



August 29, 2025
Report from District One
Honorable Amy Lyn Blake

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Judge Elaine M. Buckley, Superior Court



Judge Buckley graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and from New England School of Law. She entered private practice where she specialized in negligence, construction litigation, products liability, and torts. Judge Buckley was sworn in as an associate justice of the Superior Court in 2017.

Judge Kristen Buxton, Superior Court



Judge Buxton graduated from Colgate University and Tulane Law School. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she was an assistant district attorney rising to the chief homicide prosecutor. Judge Buxton was sworn in as an associate justice of the Superior Court in 2021.

Judge Frances M. Giordano, First Justice, Probate & Family Court



Judge Giordano graduated from the College of the Holy Cross and Suffolk University Law School. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she was a partner at two prominent law firms specializing in complex family law matters. Judge Giordano was sworn in as an associate justice of the Probate & Family Court in 2014 and was appointed First Justice in Essex County in 2022.

Judge Amy L. Karangekis, Superior Court



Judge Karangekis graduated from The Ohio State University and New England School of Law. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she was the regional chief of the Western division of the Attorney General's Office. Judge Karangekis worked on civil and criminal matters in Massachusetts and Maine before joining the AG's office and clerked for Justice Judith A. Cowin of the Supreme Judicial Court and Justice Harold Flannery of the Appeals Court. Judge Karangekis was sworn in as an associate justice of the Superior Court in 2025.

Judge Helene Kazanjian, Superior Court



Judge Kazanjian graduated from Stanford University with a B.A. in Political Science and from Boston University School of Law. She clerked for Judge William G. Young of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts and practiced at Goodwin Procter. Judge Kazanjian also worked in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington D.C. and in Maine. She also served as Chief of the Trial Division at the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office. 1994-2010. Judge Kazanjian was sworn in as an associate

justice of the Superior Court in 2016.

BOSTON 2025

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<https://www.nawj.org/schedule/events-calendar/nawj-2025-annual-conference/2025-10-23>



CONNECTIONS: FROM MASSACHUSETTS TO NORWAY

Introduction by Hon. Valerie A. Yarashus

One of the most meaningful parts of a NAWJ conference is the incredible network of judges we meet from all around the world. Thanks to NAWJ, I now have friends who are or were judges in Norway, Nigeria and Afghanistan, and I keep in touch with each of them on a regular basis.

In 2019, at a NAWJ event at the United Nations (in New York), I met a wonderful judge from Norway who was also attending her first NAWJ event. After some discussion, this remarkable judge (President of the Court of Appeals of



Borgarting, i.e., the Chief Justice of the largest of Norway's intermediate appellate courts), invited me to visit her country and offered to set up a three-day itinerary of places for us to visit. After one false start due to the pandemic, I finally put together an exploratory, informal trip with some colleagues and our partners earlier this year, at our own expense. We spent five days

in Oslo, three of which were spent at various courts and prisons, engaging in fascinating discussions with people at all levels of involvement, including many thoughtful and impressive judges, as well as equally thoughtful and impressive people who worked in the prisons and in probation. Each of us who attended was truly moved by how much we learned from visiting another country's courts, probation offices, and prisons, particularly one that regularly ranks at the top of international indexes for fairness and access to justice in their civil and criminal justice systems. The brief reflections that follow are something that each of us found particularly striking and relevant.

Hon. Julie Bernard (ret.), current CEO of Flaschner Judicial Institute

The trip to Norway resonated with me because their system of justice is focused on rehabilitation and not punishment. All of the justice partners, Judges, probation, corrections work collaboratively to achieve this goal. The single moment that stood out was at Halden Prison, a maximum-security prison, world renowned for its architecture and restorative programs. We met with a resident from Argentina who was gracious and gave a tour of his living quarters. He reflected on his imprisonment by saying: "This is not like America. In Norway you do not lose your dignity by being confined." It was a powerful statement as to how our American system of justice is viewed in other parts of the world. I hope that Flaschner Judicial Institute can participate in further exchanges to Norway to expand educational opportunities for Massachusetts judges. I believe there is real value in discussing judicial practice in other countries to explore best practices and look at areas for change, improvement or clarification.

Hon. David Deakin, Massachusetts Superior Court

Meeting with Norwegian judges, I noted that one of their primary focuses in sentencing was to consider how their sentence would contribute to the offender's rehabilitation. Judges in Norway are expected to focus at least as much on rehabilitation as on punishment. Their sentences are designed to lay a foundation for an offender's rehabilitation plan, which is then prepared and implemented by the corrections and probation departments from the beginning of the offender's incarceration. Not surprisingly, therefore, the judges with whom we met were uniformly aware of: the philosophy of the correction system and its approaches to rehabilitation, the extensive training that corrections officers receive, and the conditions in Norway's prisons. Also remarkable was the Norwegian judges' confidence that Norwegian society generally (although not unanimously) supports the judiciary's focus on rehabilitation, accepts that most prisoners eventually will return to society, and expects that the criminal justice and corrections system will play an active role in rehabilitating offenders. As we attended meetings and visited correctional facilities in Norway, I couldn't help but note the differences between that country and its criminal justice environment and our nation and its criminal justice system. At the same time, many of Norway's approaches echo the Massachusetts judiciary's reports on best practices in sentencing. Thus, although, Norway and Massachusetts (not to mention the United States as a nation) are

quite different places, there is much that the Commonwealth's judges can learn from studying the Norwegian system – particularly the role of judges in Norway in imposing sentences that lay a foundation for the ensuing rehabilitation plan.

Hon. Catherine Ham, Massachusetts Superior Court

Inmates are called residents and correction officers are contact officers. Words matter in changing one's mentality. When we toured the Oslo Prison, one of the contact officers explained how he would take walks with his resident in the courtyard and talk about life with him. I asked: One-on-one, without another witness present? His response: Yes, how else would the resident feel comfortable to open up? The cautious lawyer in me worried about lawsuits, allegations and boundaries that could be crossed. Contact officers go through two years of training, focusing on correcting and rehabilitating the inmates. Much of their training also focuses on ethics and keeping safe boundaries between one another. In our litigious country, such therapeutic relationship between a

correction officer and an inmate is unfathomable. This is not what I am suggesting should happen here in our country for many reasons. I am applying this lesson that I learned in how I interact with defendants and parties in court—to treat them humanely, where my first instinct is not to control or to show authority over them but to be open to listening and to understanding them. Easier said than done. We need constant reminders, and I got a very good reminder in the Oslo Prison.



Hon. Brian Palmucci, Massachusetts District Court

The most striking impression I took from our visit to Norway was the profound respect for time embedded in their justice system. Incarceration is not treated as a pause, but as a purposeful period aimed at addressing the root causes of criminal behavior. Even pretrial detention reflects this ethos—if an accused person is acquitted, they are financially compensated for the time lost. The experience prompted me to reconsider my own operating beliefs about how time is valued in our system and left me with a deeper appreciation for its significance.

Hon. Valerie Yarashus, Massachusetts Superior Court

I was impressed by how open-minded the Norwegian judges were, continually testing their beliefs to find out whether their “best practices” were actually working or not. If their sentencing practices did not have the intended effect (such as reducing recidivism while still upholding their values of treating everyone with dignity and respect), they did more research and looked to develop sentencing practices that would give them the results they wanted. This mindset was present whether it meant crafting a sentence that intentionally helped people re-integrate into the community, or focusing on the rehabilitative purpose of sentencing someone to prison, or developing effective administrative boards for civil complaints at the prisons. The mindset of openness to evidence-based best practices was noticeable wherever we went.

None of us would have had these experiences if not for a connection that began at an NAWJ conference. We hope that when you come to Boston for the NAWJ conference in October, you will meet judges from all around the country (and world) who will inspire you in some way, too.

Respectfully submitted:

Hon. Amy Lyn Blake
NAWJ District One Director