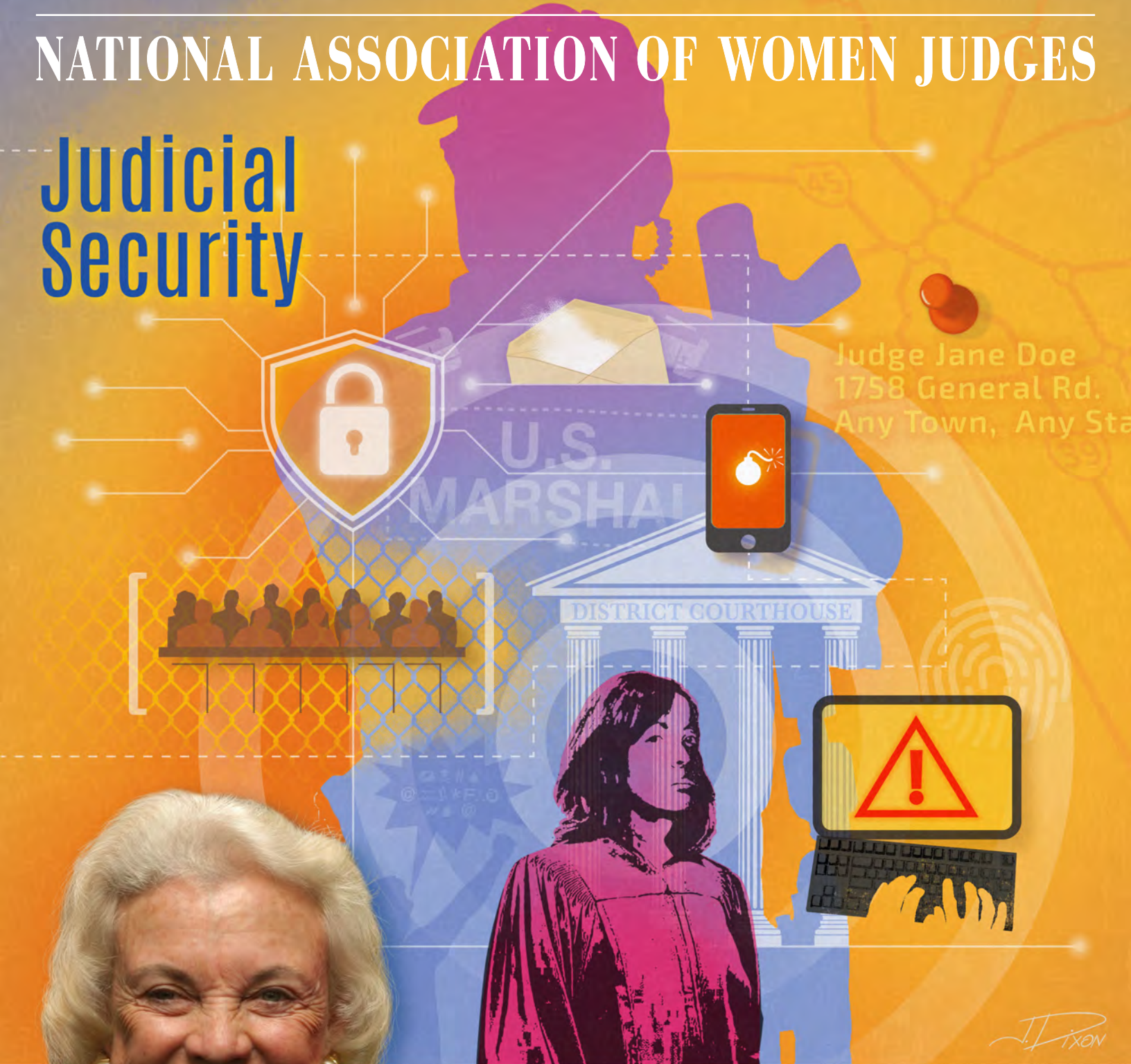


# COUNTERBALANCE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES

## Judicial Security



Judge Jane Doe  
1758 General Rd.  
Any Town, Any Sta



A tribute to  
**SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR**

page 19

*J. Dixon*

# Inside

## 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  
WOMEN JUDGES

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# President's Message



“When Justice O'Connor graduated at the top of her class from Stanford Law, she could not get a job as a lawyer in a law firm. When I graduated from law school ten years after she joined the Supreme Court, half of the summer associates at my major law firm were women.”

This issue has been devoted to the memory of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. If you did not already know, I'm sure this issue has shown you how Justice O'Connor was an important member of NAWJ who touched the lives of many of our members. I never had the opportunity to meet her—she retired from the bench in 2006, five years before I would take the bench. I was a junior in high school when she was appointed by Ronald Reagan. I remember it very well; it made a distinct impression on my young life.

I remember feeling both surprised and elated that she was the first woman to join the Supreme Court. Having not really entered the workforce on my own at that time, let alone the legal field, I had no idea the obstacles she had to overcome to get there. I was young and naïve. I grew up being told that women could achieve anything, but I did not yet realize a) that this was still wishful thinking and b) how much the women who were still a part of my generation were actively fighting to make that happen.

When Justice O'Connor graduated at the top of her class from Stanford Law, she could not get a job as a lawyer in a law firm. When I graduated from law school ten years after she joined the Supreme Court, half of the summer associates at my major law firm were women. Still, then and even today, women were not well represented in the partnerships of those firms. I have to believe that her appointment made a difference in the way the public saw the judiciary. I have to believe that her position on the Supreme Court helped change the perceptions of

those senior partners who set the hiring practices of law firms. And I have to believe that seeing her on the bench changed the way judicial appointments were made and the way voters viewed judicial elections. Appearances matter. Representation matters.

I had the honor of attending the memorial service of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor at the National Cathedral in Washington with NAWJ past president and current president of the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and chair of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) Board of Directors Anna Blackburne-Rigsby. It was truly memorable to be present while we paid our last respects to an “American pioneer,” as Joe Biden called her. President Biden spoke of his memories serving on the Senate Judiciary Committee during her confirmation. He remembered her as “gracious and wise, civil and principled.”

If you will recall, Chief Justice John Roberts was originally nominated as her replacement; however, he was appointed instead to replace Chief Justice Rehnquist. Roberts and O'Connor served together on the Court for over half a term. Chief Justice Roberts talked about that time during his eulogy, remembering her direct, thoughtful, and compassionate approach to her position. He discussed her appointment as a watershed moment within the nation's legal history—a milestone for women in the legal profession and beyond.

I was struck, as I always am during such occasions, at the way our country can come together in its remembrance of our

leaders. For a couple of hours, labels such as liberal and conservative, Republican and Democrat are put away. And, for a couple of hours, we are allowed a glimpse at what national unity could look like. For a couple of hours, we are all Americans, just Americans, proud Americans. As our country grows more divided, these glimpses are even more precious.

As judges, I believe we have a duty to pave the way to greater civility and mutual respect. After all, as judges, these labels

should not affect the decisions we make. We are chosen or elected to be fair—to apply the law regardless of political demands or political consequences. Civil discourse in our country has become a rare exception to the rule. Even within the ranks of NAWJ, we have failed to observe and recognize all of the voices that are trying to be heard. I personally have heard from both sides of the political spectrum that we as NAWJ are no longer responsive to their needs and that they no longer feel included. As president, it is my goal and my pledge to ensure that

NAWJ seeks to actively understand and engage with the needs of all women within the judiciary. I want to lead the way as we go past the labels and see each other as individuals, welcoming the viewpoints we each bring to the table. We need to grow. We need to find our unity. And we need to make the judiciary a shining example for the unity we need in our nation.



**Hon. Karen Sage**  
President

## Vice President of Publications Message



*“ I hope that I can fill the large shoes of my predecessor, Judge Pam Washington, in continuing the excellence of the NAWJ Counterbalance issues. Thanks, Pam, for your service as the VP of Publications. ”*

**T**his Winter Counterbalance issue includes many different topics with our focus in remembering and celebrating Justice Sandra Day O’Connor and her many contributions to the US Judiciary, women, and the law in light of her passing on December 1, 2023. Judges Dana Fabe, Nan Duffly, and Anna Blackburne-Rigsby have co-authored a feature article remembering Justice Sandra Day O’Connor which focuses on her many different contributions to the judiciary, women, and the law.

We also will look at back at the Annual Conference in Indianapolis and reflect on the wonderful opportunities we had to interact with the over 80 international Judges who attended, and to learn more about many important and timely legal topics which were presented at the conference. At the Annual Conference, Judge Toni Clarke, passed the baton to incoming NAWJ President Judge Karen Sage. While we were sad to see Judge Toni Clarke become the immediate Past-President of NAWJ, we were thrilled to welcome Judge Karen Sage as our

new President.

As many of us know, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor committed much of her life’s work to Judicial Independence. Before we learned of the death of Justice O’Connor, the NAWJ Judicial Independence Committee agreed to be the spotlight committee. This article focuses on the importance of judicial independence of US Courts in today’s society.

The NAWJ continues to focus on the importance of the work with international judges. We look at the amazing work the NAWJ has done in assisting the Afghan judges assimilate in the US. Judge Palmer also provides excellent insight for juvenile judges on how to best address challenges with juvenile immigrants.

I want to give a special thank you to all of our generous contributors to this Winter issue of Counterbalance, including the exceptional work of Laurie Denham, NAWJ’s Executive Director, and her skilled team, who piloted this issue to the finish line. I am honored to edit this Counterbalance issue and make sure it is

reflective of the NAWJ's mission and what we do each and every day to inspire our members to continue their great work. I hope that I can fill the large shoes of my predecessor, Judge Pam Washington, in continuing the excellence of the NAWJ Counterbalance issues. Thanks, Pam, for

your service as the VP of Publications.

In closing, we examine how judges and courts can provide secure environments for judges and their staffs to work. Judge Perez has discussed the various threats judges face each day when they put their

robe on and how they can minimize such threats. Hope you enjoy this issue!



**Hon. Heather Welch**  
Marion County Superior Court  
Vice President Publications

## Executive Director Message



“ “ *The backbone of our operations is strengthened by the dedication of our volunteers. With efforts of the Board of Directors, Committees, and leaders of both National and District events, we are fortunate to have the support of over 400 volunteers. Their time and talents are invaluable, embodying the collaborative spirit that defines NAWJ.*

**2**023 witnessed significant activity and accomplishment by the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ). Our organization saw the successful execution of 15 webinars, two New Member Orientations, alongside the Annual Conference and Midyear Meeting. These national events cumulatively attracted over 1,000 attendees, underscoring the growing engagement of our members.

The NAWJ Districts facilitated a total of thirty programs throughout the year, showcasing a diverse range of initiatives and activities. This comprehensive approach contributed to the vibrancy of our organization and expanded member engagement.

The backbone of our operations is strengthened by the dedication of our volunteers. With efforts of the Board of Directors, Committees, and leaders of both National and District events, we are fortunate to have the support of over 400 volunteers. Their time and talents are invaluable, embodying the collaborative spirit that defines NAWJ. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each volunteer, recognizing that their commitment is vital to our shared success.

In 2024, NAWJ proudly celebrates its 45th Anniversary. As part of our commemorative efforts, we are

introducing the “\$45 for 45” campaign. Participants in this initiative will receive written recognition during the 2024 Annual Conference in San Diego, symbolizing their contribution to our enduring legacy.

Looking ahead, we invite you to mark your calendars for our upcoming events: the Midyear Meeting, scheduled for April 4-6, 2024, in Austin, Texas, at the Hotel Van Zandt, and the 2024 Annual Conference, set to take place from October 17-19 in San Diego at the Omni Hotel.

A special acknowledgment is also extended to our dedicated staff team, comprised of Megan Collie, Brian Gorg, Janelle Mihoc, and Francie Teer. Their collaborative efforts, adept problem-solving, and commitment to prioritizing our members exemplify the exceptional professionalism that characterizes our organization.

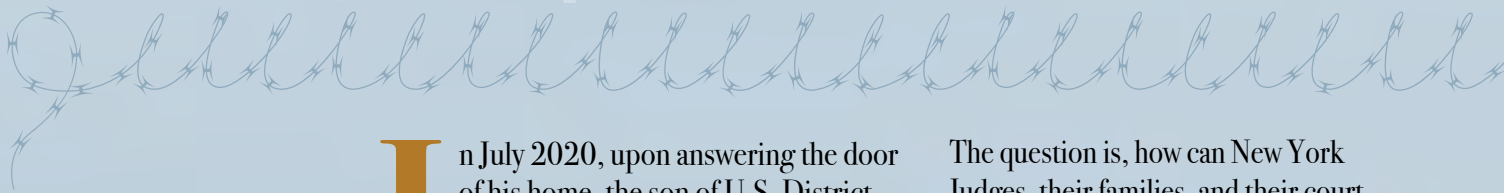
In closing, we express our gratitude to all those who have contributed to the success of NAWJ in 2023. Together, we look forward to a promising future filled with continued growth, engagement, and achievement.



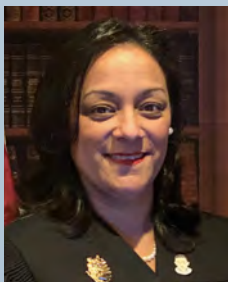
**Laurie Hein Denham, CAE**  
Executive Director



# A Judge Speaks for the Re



**I**n July 2020, upon answering the door of his home, the son of U.S. District Judge Salas was killed by a lawyer, who also identified as an “anti-feminist.”<sup>1</sup> Security threats to Judges are not a new phenomenon. Several years earlier, in 2005, the husband and mother of U.S. District Judge Joan H. Lefkow were killed in their home by a white supremacist who the Judge had previously held in contempt.<sup>2</sup> Threats to the judiciary run the gamut between serious physical threats, and more nuanced types of threats. The latter has been recently seen in the civil fraud trial of Donald J. Trump. What began as “a baseless accusation,” posted by Trump to social media, turned into “hundreds of harassing and threatening calls and emails,” to the chambers of Judge Arthur Engoron, the presiding Judge.<sup>3</sup>



**Hon. Bianka Perez,**  
Associate Justice of the Appellate Term of  
the New York Supreme Court,  
First Department

The question is, how can New York Judges, their families, and their court staff, be best protected from threats, both overt and abstract. In 2011, New York passed a law making “menacing and assault on a judge” a crime.<sup>4</sup> This bill does not, however, address measures to prevent the security threat from happening in the first place. More recently a 2023 bill introduced in the New York Senate, included a measure requiring an annual report on the security of judicial and non-judicial officers.<sup>5</sup> While any measure seeking to better protect Judges may be welcomed, neither squarely answers the question of how to better protect the judiciary from a threat or attack. In answering this question, New York would do well to consider measures to protect the personal information of judges, specifically home addresses, to address

the idea of cyber threats and the evolving nature of attacks with advancements in technology, and measures to protect those who support the work of the Justices, who are not, themselves, judges.

Both the July 2020 attack and the 2005 attack occurred at the homes of the Judges. The advent of the world wide web has made information, including home addresses of Judges, accessible.<sup>6</sup> The Daniel Aderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act, named for Judge Salas' son and signed into law December 2022,

judicial officers, their immediate family members, among others, can have their home addresses redacted by request.<sup>10</sup> In 2021, then Governor Cuomo stated his support of New York's own bill that would allow the home addresses of both state and federal judges to be protected from the public by request.<sup>11</sup>

However, some argue that even these attempts at protecting the personal information of Judges, cannot prevent the public from finding that information online. As Colleen Murphy, executive director of the Connecticut Freedom

allowing information shielding may only "provide employees with a false sense of comfort and security."<sup>13</sup> Others have voiced concerns that, regardless of the level of personal protection shielding information can provide, it can also prevent accountability measures. As reporter Tierney Sneed writes, "Of second concern is how it will make it more difficult to report on judges in the first place, by obscuring some of the sources of information court observers and journalists use to examine potential ethical conflicts within the judiciary."<sup>14</sup> On balance, for the New York judiciary,

# cord on Judicial Security



sought to address the problem of ready access to personal information of the judiciary. The act protects the personal information of federal judges by, among other measures, "requiring federal agencies to maintain the confidentiality of judges personally identifiable information on request," and by "providing a mechanism for judges and their immediate family members to secure the removal of their personally identifiable information from the internet."<sup>7</sup> The act went so far as to authorize, "funding for state and local governments to adopt similar measures."<sup>8</sup>

Following the passage of the Daniel Aderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act, states began adopting similar protections at the state level.<sup>9</sup> New Jersey, for example, created an Office of Information Privacy. Through this office

of Information Commission, told AP News, "For better or worse, the fact is that the residential addresses of most people are now readily available for free, or for a nominal charge, on the internet or through other commercial services."<sup>12</sup> She suggested that laws

As Colleen Murphy, executive director of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission, told AP News, "For better or worse, the fact is that the residential addresses of most people are now readily available for free, or for a nominal charge, on the internet or through other commercial services."

making personal information more difficult to find would likely provide some level of protection, however small.

Accessibility of personal information is not the only threat to judicial security. The second issue judges face is the nature of the threat itself. In an increasingly technological world, the traditional threats are not the only threats judges must be concerned about. As the Trump trial demonstrated, posting to social media can create a much larger pool of threats. As one article noted, where previously the threat might have come from someone directly in front of the Judge, social media has given litigants the power to spread their anger, "due to the reach of today's internet, with the possibility of inciting the hostilities of large groups of people not directly connected to the

judge or the case.”<sup>15</sup> Another article articulated the threat of social media more directly, stating, “social media has been weaponized to allow extremists to identify where judges live, where their children go to school, and what cars they drive, and to share these specifics on social media while encouraging toxic online communications to threaten judges and commit acts of violence.”<sup>16</sup> When these types social media threats were occurring in the 2023 Trump civil fraud trial, Judge Erdogan responded by issuing a gag order.<sup>17</sup> New York should consider adopting a policy or statewide strategy for dealing with such threats as they become more likely to occur.

Further, Judges have seen an increase in cyber attacks over the years.<sup>18</sup> A cyber attack could be devastating on many levels. As U.S. District Judge Roslynn Mauskopf told Reuters, “I cannot overstate the gravity of the broad impacts across our society of cyber attacks on the judicial branch.”<sup>19</sup> New York experienced this threat

firsthand in 2021 when the New York City Law Department’s network was compromised.<sup>20</sup> This attack resulted in a ripple effect such that it, “rippled through New York courts, slowing cases and forcing city lawyers to ask for extensions on deadlines.”<sup>21</sup> There are many strategies each individual level organization can use to attempt to prevent a cyber attack (passwords, two factor authentication, software updates)<sup>22</sup>, but as the ripple effect of the Law Department demonstrated, the efforts will not be effective if they are left to individual institutions. While funds were requested at the federal level to better protect the judiciary from cyber attacks, New York must also ensure it has taken steps to protect against cyber attacks at the statewide level.

Finally, as the Trump civil fraud trial has demonstrated, it is not just the person sitting on the bench that may be vulnerable to a threat. Those that support the work of the judiciary, the Clerks, Court Attorneys, Court Officers,

and others may also become victims of threats. Therefore, judges cannot be the only actors in a conversation about judicial security, the other members of the staff must be included in the conversation as well.

Judicial security, be it protection from a physical threat, an online threat, or a broader system attack is of the utmost importance and can be addressed at a policy level. Officers cannot always accompany members of the judiciary for protection, this is simply not reasonable or feasible. However, there are other measures that can offer some amount of protection, such as shielding personal information from the public, determining a statewide strategy to address social media threats, developing a statewide strategy for protecting against cyber attacks, and considering court staff when determining protective measures. Not every threat can be eliminated, but New York can take steps to make it much more difficult for serious threats to be carried out.

1 Nicole Acedvedo, “Judge Esther Salas Applauds New Law Named After her Son, Who Was Killed by a Gunman Targeting Her,” NBC News, Dec. 20, 2022. [Judge Esther Salas lauds law named for son, killed by man targeting her \(nbcnews.com\)](#)

2 Hannah Sbaity, “Private Lives at Home and Public Lives in Court: Protecting the Privacy of Federal Judge’s Home Addresses,” 28 JIPL 475 (2021).

3 Kara Scannell, “Judge and Clerk in Trump Civil Fraud Trial Have Received Hundreds of ‘Serious and Credible’ Threats,” CNN Politics, Nov. 22, 2023. [Judge and clerk in Trump civil fraud trial have received hundreds of ‘serious and credible’ threats | CNN Politics](#)

4 N.Y. Assembly Bill A 409, 2011.

5 N.Y., Senate Bill S6665, Assembly Committee, 2023-2024.

6 See J. Herbert Dixon and James Anderson, “The Evolving Nature of Security Threats to Judges,” 62 No. 3 JUDGE J. 8, 10 (Am. Bar Assoc. 2023).

7 Dixon, note 6 at 11.

8 Id.

9 See David A. Lieb, “States Shield Addresses of Judges, Workers After Threats,” AP News, March, 14, 2023. [States shield addresses of judges, workers after threats | AP News](#)

10 N.J. Bill A6171 AcaSca (2R), S4219, 2020-2021.

11 Ryan Tarinelli, “Cuomo to Back Bill to Protect Judges’ Privacy by Shielding Their Home Addresses,” N.Y.L.J., Jan. 20, 2021. [Cuomo to Back Bill to Protect Judges’ Privacy by Shielding Their Home Addresses | New York Law Journal](#)

12 Lieb, “States Shield Addresses of Judges, Workers After Threats,” note 9.

13 Id.

14 Tierney Sneed, “What to Know About a Judicial Privacy Bill Congress is Passing With a Major Defense Package,” CNN Politics, Dec. 14, 2022. [What to know about a judicial privacy bill Congress is passing with a major defense package | CNN Politics](#)

15 Dixon, note 6 at 9.

16 Timothy Tomasik, “Judicial Security: The Judicial System s Blinking Red,” CBA Record (Chicago Bar Assoc. 2022).

17 See Lauren del Valle, et al., “Judge Issues Gag Order and Rebukes Trump After Social Media Post Attacking His Clerk,” CNN Politics, Oct. 4, 2023. [Judge issues gag order and rebukes Trump after social media post attacking his clerk | CNN Politics](#)

18 See Dixon, note 6 at 9.

19 Nate Raymond, “Federal Judiciary ‘Vulnerable’ to Cyberattacks, U.S. Lawmakers Told,” Reuters, May 12, 2022. [Federal judiciary ‘vulnerable’ to cyberattacks, U.S. lawmakers told | Reuters](#)

20 Ashley Southall, et al., “This Agency’s Computers Hold Secrets. Hackers Got In with One Password,” N.Y.Times, June, 18, 2021. [How New York City’s Law Department Got Hacked - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

21 Id.

22 See id.



# NAWJ'S 1st National Virtual MentorJet is a Huge Success

MentorJet is a NAWJ flagship program. It provides outreach to law students who might not otherwise have opportunities to engage with judges. MentorJet is a "speed mentoring" networking opportunity that provides students with one-on-one access to judges and lawyers who serve as mentors and provide information on various legal careers.

**M**entorJet activities take place anywhere there are NAWJ members and law students. In 2023, Michigan's state co-chair, Zenell Brown, spoke with Ashley Heidemann and Rachel Margiewicz of JD Advising. The company is Michigan owned and female operated. JD Advising focuses on supporting predominantly first-generation law students, many of whom come from communities of color and from populations that are under-represented in the law. The company provides its students with a host of law school support, from bar exam and MPRE services,

to tutoring, study aids, and guidance on how to succeed in law school. Instantly, Zenell knew that JD Advising would be an ideal partner for



**By Hon. Michelle Rick**  
NAWJ President-elect  
Michigan Court of Appeals



MentorJet. And an added bonus - while JD Advising has offices in Michigan, it supports students from around the country. From that connection, a concept was born: the first ever national virtual MentorJet.

The event was held in the evening on October 26, 2023. NAWJ provided judicial and attorney members for the MentorJet program with JD Advising provided law students from around the US. JD Advising created brochures for mentors and students. They also tracked demographics and managed the Zoom platform for the evening event. Approximately 30 judges participated, including Past-President Judge Toni Clark, NAWJ former President Judge Elizabeth White, President-elect Judge Michelle Rick, District 7 Director Judge Miriam Perry, District 8 Director Judge Julie Verhey, District 10 Director Judge Rachel Pickering, Michigan

state co-chair Zenell Brown, and Michigan Court of Appeals Judges Hon. Kristina Robinson-Garrett and Hon. Allie Greenleaf Maldonado, to name a few.

The student representation was extraordinary. Seventy-one students from law schools in California to Massachusetts, and everywhere in between participated. Students paired up and met in groups of 2 with a single judge for approximately 8 minutes before they moved to the next virtual meeting room.

The event was remarkable. Student feedback was very positive. The students were inspired and gleaned new insights into the legal profession. We look forward to the next MentorJet collaboration with JD Advising, perhaps as early as the spring 2024. Stay tuned for more details!





# Children at the Intersection of Federal Immigration Policy and State Family Law



By Hon. Tiffany Palmer  
Court of Common Pleas, Philadelphia,  
Immigration Committee Member, NAWJ

**M**igrant children are entering the United States in record numbers, resulting in more state court judges facing cases involving these children. In 2022, 152,880 unaccompanied children arrived in the United States, more than doubling the pre-pandemic numbers from 2019, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection statistics. Many come from Central America, where they are fleeing drug cartels, child labor, and extreme poverty that deprives them of necessities such as food and education. Children from around the world are

seeking refuge from destruction from wars and natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. Whether arriving with a parent or unaccompanied, most of these children face an uncertain route to navigating the immigration system and remaining lawfully within the United States.

Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) Status is a form of immigration relief aimed at allowing children who have been victims of parental abuse, neglect, abandonment, or something similar, to remain safely in the United States with a pathway to lawful permanent

residence. 8 U.S.C. Section 1101(a) (27)(J). The requirements include that the child must be under 21 at time of filing with USCIS, unmarried, physically present in the United States, and that the child is the subject of a state court order with specific determinations that have been made following a hearing. Therefore, the SIJ process includes an important, required role for state courts in making factual findings that will permit these children to move forward in obtaining lawful status.

State court proceedings that could result in SIJ findings may include a dependency case, an adoption, a child custody or guardianship case, a juvenile justice case, or a probate case. Those specific state court findings include 1) that the child has been declared dependent upon a state juvenile court or placed in the custody of an individual or entity, 2) that reunification with one or both parents is not viable due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, or something similar under state law, and 3) that it is not in child's best interest to return to

country of origin. 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a) (27)(J); 8 C.F.R. § 204.11(b)-(c).

The implementation of “how” state court judges should make SIJ findings has been inconsistent as there is no uniform body of law among the states. Only nine states have enacted rules or statutes that specifically address SIJ children in state court proceedings. See, e.g., Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 155; Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 14-10-123 (1.5); Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 45a-608n(c); 705 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 405/1-4.3(a); Me. Rev. Stat. tit. 22, § 4099-I; Minn. Stat. Ann.

§ 257D.01; Neb. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 43-3806; Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 3.2203(1); Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 13.90.901(1)-(2).

Without state statutes or court rules governing SIJ children in state courts, appellate courts have addressed this unique intersection of federal

**Without state statutes or court rules governing SIJ children in state courts, appellate courts have addressed this unique intersection of federal immigration policy and state laws with varying results. In Pennsylvania, in the past year, there have been four appellate decisions, two with inconsistent holdings, and one currently pending before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.**

immigration policy and state laws with varying results. In Pennsylvania, in the past year, there have been four appellate decisions, two with inconsistent holdings, and one currently pending before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. See e.g., *Orozco v. Tecu*, 284 A.3d 474 (Pa. Super. 2022) (holding trial court was required to make findings of fact necessary for mother to petition USCIS for SIJ status for child in

mother's proceeding to establish sole legal and physical custody where mother specifically requested SIJ findings and federal statutory scheme put factual determinations necessary for SIJ status solely within purview of state courts); But see *Velasquez v. Miranda*, 297 A.3d 837 (Pa. Super. 2023) (holding that a child did not meet the statutory definition of an SIJ when the child resided with one parent in the United States and the child was not adjudicated dependent; the trial court's grant of sole legal and physical custody of the child to the mother was not an appointment of a custodian for the child for SIJ purposes), appeal granted, November 27, 2023.

Given the influx of migrant children resulting in increasing caseloads, it is important that state courts develop rules and procedures, both for moving these cases through the state court system and for applying consistent standards to cases that require SIJ findings. While state appellate courts and legislatures could provide clarification, state court judges should also look to resources to understand more about this vulnerable population of children including:

#### **USCIS SIJS Policy Manual and FAQs:**

<https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-6-part-j>

#### **Immigrant Legal Resources Center:**

[https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/sijs-5th-2018-ch\\_03.pdf](https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/sijs-5th-2018-ch_03.pdf)

#### **Kids In Need of Defense (KIND):**

<https://supportkind.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Chapter-4-Special-Immigrant-Juvenile-Status-SIJS.pdf>

#### **Project Lifeline:**

<https://projectlifeline.us/>

## COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT



# Retired/Senior Judges Committee

## Seven Afghan Mentee Judges, Seven New Friends

Where to begin. I had never been to Afghanistan. Nor had I ever studied the Muslim religion nor been immersed in Middle East culture. One son of mine had ventured to Egypt for a study program. I had been to Israel though never very engaged with my right of return.

In August '21, I jumped at the request to be part of a team of hands on attorneys assisting fleeing Afghans arriving to DC's Dulles Airport. It was the right thing to do and I was in the right place. But none of the many immigration questions I answered those two weeks were from lawyers or judges.

It was March 2022 when our international director Lisa Walsh contacted me regarding the first Afghan women judge refugees arriving to the DC area. Again, jumping to help was a no-brainer. I was intrigued too because I heard a few were only in their thirties, as I had been when I became a superior court judge four decades ago, and that they had young children, as did I.

Lisa cobbled together a full Mentor Team for the DMV area. Nearly two years later, we total seven Afghan women judges resettled in various parts of NAWJ District 4, with a lovely eighth couple (both were judges) who arrived while I've been writing this.

At the beginning, it wasn't clear what we could do to be of most use, across the extreme language barrier, other than offer gestures of friendship, compassion, and hope. But I was surprised how much hands on help we quickly came up with. We were enabled significantly by the Afghan judges working very hard to learn English. I immediately put an app

on my phone to try to learn and speak a little Dari, but I was hopelessly behind the judges' efforts. But by 2023, I was adept at WeChat, using for newcomers GoogleTranslate for them to immediately read the message, write me back in Dari, and provide me instant translation into English when messaging back. Some of our conversations were hundreds of texts long, while we were sitting in the same room next to each other! (Big thanks too we owe EnglishNow and the Washington Center for International Education for providing free English instruction to many of judges all over the U.S. in personalized small classes.)

An initial part of our team's learning curve was gaining familiarity with the



By Judge Beverly Cutler (Ret.)

various immigration statuses of our arriving judges, and how that played into what government assistance they were already getting, or not, and what they needed. Some had a good case worker to assist them, some an unreliable one, and some none at all. We learned too that the judges' ages varied significantly, thus did the trajectories they were on with regard to career and family. It was important for us not to have a one size fits all approach to their future lives here.

Not surprisingly, what some needed the most was a US phone, then almost immediately a well functioning laptop. What some needed just as urgently was advice about the housing situations they had been put in, generally short term and often not very good. Some too were enduring critical medical hardships and still are. I realized quickly that "future career planning" was not front and center for everyone despite what I started off thinking.

Eventually we teamed up with a variety of non-profit efforts. But at first most of us were "inventing it as we go," operating on instinct as to how to help, before we had time to learn where other parts of society could plug in.

Our Afghan judges were suffering tremendous personal and professional loss. Some of our trauma-induced courtroom behavior training came in handy.

The biggest social problem for everybody, without exception, from the beginning and lasting still, is money. In Afghanistan, all of our mentees had been fortunate in regard to the rest of Afghan society. They had owned homes, had cars, had spending power when it came to raising their children, and now they were

penniless. They also had their many losses repeatedly re-occurring in their minds, along with tremendous worries about those left behind. Thus even taking them to a nice part of DC to see the sights, or for an event at someone's house, would make them miss their city and own home greatly despite enjoying the outing. Taking them to a courthouse to meet other judges, or watch a trial, all of which they loved, unintentionally made them "miss their robes."

Returning to money, whatever financial assistance judges were getting from our governments and assigned non-

profit refugee agencies ran out much too quickly. A few tried factory jobs, or a grocery store, but for some it was too hard on physical bodies that missed desk jobs. They, like us, were used to being compensated for what they had studied and learned, not their ability to lift 30 or 50 pound boxes in cold storage. Some of them even had been high-up officers in the Afghan Women Judges Association.

In the District 4 area, we had a few "fun for all" initial clothing and housewares drives. (Thank you, Alexandria and Arlington women judges and lawyers, and northwest Washington neighbors and friends of a particular woman lawyer



in DC.) To see our judges' faces light up when they could get a lovely kitchen item, or some beautiful even if used clothing to get dressed up in, were so rewarding. They were girls, just like us.

The Arlington and Alexandria women lawyers also hosted a working lunch early on for several of the Afghan judges, which eventually led to a few job starts. At the time of the luncheon, we were all emerging from the Zoom caves, so the personal contact at this luncheon made for real relationships. It also engendered great conscientiousness on the part of the US folks who attended. One attending NAWJ judge, Judith Wheat, paired up with an Afghan attendee and became her mentor. This Afghan judge now is in an actual paying career job in the court in Arlington VA, albeit more clerical than judicial, assisting law clerks with a particular role in preparing domestic relations cases (funding grant somehow from the city, not the court itself.) Judy's mentee is so happy to be

in a courthouse every day again, it makes me smile every time I think about it.

Over time, we realized that the main way we could help the judges most (besides social niceties like donating housewares, taking their family to a baseball game, or inviting them to New Year's Day) was to get them purchasing power somehow. District 4 Director Gwen D'Souza was instrumental in suggesting training at the Paralegal Institute of Washington DC. She had the prescience to see that useful law job training short of JDs and LLMs would be good both for their family pocket books and also for their highly intellectual minds missing the work they had so diligently performed in the past.

As you read this you might wonder why would anyone who's been a judge deign to be a mere paralegal. It turned out that not only was the training course in cost and the time it takes to get the paralegal certificate unbeatable, but it is also an

excellent way to learn many basics of American law in English, as well as some case procedure. We located scholarships for some judges for the relatively small tuition required. (Compared to tuition for an LLM or JD, a paralegal course is like purchasing a candy bar instead of a wedding on Long Island for 250.) We also lucked into a very effective paralegal instructor, whose experience with his own bilingual marriage (Spanish/English) made him supportive and skilled at helping his "English as a second language" students get this training.

We also learned, as we moved along, that the path to judge in Afghanistan was not like ours, in significant ways, so we had to cast aside some of our career assistance assumptions. Their path involved an undergraduate degree in law, and then qualifying early on for judicial training, so no JD or equivalent, and usually not much practice as a lawyer first. The notion I had that our judges would all get LLMs and take bar exams was a fairy tale. Not only are such degrees extremely expensive, but the level of academic English needed to qualify for and succeed in that degree is over the top for many, at least until several more years pass. Second, only a few states permit a bar exam to be taken after attaining an LLM.

Lisa Walsh had explained the above to me emphatically at the very beginning, but it took me three tries with three different judges to actually get what she was saying. I still have hope for some of my mentees, because some are on their way now after two years with very accomplished English and looming law school acceptance. The ABA has a nation wide project to provide LLM stipends for selected displaced Afghan



judges and lawyers (still in its infancy) in which each of about a dozen law schools around the country will be offering a tuition free LLM program to a single person.

I'd be remiss if I didn't note that, while not LLM study, two of our District 4 judge refugees were fortunate to find within their first year a funded Visiting Scholar position at law schools in our region. They were able to audit a few JD classes as part of such. However the visiting scholar positions tended to end quickly, without actually leading to a career path.

In a promising vein, the Paralegal Institute of Washington program requires its students, after taking the 11 weeks of classes, to be in an unpaid internship for several weeks. This requirement proved fortunate, in that it has led to both job experience and resume building. So far internships have been located with the Alexandria Public Defender, in a federal magistrate judge's chambers in DC, and in a

Virginia judge's chamber.

The DC area is a fortunate haven for ways to help. It's full of international efforts of all sorts, a city where numerous foreign diplomats arrive constantly, including many who also need to learn English. It has its own Capital Area Muslim Bar Association (CAMBA.) This fall DC was home to the annual conference of the National Association of Muslim Lawyers, for which CAMBA paid for our judges to receive free tickets.

Because many Afghans who escaped are reluctant to have their names displayed in publications, I'll end by introducing our new seven sisters sharing photos not names. You will see smiles even, as many have recovered their sense of humor, at least to the extent of us laughing together about unreliable bus schedules and the things that come out of ChatGPT.

A report card would show that my very first mentee is enjoying my youngest

grandchild's toddler furniture and clothing, and also getting very close to starting an LLM at George Washington Law School, with the help of a TOEFL preparation course funded by a nonprofit with a grant to help Afghan legal professionals get on career tracks here. Vanessa Ruiz' mentee was just onboarded for a year in a Yale Law School Endangered Scholars Program. A third mentee for whom Gwen and I have teamed up as mentors is on the verge of a paralegal job in a big DC firm. A fourth is in the second year of LLM study at Georgetown Law School. With her I recently shared an invitation to Austin TX for her to present at the US Bankruptcy Judges Annual Conference. New District 4 Director Judge Bobbie McCartney is now her mentor.

Our fifth mentee became a visiting scholar at William & Mary, and now is pursuing her unpaid paralegal internship in the chambers of Virginia Judge Holly Smith, who provides her actual assignments involving Westlaw. (Thank you, mentor Judge Judy Kline.) Our sixth, a 2023 arrival with a 2 and 6 year olds and a lawyer husband who was head of case management systems development in Afghanistan, has just begun the paralegal course. She can do it only virtually as she is striving to embrace her new US life with little ones at home and no extended family child care like she had before. A seventh, whom I already mentioned, is grinning ear to ear at her Arlington Circuit Court job because she is so relieved to be in a court once again. However, her apartment rent is way too high, and the myriad other aspects of trying to recover a life continue.

The work continues.



# 2023 Annual NAWJ Conference in Indianapolis

## Setting the Pace for



**T**he NAWJ President Toni Clarke opened the 45th NAWJ Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana on Thursday, October 5, 2023. The theme was “Setting the Pace for Justice” fittingly the City known as the Motorsport Capital of the World. The attendees were welcomed at the Opening Reception by Judge Toni Clarke and some amazing local musical

talent from Rachel and Rayanna Bibbs.

Judge Heather Welch, Marion Superior Court Judge in Indianapolis was the Conference Chair along with committee chairs:

**Judge Melissa McDermott**, Education

**Judges Alicia Gooden and Magistrate Marie Kern**, Entertainment

**Judges Julie Verheye and Julia Weatherly**, First Time Attendees/New Judges/Mentoring



The NAWJ had the pleasure of welcoming 8



# Justice

**Susan Williams and Jimmie McMillian,**  
Chairs of the Friends Committee

**Judges Lisa Walsh, Jennifer DeGrootte,  
Kim Dowling, and Justice Steven  
David,** International Judges

**April Keaton,** Volunteer Committee

**Judge Lucky Reddy,** Planting the Seed  
Program

They all did an amazing job in providing diverse educational programming and entertainment during the conference. Thank you!

The NAWJ had the pleasure of welcoming approximately 80 International Judges from 26 countries. The International Judges enjoyed two days of educational opportunities to learn about how US courts operate at both the State and Federal levels before the start of the conference. Chief Judge Tanya Walton Pratt of the US District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, located in downtown Indianapolis, hosted the International Judges on Tuesday morning for observance of a court proceeding. Judge Walton Pratt and her sister Judges hosted a panel presentation and question and answer session for

the International Judges. They also had the opportunity to spend valuable time in the Court's Learning Center which educated them on the American Judiciary. The International Judges had a similar experience at the Marion Superior Courts, the state trial court in Indianapolis, where they watched a murder trial and a child custody case and had the opportunity to interact with the Judges of the Marion Superior Court. They also had the opportunity to visit the Indiana Coalition to End Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking and the Indiana Domestic Violence Coalition, and finally an oral argument before the Indiana Court of Appeals.

The NAWJ programming featured some fascinating educational

sessions. As always, Dean Erwin Chemerinsky enlightened and educated the judges on the cases the US Supreme Court heard in 2023 and what they might take up in the courts next session. Dean Chemerinsky made us all wonder where the future of the courts will go. We were lucky to have two outstanding Judges to talk about their journeys on the bench. Judge Rosemarie Aquilina from Michigan discussed her determination to break gender barriers, and the management of the Larry Nasser case which she presided over. On Friday, we were all inspired and motivated by Judge J. Michelle Childs as she walked us through her journey on the judiciary from starting in the state courts in South Carolina to her participation as a



0 International Judges from 26 countries.

finalized for the US Supreme Court and how she became a Judge on the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Court. She inspired all the attendees to continue the amazing mission of the NAWJ!

The programming sessions provided a variety of education on important and timely topics including: 1) About Damn Time: Women Leading Complex Cases, 2) Helping Judges Understand Artificial Intelligence, 3) Our we Losing the Independent Courts, 4) The Intersection of Human Trafficking with American Courts, 5) Emerging Issues in Neuroscience, 6) Cultural Considerations in Judging, and 7) Legislation Affecting LGBTQ+ Rights Across the Country and much more.

On Friday night, the NAWJ reception was hosted at the NCAA Hall of Champions. This was an interactive experience for the attendees to learn about college sports and the talented and diverse athletes.

We had hoped to learn more about Judge Toni Clarke's career as a member of the Penn State Nittany Lions Women's Basketball team, but we could not find that in the Hall of Champions, but we all agreed she is an NAWJ Champion.

We all enjoyed the Gala Reception and Dinner. Chief Justice Loretta Rush, of the Indiana Supreme Court, was honored for her work as the

First Chief Judge in Indiana with the Lady of Justice Award. Justice Rush also welcomed the attendees on Friday morning and shared with the attendees that many state judiciaries still have much work to do to support women in the Judiciary and she encouraged us all to take on this important objective. At

the end of the Gala dinner, Judge Toni Clarke passed the baton to Judge Karen Sage, the new NAWJ President. Judge Sage delivered engaging but motivating remarks to set the tone for her year as President. We all are looking forward to the 2024 Annual Conference in San Diego, CA. **See you there!**



## COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT



# Ensuring Racial Equity in the Justice System Committee

## 10 TIPS

*What is your court doing differently this year to disrupt racial disparities and inequities? What are you personally doing?*

*Here are ten tips to make deliberate efforts to effectuate change and prioritize racial justice.*

The Ensuring Racial Equity in the Justice System Committee brings you 10 Things You can Do to Combat Bias:

**1 LAW CLERK DIVERSITY** - Ask yourself: “At the end of your career if you are photographed with all of your law clerks (or all you have hired in your career), am I proud of the diversity of the photo?”

**2 COURTHOUSE ARTWORK** - Display art in your courthouse that is inclusive of people of color and women.

**3 DIVERSE JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS** - Confirm that any job posting for your court is shared with all local bar organizations, including all affinity bars.

**4 DIVERSE MENTORSHIP** - Self-audit your mentees. Are you mentoring people who are different from you?



**5 NAWJ RESOURCES** - The next time your court needs a program on DEI, offer a NAWJ program – such as the NAWJ webinar on “Microaggressions in Court” and discuss. <https://www.nawj.org/past-webinars/microaggressions-in-court>

**6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** - Offer a community listening session at a local community college or other forum with numerous judicial attendees and ask for feedback on how your state’s courts are doing on equity and inclusion.

**7 STANDARDIZE PROCEDURES** - Use a standardized process for staff, members of the public, and attorneys. This would mitigate any misunderstanding as to who “looks” like an attorney and who does not at the business office and in court. Also, during meetings and activities, make sure roles don’t get assigned by gender or race, such as taking minutes, setting up, cleaning up, or hosting events.

**8 COLLECT DATA** - Urge your state’s highest court (or just your court) to publicly report at least every 6 months what your court or court system is doing to ensure racial equity in the justice system.

**9 MAKE AN EFFORT** - Learn how to say people’s names. Take five people whose names you don’t know how to say—they could be neighbors, community members, coworkers, even family members—and ask them. Don’t nickname them when they haven’t asked to be nicknamed, don’t shorten their names, don’t just point at them; say their real names. If we can learn how to say “supercalifragilisticexpialidocious”

**Continued on Page 21**

# SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR

The Justice, the friend, and the fisherwoman

By Judge Dana Fabe, Past Chief Justice, Alaska Supreme Court

Justice O'Connor always maintained a close connection to Alaska . . . and its fishing adventures. She was a guest of the Alaska Bar Association on more than one occasion over the years, and whether her visit was to Anchorage or Juneau, the Bar always helped to arrange a fishing trip for her. But more on Justice O'Connor and her Alaska fishing in a moment.

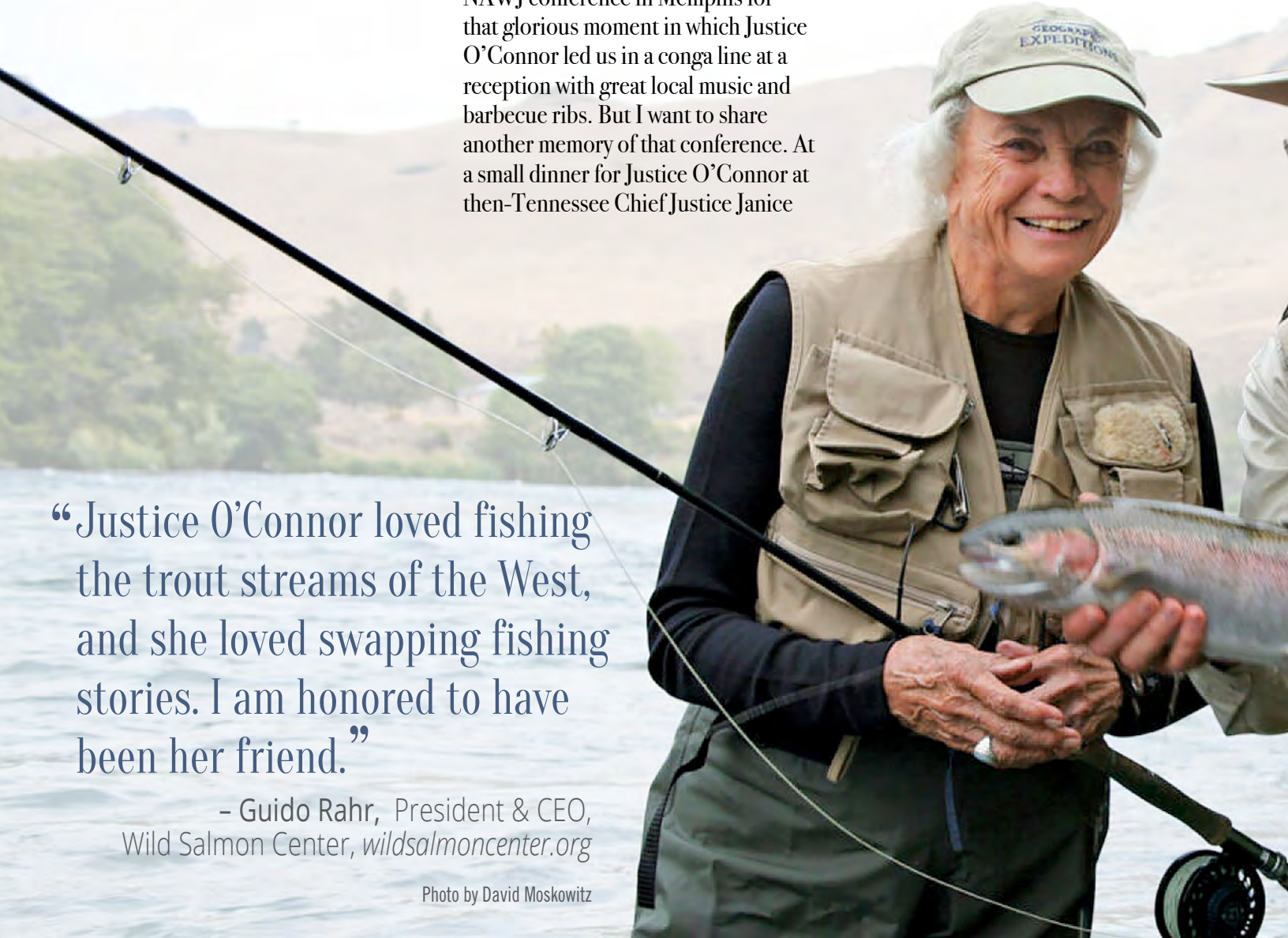
Many of us remember the 2009 NAWJ conference in Memphis for that glorious moment in which Justice O'Connor led us in a conga line at a reception with great local music and barbecue ribs. But I want to share another memory of that conference. At a small dinner for Justice O'Connor at then-Tennessee Chief Justice Janice

Holder's home, Justice O'Connor pulled me aside to discuss her ideas for iCivics (which she founded that year.) We had previously discussed my work establishing partnerships between teachers and the Alaska courts, and she enthusiastically described her goal of reimagining civics education, making it more engaging and fun for middle-school and high school students. She outlined some of the games she envisioned for the iCivics program,

“Justice O'Connor loved fishing the trout streams of the West, and she loved swapping fishing stories. I am honored to have been her friend.”

– Guido Rahr, President & CEO,  
Wild Salmon Center, [wildsalmoncenter.org](http://wildsalmoncenter.org)

Photo by David Moskowitz



including one in which students would run their own law firms, spotting Constitutional issues and arguing cases for their clients, and another where students would run for President.

Justice O'Connor returned to Alaska for the last time in 2012, to honor middle school students who had excelled in their work on her iCivics program in their classrooms. But before the scheduled student outreach events, the Bar arranged a salmon fishing trip for

her at a remote fishing lodge. And after the events with the students, NAWJ hosted a reception for her at my log home in the foothills of the Chugach mountains.

When she arrived at the reception, Justice O'Connor brought me the perfect hostess gift: a salmon that she had caught on her fishing trip, vacuum sealed, flash frozen, and marked in black Sharpie with her initials – SDO. When I accepted it, I told her that the

Justice O'Connor waiting to speak to iCivics middle school students in Anchorage, September 2012



## Reflections and Memories of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

By Anna Blackburne-Rigsby

Chief Judge District of Columbia Court of Appeals, NAWJ President 2014-2015

*"I would like to share a few reflections and memories about Justice O'Connor. In my current role as President of the Conference of Chief Justices, I am keenly aware of Justice O'Connor's service and contributions to state courts, having served on the Arizona Supreme Court. I had the opportunity to work with Justice O'Connor through my work with the NAWJ, as Justice O'Connor was an engaged member. She encouraged the growth of the organization and invited the participation of women judges at all levels of the judiciary. She attended many of the conferences and enjoyed the fellowship and collegiality. At one of the annual conferences, she led the conga line of judges at one of the conference events!"*

*She was dedicated to civics education. During my term as President of NAWJ, Justice O'Connor agreed to be the featured speaker for a short educational video, "Fair and Free: Informed Voters, Fair Judges", as part of an NAWJ civics education program. The short educational video won an Emmy award! The award and a picture of me presenting the Emmy to Justice O'Connor, are proudly displayed in my chambers.*

*Finally, I wanted to share that a prominent artist, commissioned an original piece of art in honor of Justice O'Connor's retirement from the Supreme Court. It is a three-dimensional collage capturing many milestones of Justice O'Connor's distinguished career. Justice*

*O'Connor gifted this extraordinary piece of art to NAWJ where it hung until the office closed when NAWJ shifted to remote work during COVID. NAWJ loaned this work of art to the DC Courts and as many of you have seen, it is hanging in the reception area of my office. I feel very fortunate to have known Justice O'Connor personally and professionally, as she was such an exceptional human being, pioneering women leader, and throughout her career, a truly shining light of the Judiciary."*

*Current and past presidents Hon. Karen Sage and Hon. Anna Blackburne-Rigsby at Justice O'Connor's Memorial Service in Washington, DC.*



gift was such an honor that I wasn't sure I could bring myself to eat it. (I think I may analogized it to shaking hands with Paul McCartney and not wanting to wash afterwards.) In her own practical, matter-of-fact way, she responded, "Of course you'll eat it. It's a perfectly good fish." But I'm afraid I never did eat it. I liked having my frozen salmon, marked "SDO", waiting to greet me every time I opened the freezer. I kept it there for years, until we moved out of the log house!

One of the greatest gifts presented to us by NAWJ has been the opportunity to meet so many of the women Justices of the United States Supreme Court. At our annual and mid-year conferences, we have been able to spend time not only with Justice O'Connor, but also Justice Ginsburg, Justice Sotomayor, and Justice Kagan – and soon, hopefully, Justice Jackson and Justice Coney Barrett. Justice O'Connor will always hold a special place in our hearts. She opened so many doors for women, not only on

the bench at every level of court, but also in the legal profession as a whole. And she was always so generous to NAWJ and its members, attending our conferences,

inviting us to tea at the Supreme Court, and standing for photos with every one of our members who wanted to preserve the experience. We will miss her.

Justice O'Connor with Alaska members of NAWJ at a reception at Chief Justice Dana Fabe's log home in Anchorage, September 2012



## Ensuring Racial Equity in the Justice System Committee

Continued from Page 18

we can make this small yet meaningful effort.

**10 YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT -** Take stock of your media consumption, whether it's podcasts, books, movies, TV shows, or social media. Pick a category and write down the last 10 you consumed and look at how much similarity there is among the voices that are centered, whether it's the creator's voice or the characters' voices. How similar are those voices to your own experience and background? How similar are the voices to each other? With a little awareness, we can break out of the



tendency that we have to hear the same voices.

Thank you to Justice Vickie

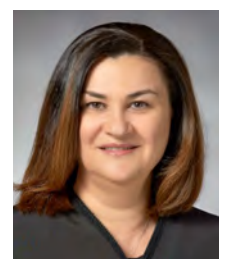
Henry for her contribution to this project.

If you want to submit your own best practice to the committee, please contact: [vickie.henry@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:vickie.henry@jud.state.ma.us).

**Co-Chairs:**



Hon. Sherry Thompson-Taylor  
[sherry.thompson-taylor@sdcourt.ca.gov](mailto:sherry.thompson-taylor@sdcourt.ca.gov)



Hon. Nadia J. Keilani  
[nadia.keilani@sdcourt.ca.gov](mailto:nadia.keilani@sdcourt.ca.gov)

# Safety & Security

Every day,  
the administration of  
justice is served by judges  
that work in environments  
that may have limited  
protections. As a judge –  
there are things you can do  
to protect yourself  
and your family.

I send my best to  
each of you and hope  
that these ideas will be  
helpful to you!



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

**BE SMART** – Don't utilize the title outside of the courtroom. This includes when you are filling out information sheets for your children. I always simply stated that I "worked for the Commonwealth of Virginia." If a location is required – I would state I work "at the Courthouse." Limiting the number of people who know who you are and what you do is essential. The title should not be on your checks (if you still use that form of payment) your credit cards, and no personalized plates on your car.

**KEEP A LOW PROFILE** – Try to keep your name out of the news. This is a tough one as it will depend upon how active your local and or state news is and whether the case has caught national attention. If the case has become a media show – do your best to minimize your face time. In Virginia, cameras in the courtroom are only permitted by agreement of the judge. It is best not to be on display. You can agree to have cameras but request that your image not be utilized.

**RING CAMERAS** – Although you may not be one that is amenable to cameras within your home – the ring camera will provide you with some perimeter safety. It will allow you to see who is at your door before you answer and give you an opportunity to talk with that person without opening up the door and exposing yourself.

**LIMIT SOCIAL MEDIA** – This may be a difficult one as today a lot of communications are provided through social media. Family and children's activities often require access. You can either minimize your media presence by having only your name – no title – and no personal information or you can choose a pseudo-name. But even under a different name – restrict information and photos. It is never wise to post photos of your children, their school or activities. Be careful that none of your photos reveal your address or the area where you live. And, of course, any photos of vacations should be after the trip.

**WATCH WHERE YOU PARK** – If you have a garage – use it. Get an automatic garage door opener. If you park outside be mindful of your surroundings. You don't have to dash into the house, but you should look around before you exit your vehicle. Carrying mace or a loud alert device is highly recommended.

**FOLLOW THE RULES** – The safety and security rules that are established by your deputies are there for your protection. Yes, it may be annoying that you have wait for security to open the gate – but your car is parked in a secure area for your safety. Deciding that you don't want to wait and leaving your car in the general lot – imposes a burden on those responsible for your life and may also place others around you at risk.

**BE OPEN WITH YOUR FAMILY** – Letting your children know that they need to be mindful of your position is key. These discussions can be tailored to the age of the child being mindful not to frighten them. Teaching them to be alert to their surroundings and limited in responses that involve your job will help protect them.



# Judicial Independence Committee

**As we have for more than a decade, the JI Committee and its Informed Voters/Fair Judges Project (IVP) continued its public education projects throughout 2023. We met regularly on Zoom, as well as in person at the midyear and annual meetings.**

The committee has active participants from coast to coast and completed several long-running projects this year. In 2022, JI/IVP completed and released its updated educational video, “Liberty and Justice for All,” with 5 and 3-minute versions, in a collaboration with funding by the ABOTA Foundation. The longer version includes a new section, highlighting the importance of jury service. JI/IVP Committee plans to include the videos in general educational programs for the public, and in jury orientation programs.

Ji/IVP committee members and ABOTA leaders actively participated in the creative work on the script and video editing, with the production being led by long-time lawyer and North Carolina public television producer Tom Earnhardt and his skilled professional crew.

In 2023, we completed and released Spanish language versions of the videos and have continued distribution nationally. Also, the summer issue of Judicature, the

magazine of the Bolch Judicial Institute, included a write-up with links to the videos in both its printed and online editions.

We have been pleased with national efforts to distribute the video for educational and juror orientation programs and welcome any ideas from NAWJ members.

For fall Constitution Day programs in 2023, Committee leaders Annette Pitts and Cymonie Rowe created a new program on the right to a jury trial and obligations of jury service. The program was created for use in Florida’s Justice Teaching programs but can be used in age-appropriate forms in any state, using either a state-specific hypothetical or actual landmark case.

## Co-Chairs:



**Hon. Robin Hudson**  
Associate justice,  
North Carolina Supreme  
Court (Ret.)



**Hon. Debra Stephens**  
Associate justice,  
Washington Supreme Court

## Here are links to all four new videos:

### Jury Orientation and Public Education Video (Five-minute English version):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o6FVSB1Qb5h0Gu21RIZ4ZvJM3ZCZCNDP3y/view>

### Jury Orientation and Public Education and Outreach Video (Spanish version)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Cty6Eji1kL\\_D78GZVXDoytQ-T-MnJFPV/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Cty6Eji1kL_D78GZVXDoytQ-T-MnJFPV/view?usp=sharing)

### Shortened Video (Three-minute English version)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12FPC0IhVr7GUa05hb8xWEyEAooPA6kqz/view>

### Shortened Video (Spanish version)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdEHq56eQSch6w63KSgiBBfbvgMvnPW-/view?usp=sharing>



The program demonstrates the steps in a trial, voir dire processes, types of cases and levels of courts in state and federal systems, and more.

A new elementary presentation on Integrity was recently created for judges to use introducing first through fifth grade students to the code of conduct that judges must follow, just as students do. The program is available, with PowerPoint slides, to NAWJ members upon request.

Every year the ABA releases a theme for National Law Week programs, first week of May 2024, and it is: "Voices of Democracy." The JI/IVP committee also creates a new slide deck annually on the theme, for use with these programs. JI/IVP Education Director, Annette Boyd Pitts and her students at Florida Southern College's Justice Teaching Center have been at work in 2023 to create a database and clearinghouse of resources on Judicial Independence. Resources will include

reviews of available resources, access to scholarship, primary sources, essays and speeches, as well as animations, videos, lessons, and more, to assist with educational initiatives. These resources should become available in 2024 and will be updated and sampled for NAWJ members regularly.

Committee Co-chair Robin Hudson, and NAWJ Executive Director Laurie Denham attended the September 2023 meeting of the Civil Trial Bar Roundtable, in Washington, DC, convened by ABOTA and also attended by leaders of national lawyer organizations. NAWJ's JI/IVP leaders have attended these meetings since 2016, resulting in significant collaborative efforts, including our recently released videos.

At the NAWJ Annual conference in Indianapolis, JI/IVP's panel included moderator Justice Robin Hudson (NC retired), Justice Debra Stephens (WA),

Annette Pitts (FL Educator), Judge Delissa Ridgway (US Court of Int'l Trade, NY), Justice Judith McConnell (CA), and Judge Carletta Sims-Brown (GA). The presentation will be updated and presented as a webinar to expand outreach with membership and attended by leaders of national lawyer organizations.

Since then, we have been very proud that our Co-Chair, Justice Robin Hudson (NC, Ret.) was honored to have been named by the National Judicial College in December as one of its "60 Courageous Judges." Congratulations!

The JI/IVP committee work continues in 2024, with new members and ideas. We meet on Zoom about five times a year, in addition to the midyear and annual meetings, and we welcome any NAWJ members who are interested in joining our work. Anyone interested can contact NAWJ Executive Director Laurie Denham, who will provide meeting details.

# District News



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

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

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:  
Hon. Amy Blake**

Massachusetts Appeals Court

MASSACHUSETTS  
MAINE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PUERTO RICO  
RHODE ISLAND



**WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER**

**District Court Judge Michelle Fentress** was appointed to the District Court by Governor Charlie Baker in 2022. Prior to her appointment, Judge Fentress was an Assistant Clerk Magistrate in the Suffolk Superior Court Criminal Division. She earned her Juris Doctorate from Northeastern University School of Law and her bachelor's degree from the University of

Connecticut.



*Judge Michelle Fentress*

**GOVERNOR HEALEY NOMINATES THREE WOMEN TO THE BENCH**

**Superior Court Judge Tracy Duncan** was a Springfield-based attorney who has led her own practice for more than 30 years. She has a B.A. from Lake Forest College and a J.D. from Western New England University School of Law. She is the second person of color to serve on the Superior Court in Western Massachusetts in state

history. **Juvenile Court Judge Audrey Carr Murillo** was an accomplished juvenile justice practitioner and defense attorney, and clinical instructor at Harvard Law School's Criminal Justice Institute, where she taught and supervised law students who represent indigent adults and youth in criminal and delinquency proceedings. She has a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a J.D. from the New England School of Law.

#### **Juvenile Court Judge Fabiola White**

emigrated from Haiti to Cambridge as a child and was raised in foster care. She worked for Massachusetts Probation Services since 2019, first as an Administrative Attorney and then as Deputy Legal Counsel. She has a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Lasell College, M.A. in Criminal Justice from Suffolk University and a J.D. from Massachusetts School of Law.

### **JUDGES RECEIVE TRAINING AT NATIONAL JUDICIAL COLLEGE IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**

#### **“The Antiracist Courtroom: Theory and Practice”**

District One members Judges **Joanna Rodriguez** and **Arose Nielsen** were part of a group of Massachusetts Trial Court staff who traveled to the Montgomery, Alabama where they participated in a training organized by the National Judicial College. During the training, participants heard from experts on a wide range of topics including racism in the court system, machine bias in courts, antiracism, and more. The group also visited the historic Tabernacle Baptists Church and courthouse in Selma as well as the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the EJI Legacy Museum in Montgomery. **Judge Designate Fabiola White** also attended the program.

### **MEMBERS ON THE MOVE**

District One is an incredible group of judges who give back both in their court

and in the community. We celebrate and recognize these amazing women:

**Federal District Court Judge Angel Kelly** was invited to deliver remarks at the Supreme Court of the United States at a dinner for new United States District and Circuit Court judges.

New Hampshire **Circuit Court Judge Melissa Countway** was nominated by Governor Sununu to the New Hampshire Supreme Court.

**Judge Mary Dacey White (ret.)** sits on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee for NAWJ. This is her second year on this important committee. She is also on the All Rise Committee for Suffolk Law School and is volunteering at My Brother's Keeper in Dartmouth, MA.

The Massachusetts Juvenile Court has launched a Virtual Hub Resource under the leadership of **Chief Justice Amy Nechtem** and **Juvenile Court Judge Carol Shaw**. The Hub provides comprehensive and accessible information about the Juvenile Court processes, timelines, and legal framework. It is also scalable with the potential to add content including community resources, programs and services. For more information, here is the link: [Care and Protection Proceedings in Juvenile Court | Mass.gov](#)

**Judges Cat Ham** and **Diane Rubin** have been named cochairs of the Massachusetts Public Outreach Committee. **Judges Michelle Fentress** and **Amy Blake** serve on the committee.

Appeals Court **Justice Kathryn Hand** served as co-chair of the Appellate Bench-Bar Conference sponsored by the Flaschner Judicial Institute.

**Judge Michelle Fentress** embodies “paying it forward.” This year alone Judge Fentress

spoke to a class of Northeastern University Law students who were completing a social justice program regarding restraining orders, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade class at New Heights Chart School in Brockton, and to the Northeastern University Criminal Justice Student Advisory Council about the justice system and her path to the bench. Judge Fentress attended a Color of Justice program in Lowell, judged a debate among students at the Promise College and Career Academy, spoke with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from the Ashfield K-8 School in Brockton, and met with students from West and East Middle School as they prepared for their Mock Appeal as part of the Discovering Justice Program and spoke with members of the Plymouth County Bar Association about these programs. Judge Fentress is the co-chair of the Race and Ethnic Fairness Committee of the District Court and presented at their annual conference in topics ranging from selective enforcement to the police use of body worn cameras. She was a panelist for “Careers in the Judiciary” presented at the Boston Public Library, and hosted by the Trial Court. Judge Fentress spoke with the Cape Verdean Women's Association in Brockton and did community outreach to provide information about the upcoming Supreme Judicial Court Restorative Justice pilot programs. She spoke to senior citizens and Stonehill College students about her path to the bench. Finally, Judge Fentress worked with the North Middle, West Middle, East Middle and South Middle schools in Brockton to prepare them for their Mock Trial to be held on December 20, 2023.

Several District One members authored or coauthored articles for the Boston Bar Journal. These include **Judge Julie Bernard** (Some Pitfalls and Perils of Judicial Social Media Use); **Chief Justice Diana Horan** (Comments from the newly appointed Housing Court Chief); **Judge Debra Squires-Lee** (Take A Small Step-Aspire to the Bench-Begin Your Judicial Application);

**Judge Sarah Weyland Ellis** (Jury Trials and the Global Pandemic: Lessons Learned About Remote Jury Empanelment). To read these articles and more, here is the link: <https://bostonbar.org/journal-category/voice-of-the-judiciary/>

Appeals Court **Justice Marguerite Grant** presented “In Case You Missed it: A Law Update” focusing on recent important civil and criminal appellate decisions.

In October, NAWJ member and former NAWJ president, **Chief Justice Amy Nechtem** moderated a panel entitled “Making a Difference in the Lives of Children, Families and Communities.” NAWJ member **Judge Helen Brown Bryant** participated along with three seasoned Juvenile Court practitioners. The event was held at Suffolk University Law School and simulcast to all law schools in the Massachusetts. The purpose of the panel was to educate new attorneys, third year

law students, and attorneys of all levels of experience about the rewarding work of the juvenile justice and child welfare practice. With the exception of a select few case types, Massachusetts Juvenile Courts are confidential and closed therefore many law students do not have the opportunity to observe without an invitation to do so or by participating in a clinic. We hope to have sparked some interest in this complex area of law. The presentation was organized by **Judge Designate Audrey Carr Murillo**.

District Court **Judge Janine Simonian** served as a faculty member for the Social Law Library’s educational program on search and seizure.

**Superior Court Judge Cathleen Campbell** was a faculty member on a panel for Motor Vehicle Stops at the Social Law Library .

Superior Court **Chief Justice Heidi Breiger** has been appointed Chief Justice of the

Massachusetts Trial Court.

**Chief Justice Amy Nechtem** and **Juvenile Court Judge Carol Shaw** are proud to announce the opening of the Springfield PATHS Family Treatment Court. The program is designed to provide prevention and treatment for the health and stability of children and families.

**Judges Christine Anthony, Lee Peterson** and **Janine Rivers** were faculty members for MCLE’s Motions Practice in Probate & Family Court.

**Judge Marylou Muirhead** (ret.) is finishing her first semester as a visiting professor of practice at New England Law Boston in the fall.



**DISTRICT FOUR (DC, MD, VA)**  
District of Columbia, Maryland,  
Virginia

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Bobbie McCartney**  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (Ret.)

In recognition of her outstanding contributions and tireless efforts on behalf of District 4 for many years, **Judge Julie Weatherly** has been selected as the 2024 recipient of the Edna B. Parker award! **Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby** will be making the award presentation at the DC Court of Appeals Historic Courthouse. A committee will be appointed to work of event details to make this a truly special even for her. Judge Weatherly has also agreed to serve as the Chair of our newly formed Advisory Committee.

Congratulations to **Judge Gwen D’Souza** who has recently transitioned from the

DC Dept of Employment Services as an Administrative Law Judge to the Maryland Office of Administrative Hearings. She tells us that she is really enjoying her new position. Her Chief Judge even had an Indian News correspondent come out to write an article about her investiture that can be found at this [link](#).

**Judge Cathy Serrette** long-time member and supporter of NAWJ D4, was asked to share a little about her ongoing work with the youth homeless population. This project was started with the idea of building a housing complex with wrap-around services for the youth homeless population, kids that have been in

foster care and have aged out. Efforts to get property for a “home” have been unsuccessful so far but they did get a commitment from the County for “x” number of units for these kids in the developments being built along the blue line metro station. They have successfully created a wraparound service center for kids between 21 and 26 and housing services will be available through state and federal voucher programs, but they are still working on trying to get enough housing for these kids. Healthcare will also be made available. They have tried through the University of MD Healthcare system and then with the Health Dept, because most of these young folks will

qualify for Medicaid, so they are looking for the best fit for these kids. The center is on 1801 McCormik right near the new hospital so that would be great, but they may end up using the same medical services that the County uses. This is a fantastic initiative that is still a work in progress.

On Saturday, November 4, 2023, District 4 members **Judge Toni Clarke**

(Past President) and **Judge Francine Applewhite** participated in Howard University's First Annual Law School Fair. The fair was the vision of Howard's chapter of The Black Women in Pre-Law Society. Toni and Francine introduced NAWJ to the many young women and men who were eager to learn of our organization, the opportunities for membership as law students, and the opportunity to meet and talk with female

judges. The overwhelming question placed to us was "what was your journey like". Each student left with NAWJ swag and information on NAWJ and District 4. Over 100 students attended!

The Maryland Chapter held its 13th Women Moving Forward Re-entry Conference with 150 participants at Maryland's prison for women on Oct. 21, which was very successful.



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

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR:**  
**Hon. Miriam Perry**  
15th District Court, Michigan

MICHIGAN  
OHIO  
WEST VIRGINIA

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District 7 collaborated with the State Bar of Michigan Face of Justice Program and with JD: Advising for a virtual Nationwide Mentor Jet program in October 2023 In November we partnered with the Cooley Law School for a Mentor Jet Program.

**Judge Deborah McNabb** was appointed by Governor Whitmer, to the Michigan State Council for Interstate Juvenile Supervision on November 8th, 2023. Judge McNabb



*Judge McNabb*

received her undergraduate degree in Political Science and Spanish from Alma College in 1984, and her JD in 1987 from DePaul University College of Law. Following her education Judge McNabb served as a staff attorney for the Michigan Migrant Legal Aid service before her time as a Circuit Court Referee. Judge McNabb currently serves as Chief Judge Pro Tempore of the 17th Circuit Court Family Division.

**Governor Gretchen Whitmer** also appointed **Judge Tara Hovey** to fill the vacated seat for the 55th Circuit Court of Clare and Gladwin Counties.



*Judge Tara Hovey*

Judge Hovey received her undergraduate degree in 1992 from Central Michigan University and her J.D. from Ohio Northern University College of Law in 1995. Previously, Judge Hovey has practiced privately, working on criminal, family, real estate, probate, and civil litigation. Judge Hovey has a long history of public service having served on the boards of directors of Big Brother Big Sister of Mid-Michigan, Friends of Clare County Parks and Recreation, and Isabella Citizens for Health.

**Zenell Brown** was appointed as the President of the Detroit Bar Association, the third oldest bar association in the country; and, on September 21st, named by the Michigan Supreme court as the Region 1 Administrator for the State

Court Administrative Office. Additionally, Ms. Brown received, from the State Bar of Michigan, The Alternative Dispute Resolution Section 2023 Award and the Cynthia Diane Stephens Award from the Black Slate.



*Zenell Brown*

**Judge Jacquelyn McClinton** was appointed as an Administrative Law Judge for the Social Security Administration in Detroit. Judge McClinton began her legal career with the Michigan Department of the Attorney General, where she spent several years as an assistant attorney general. Judge McClinton earned her master's degree in dispute resolution from Wayne State University and completed her J.D. at Wayne State University Law School. Prior to Judge McClinton's appointment as the 36th District Court of Michigan in December of 2019, she served as an administrative law judge with the Michigan Office of administrative Hearings and Rules.



**DISTRICT EIGHT (IL, IN, KY)**  
Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky

**Co-District Directors**

**Hon. Patrice Ball-Reed**  
Circuit Court of Cook County  
**Hon. Julie Verheye**  
St. Joseph Superior Court

ILLINOIS  
INDIANA  
KENTUCKY

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**MEMBERSHIP:**

Welcome to the new members joining NAWJ!

**Chief Justice Loretta Rush of the Indiana Supreme Court.**

The Chief was honored at the NAWJ annual conference in Indianapolis with the Lady Justice Award. The award is given to a member of the NAWJ community who uses their position with equanimity, respect, transparency, and impartiality to advance and promote the judicial role in 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.

**Judge Sarah Glasser, Marion County Superior Court Magistrate.**

**Judge Glasser** is a magistrate judge hearing cases involving estate administration, adoptions, and mental health case types.

**Samantha DeWester**

Samantha is an Amicus Judicial member of NAWJ. She currently serves as General Counsel for Beam, Longest and Neff, LLC

in Indianapolis, IN. Prior positions include serving as an adjunct professor at the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University and with the Office of the General Counsel as Deputy Director, Chief Ethics Office, Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

**DISTRICT NEWS:**

On November 20, 2023, President Biden nominated St. Joseph Superior Court **Judge Cristal Brisco** to fill a vacancy in the Northern District of Indiana. Judge Brisco appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee on December 13, 2023, for hearing on her nomination. Judge Brisco was appointed to the Superior Court bench in 2021 hearing cases in the Civil Division of the Court. She was also designated to hear commercial court cases by the Indiana Supreme Court. Her first judicial position was as a magistrate judge in the St. Joseph Circuit Court. Prior positions include service

as General Counsel for St. Mary's College, Corporation Counsel for the City of South Bend and as an associate with Barnes and Thornburg, LLP.

**Judge Kimberly Dowling** serves on the Delaware County, Indiana Circuit Court. She was recognized by the Indiana Judges Association for Excellence in Public Information and Education in 2023. She was nominated by fellow judges for her work in educating the public about child victims of human trafficking. Judge Dowling has made presentations to law enforcement, probation officers, civic groups, teachers, physicians, nurses and counselors on identifying and protecting these victims.

**SPECIAL THANKS:**

The St. Joseph County Indiana Bar Foundation sponsored the attendance of two international judges to the 2023 NAWJ Conference held in Indianapolis this past



2023-2024 NAWJ Officers Swearing in.



Indianapolis Planning Committee

October. **Judge Wahida Rahimi** had to leave Afghanistan due to the recent regime change. She is a scholar in residence at Notre Dame. She hopes to be certified to practice law in the U.S. **Judge Micheline Ilonga** is a judge from the Democratic Republic of the Congo pursuing a degree in peace studies with the Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Judge Ilonga had the chance to connect with a younger judge from the DRC who attended the conference.

**DON'T FORGET:**

All district 8 members should respond to the poll sent out regarding the scheduling of district meetings for 2024. Your responses

are due by 12/31/23. The results will be sent out on 1/8/24.

**DISTRCT 8 ACTIVITIES:**

The district is partnering with the United Council for Higher Education in Haiti (UCHEH) to build a center for higher education in Haiti where students are equipped through education, training, and community service, to become thinkers, problem solvers, and entrepreneurs, and to support the economic development of Haiti.

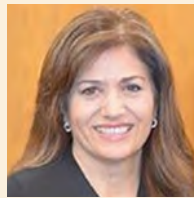
The benefit will take place on January 23, 2024, at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Chicago, 9599 Skokie Blvd, Skokie, IL. The benefit

consists of a reception from 5:30-6:30 p.m.(central) followed by a dinner program. Co-chairs of the event are **Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky** and **Dean Anita Krug** of Chicago-Kent College of Law. Speakers at the event are **Dr. Reynold Verret**, President of Xavier University, HBCU, and **Ron Guerrier**, 4 times a Fortune 500 CIO and former Illinois Secretary of Technology and Innovation. Please attend if you can and share information about the benefit with judges, lawyers and community leaders to support real difference for the people of Haiti.

Thank you **Yolaine Dauphin**, NAWJ member, for bringing this partnership opportunity to District 8!



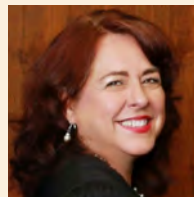
**DISTRICT 2 (CT, NY, VT)**  
**Hon. Bianka Perez**  
Supreme Court, Bronx County Civil Term



**DISTRICT 10 (KS, MN, NE, ND, SD)**  
**Hon. Rachel Pickering**  
Kansas Court of Appeals



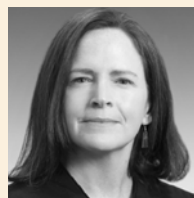
**DISTRICT 3 (DE, NJ, PA, VI)**  
**Hon. Lisa James-Beavers**  
New Jersey Superior Court



**DISTRICT 11 (AR, OK, TX)**  
**Hon. Gina Benavides**  
13th Court of Appeals



**DISTRICT 5 (FL, GA, NC, SC)**  
**Hon. Phinia Aten**  
Magistrate Court of Rockdale County



**DISTRICT 13 (AK, AS, GU, HI, ID, MT, OR, WA)**  
**Hon. Bride Seifert**  
Homer Superior Court



**DISTRICT 6 (AL, LA, MS, TN)**  
**Hon. Barbara Holmes**  
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Tennessee



**DISTRICT 14 (CA, NV)**  
**Hon. Victoria Kolakowski**  
Alameda County Superior Court



**DISTRICT 9 (IA, MO, WI)**  
**Hon. Karen Romano**  
Iowa District CourtTennessee

## NAWJ DISTRICT DIRECTORS

### DISTRICT DIRECTORS

#### DISTRICT 1 (ME, MA, NH, PR, RI)

**Hon. Amy Blake**

Massachusetts Appeals Court

#### DISTRICT 2 (CT, NY, VT)

**Hon. Bianka Perez**

Supreme Court, Bronx County Civil Term

#### DISTRICT 3 (DE, NJ, PA, VI)

**Hon. Lisa James-Beavers**

New Jersey Superior Court

#### DISTRICT 4 (DC, MD, VA)

**Hon. Bobbie McCartney**

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (Ret.)

#### DISTRICT 5 (FL, GA, NC, SC)

**Hon. Phinia Aten**

Magistrate Court of Rockdale County

#### DISTRICT 6 (AL, LA, MS, TN)

**Hon. Barbara Holmes**

U.S. District Court, Middle District of Tennessee

#### DISTRICT 7 (MI, OH, WV)

**Hon. Miriam Perry**

15th District Court, Michigan

#### DISTRICT 8 (IL, IN, KY)

**Co-District Directors**

**Hon. Patrice Ball-Reed**

Circuit Court of Cook County

**Hon. Julie Verheye**

St. Joseph Superior Court

#### DISTRICT 9 (IA, MO, WI)

**Hon. Karen Romano**

Iowa District Court

#### DISTRICT 10 (KS, MN, NE, ND, SD)

**Hon. Rachel Pickering**

Kansas Court of Appeals

#### DISTRICT 11 (AR, OK, TX)

**Hon. Gina Benavides**

13th Court of Appeals

#### DISTRICT 12 (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY)

**Vacant**

#### DISTRICT 13 (AK, AS, GU, HI, ID, MT, OR, WA)

**Hon. Bride Seifert**

Homer Superior Court

#### DISTRICT 14 (CA, NV)

**Hon. Victoria Kolakowski**

Alameda County Superior Court

### STATUS DIRECTORS

#### Projects Committee Chair

**Hon. Kathy King**

Supreme Court of New York, Kings County

#### Committee Liaison

**Hon. Mimi Tsankov**

New York Immigration Court, New York

## Happy New Year!



*Francie Teer*  
**Francie Teer, CFRE**  
 Director of Development

*2024 marks NAWJ's 45th year.*

*45 years since 2 women saw a need and created an opportunity for judges across the country to come together in solidarity.*

*45 years of seeing the underserved within the court system and working for equal justice and access.*

*45 years of dedication to our members, to each other and to the justice system.*

*To celebrate all that we have accomplished and all we have yet to do, I am proud to announce the 45 for 45 Campaign. Please plan for gifts that have 45 in them – such as \$45, \$450 or even \$4,500.*

*This campaign is not only about the past, but also about preparing for what's yet to come!*

*I'm excited about what's ahead,*

**Francie**

*Get in touch with me at [fteer@nawj.org](mailto:fteer@nawj.org) or by phone (757) 880-8343.*

## NAWJ LANDMARK PARTNERS



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David Wall  
Pamela Washington  
Julia Weatherly  
Elizabeth Welch  
Heather Welch  
Bonnie Wheaton  
Elizabeth White  
Betty Williams  
LaShawn Williams  
Victoria Willis  
Ann Yahner

## NAWJ NEW MEMBERS SINCE JULY 1, 2023

### We welcome the following new members of NAWJ:

**Hon. Stacy Allen Barrow**, Harris County Criminal District Courts, Houston, TX

**Mrs. Elvia Barrios Alvarado**, Poder Judicial De Perú, Lima, Peru

**Hon. Kim C. Belin**, Office Of Administrative Law, Burlington, NJ

**Hon. Charles E. Bell**, Superior Court, San Diego, CA

**Hon. Tiffany M. Cartwright**, Western District of Washington, Tacoma, WA

**Hon. Marshelle Dawkins Broadwell**, Marion Superior Court, Indianapolis, IN

**Ms. Samantha E. DeWester**, Beam Longest and Neff LLC, Indianapolis, IN

**Hon. Cheryl Elliott Thornton**, 164th Civil Judicial District Court, Houston, TX

**Hon. Laura Fashing**, U.S. District Court, District Of NM, Albuquerque, NM

**Hon. Michelle D. Fentress**, Trial Court Of Massachusetts, Brockton, MA

**Hon. Jennifer L. Fleet**, 26th Judicial District, NC, Matthews, NC

**Ms. Karen Freedman**, Lawyers For Children, New York, NY

**Hon. Bianca Garcia**, County Court at Law #3, Travis County, Texas, Austin, TX

**Hon. Sarah J. Glasser**, Marion Superior Court, Indianapolis, IN

**Hon. Cheryl Monique Grant-Thompson**, Supreme Court Of The Bahamas, New Providence, Bahamas

**Hon. Stacey Haro**, Office of Administrative Hearings, Hawthorne, CA

**Hon. Nicola Henry Taylor**, Allegheny County Court Of Common Pleas, Pittsburgh, PA

**Mrs. Maruja Otilia Hermoza Castro**, Poder Judicial De Perú, Lima, Peru

**Hon. Shiva V. Hodges**, U.S.D.C. For The D.S.C, Columbia, SC

**Hon. Teuta Ibrahim**, Kosovo Judicial Council, Pristina, Kosovo

**Hon. Nancy Joseph**, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI

**Hon. Veronica Juarez-Dunne**, 465th Judicial District Court, Bastrop, TX

**Ms. Ingrid Kakku Kabua**, High Court/Marshall Islands Judiciary, Majuro, MH

**Colonel Fansu Ku**, Eaton Corp., Kyle, TX

**Dr. Dolores Lawrie-Higgins**, Pima County Juvenile Court, Tucson, AZ

**Ms. Liz Lee**, Our Children's Trust, Potomac, MD

**Hon. Jennifer A. Mabey**, Utah District Court, Heber City, UT

**Hon. Helen Marchal**, Marion Superior Court 26, Indianapolis, IN

**Hon. Kathleen M. Miller**, Superior Court of the State of Delaware, Wilmington, DE

**Hon. Emily Morales-Minerva**, New York State Unified Court System, New York, NY

**Hon. Bianka Perez**, Supreme Court, Bronx County Civil Term, Bronx, NY

**Hon. Caridad F. Rigo**, New Jersey Administrative Court, Moonachie, NJ

**Hon. Loretta Rush**, Indiana Supreme Court, Indianapolis, IN

**Ms. Genevieve Cecilia Smith**, Bronx Civil Supreme Court, West Babylon, NJ

**Hon. Kathleen S. Stone**, Visiting Judge, Houston, TX

**Ms. Sarah Tirgary**, Appellate Division, Second Dept., Office Of Attorneys For Children, Brooklyn, NY

**Hon. Leanna K. Weissmann**, Court Of Appeals Of Indiana, Indianapolis, IN

**Dr. April C. Wood**, NC Court Of Appeals, Lexington, NC

**Ms. Charis K. Zimmick**, U.S. District Court For The Middle District Of Georgia, Leesburg, GA

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2024 marks NAWJ's 45th year, a journey begun by two visionary women who created the opportunity for judges across the country to come together in solidarity.

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# 45 for 45 Campaign

We are proud to announce the **45 for 45 Campaign**. Join by contributing gifts in increments of 45 such as \$45, \$450, or even \$4,500. Now is a great time to set up a monthly donation of \$45.

All participants will be publicly recognized at the annual conference in San Diego.

We welcome you to this celebratory journey acknowledging all that we have accomplished and are planning for our future.

Click [here](#) to donate.

2024 NAWJ Midyear  
April 4-6, Austin, Texas





# Bridging the Past, Present and Future of Justice

2024 Conference, October 17-19, San Diego

