremer**, Southern District of Iowa, presented a program for the Berkeley Judicial Institute with California Architect Susan Oldroyd, FAIA, entitled Gendered Justice: Are Courthouses Male or Female? Setting Expectations for Inclusive Courthouse Design to Improve Equity in Access to Justice and Community Support for the Rule of Law.

NAWJ member **Emily Chafa** reports the following accomplishments:

On March 20, 2022, I participated in an ABA JD SCDJ (Standing Committee on Diversity in the Judiciary, chaired by **Marcella Holland**) Women's History Month program with fellow NAWJ members **Ann Breen-Greco**, **Linda Murnane**, **Vivian Medinilla**, as well as **Judge Romonda Belcher**, **Henry Hamilton**, and **Judge Peter Reyes**. The program was entitled "Trailblazing Women in the Legal Profession: Their Stories and Legacies For Us". We featured **Margaret Brent**, **Myra Bradwell**, **Arabella Mansfield** and **Gertrude Rush**. The program was recorded and will soon be available to view free of charge.

I'm moderating a panel for an ABA JD program on April 13, 2022, entitled "Recognizing Impaired Attorneys, Parties, and Witnesses" as part of the Wellness Wednesday series.

Panelists are ALJ **Sharon Steckler** and **Prof. Amy Stark**.

I'm participating and moderating a panel for an ABA JD program on May 11, 2022, entitled "All Hands on Deck: We're All in the Judicial Outreach Business" as part of the Wellness Wednesday series. Panelists include NAWJ member **Kristin Rosi**, **Nicole Colbert-Botchway**, **Prof Greg Parks**, **Judge Paul Wilson**, and **Judge Andra Sparks**.

The ABA JD Wellness Wednesday programs are offered free to charge and are recorded for later viewing.

I'm participating in the NAWJ Webinar on April 21, 2022, "Paths to the Administrative Judiciary: Many Roads, Many Destinations" which includes NAWJ members **Dorothy Chou Proudfoot**, **Kristin Rosi**, **Susan Formaker**, **Gwen D'Souza**, and two others.

On April 20, 2022, Des Moines Public School students attended the Des Moines First Annual Color of Justice event at Drake University. Our opening speaker was Iowa **Supreme Court Chief Justice Susan Christensen** and we had two lively and interactive panels of judges, lawyers, professors and law students. Our DMPS students described the experience

as “great”, “amazing”, “insightful”, and “encouraging”. Plans are already in progress for the 2023 event. Here are some photos. More photos are posted on the DMPS website, found at <https://ca.dmschools.org/about-us/7th-grade-prep-academy/>.



*Color of Justice student participants pose with lawyers and judges*



*District 9 Director Judge Celene Gogerty with Judge Romonda Belcher*



*Judges and lawyers panel at the Des Moines Color of Justice Event in April*



**DISTRICT TEN (KS, MN, NE, ND, SD)**  
Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North  
Dakota, South Dakota

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Cheryl Ann Rios**  
Shawnee County District Court, Kansas  
Email: [crios@shawneecourt.org](mailto:crios@shawneecourt.org)

KANSAS  
MINNESOTA  
NEBRASKA  
NORTH DAKOTA  
SOUTH DAKOTA

10

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

District 11 has four new members: **Judge Miryey Ayala**, newly appointed to Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 4, and **Judge Dawn Deshea Rogers**, 334th District Court, Harris County, **Associate Judge Selina Mireles**, Child Protection Court of South Texas Court #1, and **Judge Selena Alvarenga**, 460th District Court, Travis County. District 11 currently has 98 members.



## PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES:

Another fantastic Color of Justice (Austin) was held on April 14, 2022, at the Eidman Courtroom at UT Law School; its 17th annual COJ! Sixty (60) middle and high school students participated, approximately 85% of them were minorities. **Lezly Cardenas**, 2L, received the \$1,000 Scholarship sponsored by District 11, NAWJ, and Texas Latinx Judges. A



DACA recipient, Lezly is passionately committed to helping immigrants like herself. She shared her powerful story with the students. (See link next page)

The judges' panel was comprised of: 1 appellate judge, 1 civil district judge, 1 criminal district judge, and one Justice of the Peace; 2 female, 2 male; 2 Latinas, 1 Chinese, 1 African American. The attorney panel included 3 females, 1 male; 1 Latina, 2 African Americans, 1 Mexican American; areas of practice included: family, criminal, international transaction, general counsel work.

Moody Bank and Travis County Women Lawyers were lunch sponsors for approximately 10 judges, lawyers and students.



<https://law.utexas.edu/publicinterest/news/national-association-of-women-judges-access-to-justice-scholarship-awarded-to-lezly-cardenas-23/>

On April 20, 2022, **Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez** hosted a Color of Justice program in San Antonio at the Young Women's Leadership Academy.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Judge Audrey Moorehead**, County Criminal Court #3 (Dallas), was elected President of the Texas Association of County Court at Law Judges.

**Judge Cynthia Wheless**, 417th District Court (Collin County) is this year's Texas Women Lawyers Pathfinder Award Recipient. The presentation was made at the organization's annual meeting on April 29, 2022, in McKinney, Texas.

**District Director Maria Salas Mendoza** moderated the Judges' Panel: Views from

the Bench, at the 19th Annual Texas Minority Program hosted by the State Bar Office of Minority Affairs on April 22, 2022, in Houston, Texas. The panel included **Judge Al Bennet**, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas, **Judge Beau Miller**, 190th Civil District Court, Houston, Texas, and **Judge Christine Weems**, 281st District Court, Houston, Texas.

**Judge Yolanda Huff**, County Court 12 (Bexar), presented on CCP 16.22 at the Texas Association of Pretrial Services Conference on May 5, 2022.

**Judge Beckie Palomo**, 341st District Court (Webb), received the 2022 Law Day Award from the Laredo Webb County Bar Association on May 11, 2022, honoring her selfless public service and significant contributions to the legal profession and Laredo community.

The Global Diversity Council has invited **Judge Rosie Speedlin-Gonzalez**, County Court at Law #13 (Bexar), to speak at its 2022 Mexico LGBTQ+ Cumbre de La Unidad (Unity Summit) in Mexico City on June 16, 2022.

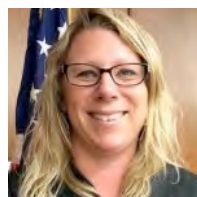
## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Justice Robbie Partida Kipness** (5th Court of Appeals), **Justice Dennise Garcia** (5th Court of Appeals), **Judge D'Metria Benson** (Dallas County Court at Law #1), **Judge Audrey**

**Moorehead** (Dallas County Criminal Court #3), newly elected **Judge Maria Aceves** (192nd District Court, Dallas), and **District Director Maria Salas Mendoza** will host an evening social for members and prospective members on May 25, 2022.

**Judge Audrey Moorehead** and **Judge Maria Salas Mendoza** will present on Criminal Trials in a Post-Pandemic Reality, for the Women in the Law Section, State Bar of Texas, on May 25, 2022. The event will be virtual for attendees, but Judges Moorehead and Salas Mendoza will present live from the office of Krisi Kastle in Dallas, Texas.

A first El Paso Faces of Justice program is planned for June 24, 2022. Members will hold the event at the El Paso County Courthouse targeting UTEP college students. Planning committee includes members **Judge Linda Chew**, **Judge Selena Solis**, **Judge Diane Navarrete**, **Judge Anna Perez** and **Judge Maria Salas Mendoza**; other members are **Lisa Soto**, **Cori Harbour-Valdez**, **Judge Becky Bustamante** and Women's Bar Association leaders **Melissa Baeza** and **Priscilla Mata**. The program is co-sponsored by Texas Latinx Judges, the plan is to award at least one \$1000 scholarship to a college student.



**DISTRICT TWELVE (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY)**  
Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Colleen Clark**  
Arapahoe County Court, Colorado  
Email: [colleen.clark@judicial.state.co.us](mailto:colleen.clark@judicial.state.co.us)

This weekend marks the end of Ramadan with the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr or "Feast of Breaking the Fast." We began the month of Ramadan with a wonderful dinner at the home of **Justice Melissa Hart**. Approximately 50 women judges from across the state gathered and shared food, drink, stories, hugs and time together. It was so incredibly wonderful to get together in person once again. At the event we welcomed former **Afghan High**

**Court Judge Nadera Akbari** and her beautiful family including her husband, four sons and two daughters. We also welcomed attorney **Shahrazad Shamim** with her husband and beautiful little boy (who she let me hold and get baby snuggles from). I am so grateful for all of you who took time to meet these extraordinary women.

The Akbari family and the Shamim family both

have their own harrowing stories of escaping Afghanistan. Judge Akbari has endured kidnapping, rape, her husband has been shot and the van that was sent to pick her up from her home the month before she left was blown up with three of her female colleagues inside. Shahrazad and her family escaped the night Kabul fell with their then 12 week old baby. They were evacuated to Germany where for an entire week they fed the baby sugar water



as they were unable to get access to formula. Both women speak of how one day they had degrees, jobs, titles and then the day the

Taliban took over everything was erased as if it didn't exist. Women were no longer allowed to work and those that did were killed. Most

women attorneys still remaining in Afghanistan have had to burn their degrees and papers for fear of the Taliban finding out their education.



**DISTRICT THIRTEEN**  
(AK, HI, ID, MT, OR, WA)  
Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana  
Oregon, Washington

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
Hon. Lisa A. Paglisotti  
King County District Court  
Email: [lisaa.paglisotti@kingcounty.gov](mailto:lisaa.paglisotti@kingcounty.gov)

ALASKA  
HAWAII  
IDAHO  
MONTANA  
OREGON  
WASHINGTON

13

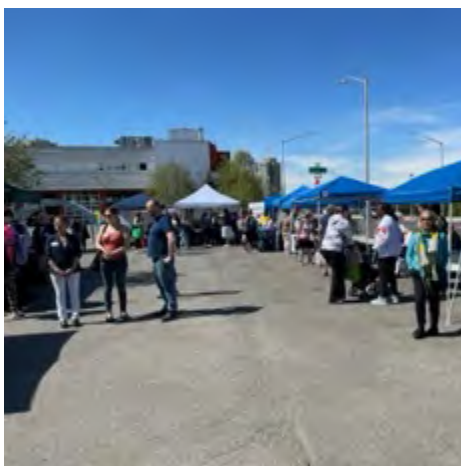
District 13 would like to welcome new members **Judge Valerie Bouffiou, Judge Angelle Gerl, Judge Catherin McDowall and Judge Megan Valentine!**

Special thanks to **Judge David Keenan** who has volunteered to work on a Color of Justice event this year!

Congratulations to our Alaska NAWJ members who held a resource fair and have shared some photos! We look forward to seeing all of you in Detroit for the annual conference



*Judge Pamela Washington &  
Judge (Ret.) Stephanie Rhoades*



*Judge Kari McCrea*



**DISTRICT FOURTEEN (CA, NV)**  
California, Nevada

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Pennie McLaughlin**  
Superior Court of California, San Diego County  
Email: [pennie.mclaughlin@sdcourt.ca.gov](mailto:pennie.mclaughlin@sdcourt.ca.gov)

CALIFORNIA  
NEVADA

14

District 14 added a dozen new members in 2022 and we continue to do outreach to grow. The list includes the following judicial officers:

**Judge Linda Bell**, Nevada  
**Judge Julia Campins**, CA  
**Commissioner Deborah Cumba**, CA  
**Judge Samantha David**, CA  
**Judge Euketa Oliver**, CA  
**Judge Daniela Reali**, CA  
**Commissioner Myrllys Stockdale Coleman**, CA

We are also happy to report the addition of several attorney new members, including:

**Rebecca Kanter**  
**Brenda Lopez**  
**Arcelia Magana**  
**Janelle Price**  
**Patricia Taitano-Valdovinos**

Our members have participated in numerous panels at the local, statewide, and national

### Celebrating Ourselves and the Women of the Supreme Court

#### PANELISTS:



#### CO-MODERATORS:



» [CLICK TO REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, May 25, 2022 | 4:30pm - 6:30pm

level over the past several months. Through this work, they serve as leaders in their legal communities and enhance the NAWJ. NAWJ Member CA **Judges Downing, Quinones and Santos** on a statewide panel on women on the Supreme Court and our future.

In Los Angeles, **Judge Laura Siegle** continues to host Mentorjet events at various law schools with many of them held virtually. The sites of these events included Southwestern, Pepperdine and USC law schools.

District 14 recognizes and congratulates our members who were recently appointed to Superior Court judgeships by Governor Newsom,

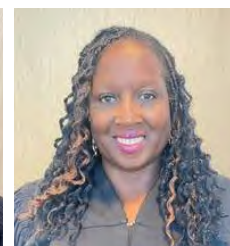
including **Judges Nadia Keilani, Daniela Reali and Sherry Thompson Taylor**.



*Judge Nadia Keilani*



*Judge Daniela Reali*



*Judge Sherry Thompson Taylor*

## NAWJ DISTRICT DIRECTORS

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Director of Development

*My mother instilled in me the importance of thank you notes. Little did we know she was preparing me for my eventual career. She remains a model of graciousness and kindness; I try to always remember to thank people. Thank you for all that you are doing for NAWJ. Thank you for serving on committees, taking part in projects, and writing articles. Thank you for making an annual gift. Thank you for paying the fee when you use your credit card as it offsets operational costs. For all the ways you support NAWJ, thank you.*

*This year the NAWJ Legacy Society was launched at the midyear meeting. I know of four members who have already included NAWJ in their estate plans. The inaugural Legacy Society members are Judge Elizabeth White, Robert Proskauer, Judge Judith Cherlin and Judge Toni*

*Clarke. Thank you for sharing your plans to help NAWJ in the future.*

*If you would like to include NAWJ in your plans, or if you have already done so, I hope you will get in touch with me at [fteer@nawj.org](mailto:fteer@nawj.org) or by phone (757) 880-8343.*

*With gratitude,  
Francie*

## NAWJ NEW MEMBERS SINCE JANUARY 1, 2022 – JUNE 1, 2022

## We welcome the following new members of NAWJ:

**Ms. Maria Aceves**, 192nd Civil District Court, Dallas, TX

**Hon. Liberty Aldrich**, Bronx New York, New York, NY

**Hon. Selena Alvarenga**, 460th Travis County, Austin, TX

**Hon. Giyang An**, NYS Unified Court System, Bronx, NY

**Hon. Athena Andaya**, Kansas Office Of Administrative Hearings, Topeka, KS

**Hon. Akemi Arakaki**, Los Angeles County

Superior Court, Monterey Park, CA

**Ms. Allison Aviki**, Mayer Brown, New York, NY

**Hon. Miryea Ayala**, Harris County Civil Court At Law No. 4, Houston, TX

**Hon. Linda Bell**, Eighth Judicial District Court, State Of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV

**Hon. Adrienne Bennett**, Virginia Beach Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, Virginia Beach, VA

**Hon. Carrie Bland**, US Department Of Labor, Washington, DC

**Hon Valerie Bouffiu**, Lynnwood Municipal Court, Lynnwood, WA

**Hon. Julia Campins**, Contra Costa Superior Court, Martinez, CA

**Hon. Allegra Collins**, NC Court Of Appeals, Raleigh, NC

**Hon. Annabelle G. Cortez**, Los Angeles Superior Court, Monterey Park, CA

**Commissioner Erica Cortez**, San Diego County Superior Court, Vista, CA

**Hon. Wende Cross**, Hamilton County Common

Pleas Court, Cincinnati, OH

**Commissioner Deborah Cumba**, San Diego Superior Court, San Diego, CA

**Miss Maia Czarnecki**, Vanderbilt University

**Ms. Jill Dash**, American Constitution Society, Rockville, MD

**Hon. Samantha David**, California Workers' Compensation Appeals Board, Pasadena, CA

**Hon. Denise Dominguez**, NYC Civil Supreme, New York, NY

**Ms. Nabintou Doumbia**, Georgetown University Law Center, New York, NY

**Hon. Kathleen Dumais**, Montgomery County Circuit Court, Rockville, MD

**Hon. Tyneka Flythe**, Newport News Circuit Court, Newport News, VA

**Ms. Julie Gafkay**, Gafkay Law, PLC, Saginaw, MI

**Hon. Carolyn Gallagher**, Circuit Court Of Cook County, Chicago, IL

**Hon. Dennise Garcia**, 5th District Court Of Appeals, Dallas, TX

**Hon. Cassandra Georges**, Bureau Of Hearings & Appeals (Pennsylvania Department Of Human Services), Philadelphia, PA

**Hon. Angelle Gerl**, Airway Heights Municipal Court, Airway Heights, WA

**Ms. Brenda Gitchev Guerrero**, Law Office Of Brenda Gitchev Guerrero, Miami, FL

**Mrs. Niya Goita**, Bronx Criminal Court, Bronx, NY

**Hon. Megan Goldish**, Circuit Court Of Cook County, Chicago, IL

**Hon. Veronica Gorman**, Broome County Family Court, Binghamton, NY

**Ms. Molly Gorman**, Suffolk University Law School, Hingham, MA

**Ms. Sephora Grey**, Georgetown University Law Center, Silver Spring, MD

**Hon. Grace Hanlon**, NYS Supreme Court, Mayville, NY

**Ms. Michelle Harrell**, Maddin, Hauser, Roth & Heller, PC, Southfield, MI

**Miss Brianna Hines**, Detroit Mercy Law School, Farmington Hills, MI

**Hon. Martin Hoffman**, 68th District Court, Dallas, TX

**Hon. Amanda Claire Hopkins**, 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Del Norte, CO

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**Hon. Sandra Jackson**, 302nd District Court, Grand Prairie, TX

**Hon. Cassandra Johnson**, Civil Court Of The City Of New York, Jamaica, NY

**Hon. E. Danielle Jose-Decker**, Sullivan County Court, Monticello, NY

**Ms. Rebecca Kanter**, US Attorney's Office, San Diego, CA

**Hon. Jill Kehn**, Rensselaer County Family Court, Troy, NY

**Hon. Viola King**, State Of Michigan, Harrison Township, MI

**Hon. Maureen Kinsella**, 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, Pontiac, MI

**Hon. Stacy Elizabeth Lee**, Henrico Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court, Henrico, VA

**Hon. Carolyn Lerner**, U.S. Court Of Federal Claims, Washington, DC

**Ms. Brenda Lopez**, PLBK, San Diego, CA

**Hon. Jacqueline Lucas**, Prince William County Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court, Manassas, VA

**Ms. Arcelia Magana**, Jackson Lewis P.C., Chula Vista, CA

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**Hon. Catherine McDowall**, Seattle Municipal Court, Seattle, WA

**Hon. Sara McGinty**, Ulster County Surrogate's Court, Kingston, NY

**Hon. Sabrina McKenna**, Hawaii Supreme Court, Honolulu, HI

**Hon. Selina Mireles**, 4th and 5th Judicial Regions - Child Protection Court, Laredo, TX

**Hon. Jennifer Mitchell**, TN Trial Judge, Memphis, TN

**Hon. Mary H. Murguia**, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Phoenix, AZ

**Hon. Kara Murphy Richards**, Renton Municipal Court, Renton, WA

**Hon. Erin Nowell**, 5th District Court Of Appeals, Dallas, TX

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**Hon. Andrea Ogle**, Civil Court, Jamaica, NY

**Hon. Euketa Oliver**, San Diego Superior Court, San Diego, CA

**Hon. Bill Pedersen**, Texas Fifth District Court Of Appeals, Dallas, TX

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**Hon. Andrea Plumlee**, 330th District Court, Dallas, TX

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**Hon. Megan Valentine**, Grays Harbor District Court, Montesano, WA

**Hon. Tracy Van Den Bergh**, Washtenaw County Trial Court, Ann Arbor, MI

**Hon. Mariana Vielma**, CO 17th Judicial District, Brighton, CO

**Ms. Alecia Watson**, University Of The District Of Columbia David A. Clarke School Of Law, Alexandria, VA

**Hon. Gayle F. Williams-Byers**, South Euclid Municipal Court, South Euclid, OH

**Hon. Victoria Willis**, 15th Judicial Circuit, Stafford, VA



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