



Mid-Annual 2022-2023
Report from District 10
Honorable Rachel L. Pickering

Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota

Kansas:

On October 10, 2022, Governor Kelly announced that Laura L. Miser of Emporia, Kansas, was appointed to the Fifth Judicial District. Judge Miser is the first woman to sit on the bench in the Fifth Judicial District. Regarding her historic appointment, Miser stated, “It’s significant, and some of it is sheer numbers. There are several female attorneys that would be qualified, it’s just a choice of whether they would decide to apply or not. I would like it to be an encouragement to young women to go into the legal field.”

Judge Miser first worked in private practice for several years before becoming the Assistant County Attorney for Lyon County. As noted in the *Emporia Gazette*, Judge Miser “believes her experience working as both a private practice attorney and a prosecutor will be beneficial to her time on the bench. As a judge, she’ll look at a case as a whole and take the information to make the best decision she can.” Judge Miser is active in the community, including memberships in the Kansas County and District Attorneys Association, National District Attorneys Association, and the Lyon/Chase County Bar Association. She earned her law degree from the University of Kansas School of Law.

On October 21, 2022, Governor Kelly appointed Stephanie Goodenow of Lenexa, to the Tenth Judicial District. Judge Goodenow was the owner of Goodenow Law, LLC. She was recognized as one of the Top 50 Women: Missouri and Kansas Super Lawyer. She received her law degree from the University of Kansas School of Law.

That same day, Governor Kelly also announced the appointment of Catherine Decena Triplett of De Soto to Tenth Judicial District. Triplett was the owner of Triplett Law Firm, LLC. She is an active member of the Johnson County Bar Association, Earl E. O’Conner Inn of Court, The Johnson County Family Law Inn of Courts, and the Johnson County Drug and Alcohol Counsel. Her law degree was from the University of Kansas School of Law.

On October 28, 2022, Governor Kelly announced the appointment of Catherine Theisen, of Lawrence, to the Seventh Judicial District. Before her appointment to the bench, Theisen

practiced in Lawrence and was a Member at Barber Emerson, L.C. She is an active member in her community, including serving as Vice President of the Judge Hugh Means American Inn of Court, a member of the Douglas County Bench-Bar Committee, and a board member for the Heart of America Professional Network, Inc. Her law degree is from the University of Kansas School of Law.

On November 21, 2022, Governor Kelly appointed Rebecca Faurot to a judicial vacancy in the 25th Judicial District. At the time of her judicial appointment, Faurot was the County Attorney for Scott County as well as the City Attorney for Leoti and Scott City. She serves on the Kansas Board for Discipline of Attorneys and is an active member of the City Attorney's Association of Kansas, the County Counselor's Association of Kansas, and the Kansas Bar Association.

On December 5, 2022, Governor Kelly announced the appointment of Elizabeth Sweeney-Reedy to the Sixth Judicial District Court, located in Miami County. Sweeney-Reeder served as the Miami County Attorney for over ten years. Sweeney-Reeder is a member of the Kansas County and District Attorney's Association, Kansas Women Attorney's Association, Miami County Bar Association, and National District Attorney's Association.

Finally, on January 11, 2023, Chief Justice Marla Luckert of the Kansas Supreme Court presented the State of the Judiciary Address to the Kansas executive and legislative branches.

Minnesota:

On October 31, 2022, Hon. Susan Segal, was re-appointed as Chief of the Court of Appeals.

On November 29, 2022, Governor Walz appointed Sydnee Woods to the Fourth Judicial District. Judge Woods was general counsel for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. She provided "legal and policy analysis, risk assessment, and litigation management for the agency, which includes the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Minnesota State Patrol, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and the State Fire Marshal. Woods was previously an attorney for the City of Minneapolis, Ramsey County, and the Metropolitan Council. She was also a law clerk to Chief Judge Edward Toussaint, Jr. on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota Law School and Mitchell Hamline School of Law. Her community involvement includes volunteering with the University of St. Thomas School of Law Mentor Externship program, Minnesota Women Lawyers' Student to Attorney Mentoring program, U.S. District Court's Open Doors program, and Everybody Wins reading program. Woods is a member of Minnesota Women Lawyers, the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She earned her B.A. from Loyola University Chicago and J.D. from Tulane Law School."

On December 16, 2022, Hon. Jane Bowman was re-appointed to the Minnesota Tax Court.

On January 9, 2023, Governor Walz appointed Kristi Stanislawski to the Tenth Judicial District. Stanislawski was an attorney at Jovanovich, Dege & Athmann, PA. Her practice

included “serving as the lead prosecutor for the cities of Cold Spring, Richmond, Kimball, and St. Stephen, as well as representing private clients in civil and family matters. She previously worked as a staff attorney for Minnesota’s attorney licensing boards, as an associate attorney for Rajkowski Hansmeier Ltd., and was a law clerk for the Honorable Jay Mondry in the Ninth Judicial District. Her community involvement includes serving on Central Minnesota Legal Service’s board of directors and volunteering with the Children’s Law Center and the Stearns/Benton County Pro Bono Legal Clinic. Stanislawski has served in various leadership roles with the Minnesota Women Lawyers Central Chapter and the Seventh District chapter of the Minnesota State Bar Association. She also serves on the board of the St. Michael-Albertville Girls Basketball Association and as a coach for the St. Michael-Albertville fifth-grade girls traveling team. She earned her B.A. from Winona State University and J.D. from Hamline University School of Law.”

On January 18, 2023, Hon. Patricia J. Milum was re-appointed to the Workers’ Compensation Court of Appeals.

On February 1, 2023, Governor Walz announced the appointment of Debra Goehler as district court judge in the Third Judicial District. The announcement included highlights from Judge Goehler’s career: “Debra Groehler is a managing attorney in the Civil Division of the Olmsted County Attorney’s Office, where she supervises a team of attorneys who handle child protection, adult protection, and juvenile delinquency cases. She previously worked as the executive director of Legal Assistance of Olmsted County, an attorney in private practice representing clients in family law matters, and a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Gerard W. Ring. Her community involvement includes serving as a member of the Juvenile Law Committee at the Minnesota County Attorneys Association and as secretary of the Next Chapter Ministry Board of Directors. She has also volunteered for the Rochester Public Schools and for the Honors Choirs of Southeast Minnesota. She earned her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and J.D. from Hamline University School of Law.”

On March 24, 2023, Governor Walz announced the appointment of Sarah Hudleston as district court judge in the Fourth Judicial District. Hudleston was an assistant United States attorney in the Violent and Major Crimes Section of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Minnesota. She prosecuted “a range of felonies, including child exploitation, bank fraud, kidnapping, armed robbery, firearms, narcotics, and government program fraud offenses. Hudleston was previously a law clerk to the Honorable Ann D. Montgomery and an attorney at Robins Kaplan Miller & Ciresi and Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson. Her community involvement includes serving as a volunteer for the U.S. District Court’s Open Doors program, a mentor for students in the University of St. Thomas School of Law Mentor Externship Program, a volunteer with the Innocence Project, and a former board member of the Volunteer Lawyers Network. Hudleston is a two-time recipient of Tubman’s Attorney of the Year Award for her pro bono representation of domestic violence victims and indigent family law clients. She earned her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin - Madison and J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School.”

On March 29, 2023, Governor Walz announced the appointment of Tori Stewart to the First Judicial District Vacancy. Tori Stewart was an assistant county attorney in Dakota County,

where she prosecuted “felony-level crimes including murder, assault, criminal sexual conduct, child physical abuse, criminal vehicular operation, and domestic-related offenses. She was previously an assistant county attorney in Rice County, where she prosecuted all levels of criminal offenses, and an associate attorney at Hughes & Costello. Her community involvement has included serving on the Minnesota DWI Task Force; the Dakota County Attorney’s Office Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Alliance; the Minnesota County Attorney’s Association Impaired Driving Educational Alliance; and the Minnesota State Bar Association Public Law Section’s Executive Council. She has also volunteered as a mock trial judge with the Minnesota High School Mock Trial Program. Stewart earned her B.A. from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities and her J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law.”

Nebraska:

On January 5, 2023, Governor Pillen began his first term as governor. We look forward to sharing news of Governor Pillen’s future judicial appointments.

North Dakota:

On October 26, 2022, Kelly Dillion was appointed as the full-time referee and magistrate judge for North Central Judicial District, located in Minot, North Dakota.

On March 10, 2023, Hon. Constance Cleveland celebrated her formal investiture when she took her oath of office in the Cass County Courthouse. She serves as a district court judge in the East Central Judicial District, located in Fargo, North Dakota. Last November, Judge Cleveland was elected to this judicial position. Prior to taking the bench, Cleveland worked in the Burleigh County State Attorney’s Office from 1989 to 1991. Starting in 1991, she worked at the Cass County State Attorney’s Office and focused on child welfare.

Judge Cleveland’s investiture speech was inspiring. She spoke of the many times that she unsuccessfully ran for judge: “Each time I was not successful, it hurt. I can’t say that it didn’t. But I learned so much. I analyze my own experiences. I saw new ones. That’s what I did next. And I learned from the experiences of those who were successful.”

South Dakota

On November 8, 2022, several circuit court women judges successfully stood for election in their circuit for an eight-year term. Congratulations to them.