



July 6, 2026

Monthly Report from District One

Honorable Debra A Squires-Lee & Honorable Lee M. Peterson
**Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico and
Rhode Island**

**Judge Rya Weikert Zobel, First Female Massachusetts Federal
Judge and Hero Among Us Passed Away on July 4th at Age 94**



"Known for her keen intellect, stellar judgment, and sharp wit, she was treasured by the bar and her many colleagues here and throughout the federal judiciary," NAWJ Member Chief Justice of the United States

District Court for the District of Massachusetts Denise Casper said in the court's statement according to the Boston Globe. Bryan Marquard, Globe Staff reported that Judge Rya Weickert Zobel, the first woman to be nominated and confirmed as a federal judge in Massachusetts, died Saturday, July 4, 2026.

"On the 250th anniversary of our country's founding, this Commonwealth has lost one of its true patriots, the Honorable Rya W. Zobel," NAWJ Member Chief Judge Denise J. Casper said in statement issued by the court.

"Back in the days when only 13 judges of the federal bench nationwide were female, Judge Zobel was a role model for all young female litigators hoping someday to become federal judges," Judge Patti B. Saris, who was then chief judge of the US District Court in Massachusetts, said in November 2013, when Judge Zobel announced she planned to retire and take senior status.

Born on Dec. 18, 1931 in Zwickau, Germany, Judge Zobel survived the rise of Nazism, only to see Soviet soldiers take her father from the family's home when she was 13. She never saw him again, and her mother was in Soviet prisons and prison camps for years.

Though Judge Zobel spoke little English when she and her brother arrived in the United States as immigrants, she mastered the language while living on Long Island, N.Y., and began studies at Radcliffe College 2½ years later. She later graduated from Harvard Law School.

The US District Court statement announcing Judge Zobel's death said that as an immigrant, she "took great pride presiding over ceremonies where new Americans were naturalized."

STRONG DISTRICT SHOWING AT MIDYEAR CONFERENCE

Several District One judges attended the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) Midyear Conference aboard an Alaska cruise, where they joined judges from across the country for a unique combination of judicial education, professional development, and meaningful connection.







The conference offered engaging educational sessions on topics including judicial leadership, wellness and resilience, judicial independence, artificial intelligence and the courts, and mentorship. Participants explored emerging issues affecting the judiciary while earning continuing judicial education credits and exchanging ideas with colleagues from diverse jurisdictions.



The conference also provided valuable opportunities to strengthen professional relationships. District One judges enjoyed connecting with fellow judges from across the nation, sharing experiences, discussing common challenges, and building lasting friendships in an informal setting. The itinerary through Alaska's breathtaking Inside Passage created an ideal backdrop for conversations that

extended beyond the classroom and reinforced the importance of collaboration and collegiality within the judiciary.

Attendees returned with fresh perspectives, practical knowledge, and renewed enthusiasm for serving their communities. The experience highlighted the value of lifelong learning, mentorship, and strong professional networks that organizations like NAWJ foster among judges nationwide.

Thank you NAWJ Vice President of Districts Massachusetts Appeals Court Chief Justice Amy Blake for the above statement.

Massachusetts District Court Judge Mary Beth Ogulewicz, who attended the midyear conference wrote:

- It was an outstanding program and travel destination. Among the topics discussed in our sessions were a robust conversation regarding Judicial Independence, Effective Leadership During Challenging Times, Artificial Intelligence, and a fantastic guest speaker, Michelle Silverthorn, regarding Judicial Wellness – Reconnecting to Purpose, Strengthening Community and Leading with Integrity.
- Highlights included not only networking with colleagues across the country, but inspiring landscape and adventure which forged bonds of friendship. The opportunity to dine every evening with women across the country and discuss similar challenges and strategies rounded out the conference. I sat with a judge one evening whom coincidentally I met and dined with in Tel Aviv years ago when our children were studying in Egypt,(!!) and kayaked with judges from Seattle who worked with my college roommate. The conferences (recently Boston and South Africa) remind us of our connection and a chance to reconnect and recommit to the value of our work.

Thank you to all our members who attended the midyear conference- we look forward to seeing you in New Orleans in October for our annual conference!

NAWJ Member Clerk-Magistrate Pamela Gauvin-Fernandes wins gold at the 2026 Transplant Games of America!!



Pam and her gold medals

Clerk Magistrate Gauvin-Fernandes recently traveled to Denver, Colorado to compete in the 2026 Transplant Games of America as a member of "Team New England."

In 2013 Clerk-Magistrate Pamela Gauvin-Fernandes received a double lung transplant as a result of complications due to Cystic Fibrosis and she has attended 3 previous Transplant Games. This year she competed in 5 swimming events and her twins Jack and Abby were there to cheer her on when she won 5 gold medals and 1 silver! The Transplant Games provide an opportunity to compete and connect with fellow transplant recipients and donor families.

Pam, we are so proud to have you as a member, you are amazing-thank you!

NAWJ Member and Boston Municipal Court Chief Justice Tracy Lee Lyons swears in Chief Court Officer Stephanie Cruz



Family, friends, colleagues, and members of the Trial Court community gathered at the Edward W. Brooke Courthouse on Friday, June 12, 2026 to celebrate the swearing-in of Stephanie Cruz as the courthouse's new Chief Court Officer. Boston Municipal Court Chief Justice Tracy Lee Lyons administered the oath of office during the ceremony, which marked an important milestone in Chief Cruz's career and for the Brooke Courthouse community. Chief Cruz also becomes the first female Chief Court Officer of color at the courthouse.

Chief Cruz reflected on the significance of serving in a courthouse named after Edward W. Brooke, the former Massachusetts Attorney General, civil rights leader, and first African American elected to the United States Senate by popular vote. Chief Cruz stated, "It is both humbling and deeply meaningful to be sworn in as the first female Chief Court Officer of color at the Edward W. Brooke Courthouse, this courthouse—and the departments within it—have been home to many firsts. Milestones that have shaped not only this building, but the people and communities it serves. And today, it gains another first."

Thank you for your leadership Chief Lyons & Congratulations Chief Cruz!

**NAWJ Member Justice Diane Rubin Presents at
2026 Land Court Judicial Conference**

The Land Court recently convened its 2026 Judicial Conference at Barat House on the campus of Boston College Law School in Newton. The conference brought together Land Court judges, legal counsel, and senior managers for a day of judicial education and professional development.



From left to right: Deputy Legal Counsel John Tilley, NAWJ Member Associate Justice Diane Rubin, and retired Land Court Associate Justice Howard P. Speicher discuss practical approaches to conducting judicial settlement conferences.

On June 9, 2026, the Land Court convened its 2026 Judicial Conference at Barat House on the campus of Boston College Law School in Newton. The conference brought together Land Court judges, legal counsel, and senior managers for a day of judicial education and professional development.

The conference opened with welcoming remarks from Land Court Chief Justice Gordon H. Piper, followed by remarks from Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd, Trial Court Chief Justice Heidi E. Brieger, and Trial Court Administrator Thomas G. Ambrosino. Their presentations highlighted the importance of continuing judicial education, collaboration across departments, and the ongoing efforts of the Massachusetts Trial Court to enhance public service and access to justice.

Thank you for promoting excellence Justice Rubin!

**NAWJ Member District Court Judge Mary Beth Ogulewicz Co-
Chaired and Facilitated Unique and Impactful
EmpowerHer Recovery Conference**



NAWJ Member Judge Mary Beth Ogulewicz addresses the audience

It was the first conference of its kind in western Massachusetts – bringing together over 100 women from four western counties including trial court employees, community partners, women who participate in recovery specialty courts, women who are incarcerated and graduated from recovery court living in the community.

Antoinetta DeAngelis, Statewide Manager of the Massachusetts Probation Service's Mental Health and Treatment Services (Specialty Courts) presented awards to Lucinda Brown, a retired Trial Court employee and community volunteer; Sheila Casey, Specialty Court Administrator; and Lori M. Streeter, Franklin County Sheriff. Donna Holmes from the Northwestern District Attorney's Office led the conference off with the song, "Wind Beneath my Wings." Women in the audience, moved by the speakers' testimonies, shared their stories and efforts to become sober, raise children, and deal with life's circumstances.

Mary Beth, thank you for your pioneer spirit and leadership!

BLAST FROM THE PAST!

Marylou Muirhead shared these fabulous photos from prior NAWJ newsletters- Yes, that is Justice Vuono with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg! Thank you for these wonderful photos Marylou!





REGISTER NOW FOR NAWJ 2026
CONFERENCE- YOU WILL NOT
WANT TO MISS THIS!



Registration is now open and the schedule overview is also published. Register early to take advantage of the Early Bird rate and guarantee your room at

The Roosevelt Hotel.

This event is wonderfully supported by our sponsors and open to everyone in the judicial and legal community.

THANK YOU NAWJ DISTRICT ONE DINNER HOSTS!



Appeals Court Justice Ariane Vuono, Superior Court Judge Amy Karangekis, and District Court Judge Mary Beth Ogulewicz hosted a beautiful, well-attended dinner in Western Massachusetts on June 17, 2026. Thank you!



Thank you to everyone who hosted and attended the dinners!



Appeals Court Justice Gloria Tan, Chief Justice of Land Court Diane R. Rubin and Probate & Family Court Judge Manisha H. Bhatt and Marylou Muirhead hosted a well-attended, beautiful Boston area dinner on June 17, 2026. Thank you!



Above Photo of Alaskan Glacier provided by VP of Districts Chief Blake

District One is proud to welcome the following new members:

Superior Court Justice Karin Bell

Probate and Family Court Judges Elena Tsizer and Alison Silber

District Court Clerk Magistrate Pamela Gauvin-Fernandes

WELCOME-YOU WILL LOVE IT!