



October 19, 2022
Annual Report from District 10
Honorable Rachel L. Pickering

Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota

Kansas

October

In October 2021, the Kansas Supreme Court District appointed Judge Jennifer Brunetti to the Access to Justice Committee. District Judge Jennifer Brunetti has served as a judge since 2018 and is in the 11th Judicial District.

November

In Kansas, each of the 31 judicial districts has a chief judge who has general control over district case assignments and supervisory authority over the administrative and clerical functions of the court. The following have been appointed or reappointed as chief judge:

- Judge Amy Harth was reappointed to the 6th Judicial District. Judge Harth has served as a district judge since 2004 and chief judge since 2015.
- Judge Laura Lewis was reappointed in the 16th Judicial District. She has served as a district court judge since 2019 and chief judge since 2020.
- Judge Patricia Macke Dick was reappointed in the 27th Judicial District. She has served as a district judge since 1989 and chief judge since 2007.
- Judge Rene Young was reappointed in the 28th Judicial District. She has served as a district judge since 2006 and chief judge since 2015.

Judge Rachel Pickering was invited by the ABA Foundation to become an ABA Fellow. She became an ABA Fellow in November 2021.

The Kansas Supreme Court appointed District Judge Constance Alvey, 29th Judicial District to the Kansas Child Support Guidelines Advisory Committee.

December

Chief Justice Marla Luckert, Kansas Supreme Court, was awarded the Phil Lewis Medal of Distinction. The Phil Lewis Medal of Distinction is reserved for individuals or organizations in Kansas who have performed outstanding and conspicuous service at the state, national, or international level in administration of justice, science, the arts, government, philosophy, law, or any other field offering relief or enrichment to others. Chief Justice Luckert stated, "I am extremely honored to receive the Phil Lewis Medal of Distinction and am humbled to join the list of past recipients, many of whom supported and encouraged me during my professional journey. I am deeply grateful for the support the Kansas Bar Association and its members have provided to me, the legal profession, and the Kansas judicial branch as we work together to improve our profession."

Judge Patricia Macke Dick, chief judge of the 27th Judicial District, received the Pillars of Community Award. This Pillars of Community Award is given to a Kansas lawyer, judge, and Kansas Bar Association member with a minimum of 10 years of active nonspecialized, general legal practice in a predominately low-density population area of Kansas. Recipients have substantial practice in small or solo law firms or local government service. She stated, "I am honored to be recognized by the Kansas Bar Association for my commitment to my community and the state of Kansas. I appreciate the efforts of all Kansas lawyers in making our state a great place to live and practice."

Retired Justice Carol Beier received the Christel Marquardt Trailblazer Award, which recognizes exceptional Kansas Bar Association members who break new ground, shatter glass ceilings, or pave new paths for others to follow. Justice Beier stated, "Judge Christel Marquardt was a good friend and mentor of mine, and I am honored and humbled to be selected for the Kansas Bar Association award created to recognize her pioneering leadership. In fact, if it were not for Christel's telephone call to me in the fall of 1999 urging me to submit my name for consideration, I may have never ended up on the bench. Christel's call typifies the boost that all of us can use in our lives and in our careers, and I'm happy that I have been in a position to provide help to young lawyers who have worked with and for me over the years."

Chief Judge Karen Arnold-Burger, Kansas Court of Appeals, received the Outstanding Service Award, which recognizes those in the legal profession for services that advance the administration of justice. This award recognized Chief Judge Arnold-Burger's numerous presentations to the legal and public community groups across the state and her work on the Supreme Court Ad Hoc Pretrial Justice Task Force. Chief Judge Arnold-Burger stated, "It is an incredible honor to be recognized for my contributions to continuing legal and judicial education. I am proud to be a Kansas lawyer, and to be able to help my fellow lawyers."

Judge Kim Cudney was elected president of the Kansas District Judges Association. She is chief judge of the 12th Judicial District. Judge Cudney stated, "I am honored to be selected by my colleagues to serve in a leadership role of the Kansas District Judges Association. The KDJA strives to better the judicial community statewide by taking positive steps toward improving the administration of justice and addressing issues that arise at the trial-court level. I look forward to meeting with familiar and new peers, listening to their ideas and concerns, and addressing those issues as an organization."

Judge Brenda Cameron was elected secretary of the Kansas District Judges Association. She serves in the Tenth Judicial District.

Judge Cheryl Rios was elected treasurer of the Kansas District Judges Association. She serves in the Third Judicial District.

District Magistrate Judge Jenifer Ashford was re-elected president of the Kansas District Magistrate Judges Association.

District Judge Kristi Cott was appointed to serve as chief judge of the 25th Judicial District. Judge Cott has served as district court judge since 2021. Judge Cott stated, "I look forward to working with the other judges in the district and I am confident we can increase access to the justice system while giving all parties their fair day in court. I have managed offices in the past and I hope my leadership skills will transfer into the many responsibilities associated with being chief judge."

January

On January 11, 2022, Chief Justice Marla Luckert delivered the State of the Kansas Judiciary. Chief Justice Luckert delivered the State of the Judiciary to Governor Kelly and a joint session of the Kansas Senate and House of Representatives.

February

The Kansas Supreme Court appointed Chief Judge Laura Lewis to the Chief Judges Council, which provides the court with ground-level perspective on issues facing Kansas trial courts. Judge Lewis is chief judge of the 16th Judicial District. She has been a district judge since 2019 and chief judge since 2021.

On February 14, Governor Kelly appointed Jessica Heinen as District Court Judge in the Third Judicial District. The Judicial Investiture is scheduled for Friday, March 25, 2022. Jessica Heinen is a Deputy District Attorney with the Shawnee County District Attorney's Office. Previously she had worked as a staff attorney for the Kansas Securities Commissioner and assistant city attorney for the City of Topeka.

March

On March 17, Governor Kelly appointed Andrea Purvis as District Court Judge in the Sixth District. According to the press release, Andrea Purvis "was elected Dickinson County Attorney in 2017 where she manages the office responsible for prosecuting felony and misdemeanor criminal cases. Prior to being elected, she was an Assistant County Attorney for Dickinson County Attorney's Office from 2012 to 2017. In addition to her prosecutorial work, Purvis has legal experience as a Public Defender working for the State Board of Indigent Defense Services from 2009 until 2012." "I have spent my legal career applying the rule of law to make decisions that might not be popular, but are impartial and fair," Purvis said. "I will continue to treat all people fairly and respectfully who may come before me as I preside from the bench."

May

On May 17, Angela Coble was sworn in as a judge on the Kansas Court of Appeals. Angela Coble served at chambers counsel for two federal magistrate judges in the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas and worked as a civil litigator in private practice in Salina, Kansas. According to the Salina Journal, Angela Coble has been "active in the Salina community through volunteer efforts such as serving for more than a decade on the board of directors for Salina Family Healthcare Center and formerly serving on the board of the Salina Airport Authority. She has also acted in other community leadership positions including the Salina Emergency Aid Food Bank, Leadership Salina, the Four Rivers Support Committee, and other school and parent-teacher organizations."

June

On June 2, Judge Nancy Parrish was honored with the Chief Justice Kay McFarland Award, presented by the Women Attorneys Association of Topeka. Judge Parrish, who retired in June, has devoted her career to public service, including serving in all three branches of government.

July

On July 15, seven Kansas women justices and appellate judges presented at the Kansas Women Attorneys Association's Lindsborg Conference. Their plenary panel, "Appellate All-Star Review," provided an overview of recent Kansas cases.

On July 25, Governor Kelly appointed Maban Wright as District Court Judge in the Third Judicial District. Maban Wright is a Chief Public Defender at the Third Judicial Public Defender Office.

September

On September 30, Governor Kelly appointed Andrea Swisher and Amy Taylor Norton as District Court Judges in the 28th Judicial District. Andrea Swisher owns Swisher Law, LLC, in Salina, Kansas. "I am honored to be selected as a judge for the 28th Judicial District. I have practiced in the 28th Judicial District my entire career and have built strong relationships with court personnel, colleagues, and the communities within the Judicial District," Swisher said. "I look forward to continuing my service as a judge." Amy Taylor Norton is an Assistant Attorney General for the Kansas Attorney General's Office Criminal Litigation Division. "As an attorney who has dedicated my career to public service, I believe it is of utmost importance that a judge ensures that all those who come before the Court are treated with equal

dignity, fairness, and respect,” Norton said. “I am incredibly humbled to have been selected and look forward to this opportunity to use my skills and experience to continue to serve my community from the bench.”

Nebraska

October

In October 2021, the Nebraska County Judges Association appointed Judge C. Jo Peterson from Seward, Nebraska, as their new association president and the Nebraska District Judges Association appointed Judge Leigh Ann Retelsdorf from Omaha, Nebraska as their new president. Each will serve until October 2022. Judges' associations allow courts to network, problem-solve and share innovations across the state. Their goal is to educate one another on national, state and local issues; and discuss ways to more efficiently function within the Judicial Branch of government. Judge association presidents work closely with the Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court and with the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation. Association presidents have the power to appoint specialized committees and operate with their elected executive committees.

November

On November 29, 2021, Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Molly B. Keane of Elkhorn as District Court Judge in the Fourth Judicial District (Douglas County). Keane has worked as a Deputy County Attorney in the Douglas County Attorney's Office since 2005. In that role, she has supervised a team of attorneys in general prosecution of all felony offenses. She has also supervised the Child Victim/Sexual Assault Unit, leading a team of specially trained attorneys in the prosecution of all felony crimes against children and all sexually based offenses. From 2001 to 2004, Keane was an Assistant District Attorney in the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office in Massachusetts. During her career, Keane has gained extensive trial experience having tried over 125 jury trials. Keane holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, graduating with the distinction of being a Superior Scholar. She also holds a Juris Doctor from Boston College Law School. She is a member of the Massachusetts Bar Association, Nebraska Bar Association, Omaha Bar Association, and National District Attorneys Association. Keane is also a member of the Nebraska County Attorneys Association and has served on its Board of Directors since 2018. Keane has been honored with the Kids First Award by Project Harmony in recognition of her service to children in the community. She has volunteered with several community organizations and served on many statewide teams such as the Child and Maternal Death Review Team and Nebraska Human Trafficking Taskforce.

On November 29, 2021, Governor Pete Ricketts appointed LeAnne M. Srb of Papillion as District Court Judge in the Fourth Judicial District (Douglas County). Srb has worked as a District Court Referee in Douglas County since 2017. In this capacity, she handles cases related to child support, medical support, and spousal support, as well as State and private contempt matters regarding non-compliance with District Court orders. Srb also worked for Douglas County as an Assistant Public Defender from 1999 to 2017, where she represented persons charged with felony and misdemeanor offenses in Douglas County District Court and County Court. Srb holds a B.A. in Pre-Law from the College of Saint Mary and a Juris Doctor from the Creighton University School of Law. She is a member of the Nebraska State Bar Association and the Omaha State Bar Association.

December

On December 21, 2021, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Tanya Roberts-Connick of North Platte as County Court Judge in the Eleventh Judicial District. Roberts-Connick, 47, has worked in the Lincoln County Attorney's Office since 2000. She served as Deputy County Attorney from 2000 to 2012, with experience in both the child support enforcement division and the criminal division. She has been Lincoln County's Chief Deputy County Attorney since April 1, 2012. In this capacity, she has represented the State of Nebraska in criminal, juvenile, and Mental Health Board proceedings as well as having responsibility to supervise and train staff. Prior to her time with the Lincoln County Attorney's Office, Roberts-Connick worked for the Nebraska State Patrol as a law clerk from 1998 to 2000. Roberts-Connick holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Nebraska Wesleyan University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Law. She is a member of the Nebraska Bar Association and the Nebraska County Attorneys Association. Since 2017, Roberts-Connick has served on the Nebraska Attorney General's Office Human Trafficking Task Force as Lead for the West Region, composed of 27 counties in Western Nebraska. She has also

been a member of Lincoln County's Coordinated Response Team for Domestic Violence, its Sexual Assault Response Team, and its Human Trafficking Task Force.

March-June

On June 17, 2022, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Katie Benson of Omaha as District Court Judge in the Fourth Judicial District (Douglas County). Benson, 42, has been a Deputy County Attorney in the Douglas County Attorney's Office since 2008. Since that time, she has worked in the office's Felony Division where she has handled all collateral attacks, which include defending challenges to convictions. She's also been in charge of all aspects of problem solving courts, such as drug court, young adult court, and mental health diversion. Additionally, she has prosecuted all phases of felony crimes, including homicides, for the office. Prior to her time in the Douglas County Attorney's Office, Benson worked for two-and-a-half years as a law clerk for the Fourth Judicial District Court.

Benson holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Business from the University of Nebraska Omaha (graduating magna cum laude) and a Juris Doctor from the University of Wyoming School of Law. She is a member of the Nebraska Bar Association, Nebraska County Attorneys Association, National District Attorneys Association, and Omaha Bar Association.

For over a decade, Benson mentored younger attorneys and law students as a member of the Robert M. Spire American Inn of Court. Benson is also a member of Pioneer Foundation for Fort Calhoun High School, which raises money for scholarships and after school programming. She also has been an adjunct professor for the University of Nebraska Omaha, teaching criminal procedure for the last five years.

Benson is being appointed to the judgeship created by amendments to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 24-301.02 (Laws 2022, LB 922) establishing an eighteenth district court judge effective July 20, 2022.

July-August

On August 22, 2022, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Denise Kracl of Schuyler to the County Court, Fifth Judicial District (consisting of Boone, Butler, Colfax, Hamilton, Merrick, Nance, Platte, Polk, Saunders, Seward, and York counties). Kracl, 48, has served as Colfax County Attorney and the City of Schuyler's Prosecutor since December 2011. From 2007 to 2010, she served as Deputy County Attorney for Colfax and Butler counties. As needed, she has also served as Special Prosecutor for Dodge, Platte, Saunders, Seward, and York counties since 2011. As a county prosecutor, she has handled complicated criminal cases including a murder investigation, attempted murder prosecution, grand juries, and fingerprint and DNA evidence. As Schuyler City Prosecutor, she has prosecuted numerous city ordinance or municipal violations. In her capacity as County Attorney, she has reviewed search warrants, issued county attorney subpoenas, and reviewed probable cause affidavits prior to asking for arrest warrants to be issued. Her experience as a Special Prosecutor has included handling a grand jury for a death in a jail and investigating alleged prosecutorial misconduct for attempt to influence the testimony of a law enforcement officer. Kracl has practiced law in Schuyler since August 2010, where she handles real estate contracts, wills, and powers of attorney.

Kracl holds a bachelor's degree in Education from Wayne State College (graduating cum laude) and a Juris Doctor from the University of South Dakota School of Law. She also holds an executive certificate from the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University. She is a member of the Nebraska Bar Association, Nebraska County Attorneys Association, and the National District Attorneys Association. Kracl is very active in community service endeavors. She has been a leader of the Colfax County Food and Toy Corporation, which serves families facing food insecurity during the Winter Break from school. For over a decade, the group has come together to provide food, toys, and clothing to families in need during the month of December. She also serves on numerous boards and committees, including: the County Attorney Standards Advisory Committee, Columbus Public Schools Foundation Board of Directors, Colfax County Food Pantry Board, Nebraska Mediation Center Board, Northeast Nebraska Human Trafficking Taskforce, CHI Mental Health Committee of Colfax County, Colfax County Juvenile Services Committee, Schuyler Community Development, and others.

Earlier this year, Kracl was selected to represent Nebraska at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice Conference in Washington, DC. She was recognized by the Nebraska Bar Association with an Award of Appreciation in 2021. She has also previously been honored with the Schuyler Sertoma Service to Mankind Award and as Volunteer of the Year by the Schuyler Chamber of Commerce.

September

On September 9, 2022, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Cindy R. Volkmer to the District Court for the Eleventh Judicial District (consisting of Arthur, Chase, Dawson, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, and Thomas counties). Volkmer, 37, has practiced law at Kelley, Scritsmier & Byrne in North Platte since 2015, becoming a partner in 2020. Her practice has focused on civil litigation. Her areas of experience include family law, paternity, trust disputes, contract disputes, employment disputes, agricultural matters, collection matters, and creditor rights in bankruptcies. Prior to attending law school, Volkmer taught secondary math at Omaha Benson High School from 2007 to 2012. Volkmer holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Math Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Juris Doctor from the University of Nebraska College of Law. She is a member of the Lincoln County Bar Association and of the 11th Judicial District Bar Association. Volkmer has served on the Mid-Plains United Way board of trustees since June 2019 and joined the North Platte Community College Foundation board in August 2022. Volkmer fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Richard A. Birch. The primary place of office for the judgeship is North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska.

On September 9, 2022, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Sarah M. Moore of Omaha to the Separate Juvenile Court in Sarpy County. Moore, 41, has been a Deputy County Attorney in the Sarpy County Attorney's Office since September 2021, working as Lead Attorney of the Juvenile Division. From April 2008 to September 2021, she served in the Douglas County Attorney's Office. During her time there, she was a Deputy County Attorney in the Juvenile Division, misdemeanor Domestic Violence/Child Abuse Division, and Felony Criminal Division. Moore has extensive experience managing a demanding, complex, and diverse caseload. She is skilled in bench and jury trials. Moore holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Juris Doctor from the Creighton University School of Law. She is a member of the Robert M. Spire Inns of Court, Nebraska Bar Association, Omaha Bar Association, Sarpy County Bar Association, and the Nebraska County Attorneys Association.

Additionally, Moore gives back to her community in a variety of ways, and her main volunteer work is devoted to improving the lives of youth. Since 2009, she has been an executive board member of Go Beyond Nebraska, a nonprofit dedicated to helping youth discover their full potential. Moore has also been active in Millard Public Schools, newly appointed to the Superintendent's Advisory Committee, a member of the Upchurch Elementary School Improvement Team, and an active member in the school PTA since 2015. Additionally, she has worked with the Omaha Country Club Caddie Alumni Association, after having been the first female caddie in the club's history and volunteers her time coaching soccer through the YMCA. Moore routinely mentors and provides job shadowing opportunities to criminal justice and pre-law students from Creighton and the University of Nebraska Omaha. She also currently serves as Juvenile Law instructor with the Sarpy Douglas Law Enforcement Academy and is a member of the Sarpy County 1184 Treatment and Response Teams. Moore fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Robert B. O'Neal. The primary place of office for the judgeship is Papillion, Sarpy County, Nebraska.

Minnesota

October

In October 2021, Siv Mjanger and Jennifer Stanfield were appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judges in Minnesota's Tenth Judicial District.

As noted in the Governor's press release: "Ms. Mjanger is the Criminal Division Chief at the Washington County Attorney's Office. In addition to her management responsibilities, she advises the County Attorney on the development and execution of internal and external policies. She is the lead sexual assault and vulnerable adult prosecutor in Washington County. Ms. Mjanger was previously an Assistant Washington County Attorney, and she has also practiced

in the areas of family law and criminal defense. Ms. Mjanger began her career as an Assistant Hennepin County Public Defender. She serves on the Washington County Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Team and the Vulnerable Adult Multidisciplinary Team. Ms. Mjanger is an advocate for criminal justice reform, including bail reform, diversion reform, and additional support for offenders with substance abuse disorder to curtail recidivism. Ms. Mjanger earned her B.A. from the University of Minnesota and J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law.”

As stated in the Governor’s press release: “Ms. Stanfield is a Child Support Magistrate in the Tenth Judicial District. She previously worked as a Senior Assistant Carver County Attorney, where she worked in the areas of child support, child protection, maltreatment, commitments, and criminal law. Ms. Stanfield was also a Staff Attorney with the Minnesota State Court Administrator’s office. She has worked for the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, and she has volunteered for women’s legal aid programs in Ethiopia. Ms. Stanfield has been a member of the Minnesota Department of Human Services Advisory Committee, the Minnesota County Attorney’s Association, and the Minnesota Family Support and Recovery Council. She is the co-creator of the nationally recognized Carver County program Jobs Not Jail. Ms. Stanfield earned her B.A. and J.D. from Hamline University.”

November

In November 2021, Sarah Wheelock was appointed by Governor Walz to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Sarah Wheelock is the first Native American judge to sit on the Minnesota Court of Appeals.

As noted in the Governor’s press release: “Ms. Wheelock is legal counsel for the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community in Prior Lake. She previously worked as an Adjunct Professor at Mitchell Hamline College of Law and as an Appellate Judge for the White Earth Band of Chippewa Court of Appeals. Her experience includes litigation in tribal, federal, and state courts, as well as economic development and finance work. Ms. Wheelock is a member of the Meskwaki Nation (federally recognized as the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa). She is a member and past Vice President of the Minnesota American Indian Bar Association, member of the National Native American Bar Association, and member of the Federal Bar Association. She previously served as a member of the Minnesota Commission on Judicial Selection. Her community involvement includes serving as a director on the board for the Division of Indian Work, as an assistant director of Twin Cities Native Lacrosse, and as the chair of the American Indian Parent Action Committee for the Prior Lake-Savage Area School District. Ms. Wheelock earned her B.A. and J.D. from the University of Iowa.”

December

In December 2021, Helen Brosnahan and Kari Willis were appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judges in Minnesota’s Tenth Judicial District.

As noted in the Governor’s press release: “Ms. Brosnahan is an Assistant Dakota County Attorney in the Civil Division, where she handles matters including litigation, contracts, civil asset forfeiture, and water management. Previously, Ms. Brosnahan was an Assistant Dakota County Attorney in the Criminal Division, where she prosecuted adult criminal cases. Ms. Brosnahan has been recognized as a leader for her work with Dakota County’s initiative to champion inclusion, diversity, and equity, and she serves on the Dakota County Attorney’s Office’s Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Alliance. Before joining Dakota County, Ms. Brosnahan was an attorney at LeVander, Gillen & Miller, P.A., an Assistant Olmsted County Attorney, and a law clerk for the Honorable Robert F. Carolan. Ms. Brosnahan also served on the Minnesota Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Rules of Criminal Procedure. She has been active with Minnesota Women Lawyers, where she has served in various leadership roles. Ms. Brosnahan has been a judge for the William McGee National Civil Rights Moot Court Competition and the Minnesota State Bar Association Moot Court Competition. Ms. Brosnahan earned her B.A. from Smith College and her J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School.”

The Governor’s press release stated, “Ms. Willis is an Assistant County Attorney with the Wright County Attorney’s Office, where she primarily represents the human services agency in child protection matters. She previously worked in the areas of juvenile delinquency and adult criminal prosecution. Prior to joining the Wright County Attorney’s

Office, Ms. Willis was a law clerk for the Honorable Kim Johnson in Wright County in the Tenth Judicial District. Ms. Willis is an active participant in The Turn - Wright County Adult Drug Court Program. Her community involvement includes engaging with community youth sports and volunteering as a mock trial judge with the Minnesota State Bar Association. Ms. Willis serves on the Wright County Safe Schools committee, Community Child Safety Team, Back-to-School Program, and Children's Justice Initiative. She also administers the Wright County Attorney's Office truancy program. Ms. Willis earned her B.A. from the University of Minnesota Duluth and her J.D. from the Hamline School of Law."

January

In January 2022, Christy Hormann was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Third Judicial District. As noted in the Governor's press release: "Ms. Hormann is the Chief Deputy Steele County Attorney. She was previously an Assistant Ramsey County Attorney in the criminal division. Ms. Hormann also serves on the Third Judicial District Veterans Treatment Court and the Steele County Community Corrections Advisory Board. Her community involvement includes serving on the board of directors for the Crisis Resource Center and the Steele County Safety Camp. She is also a member of the Promoting Peace Planning Committee and a mock trial judge with the Minnesota State High School League. Ms. Hormann earned her B.A. from the University of St. Thomas and her J.D. from the William Mitchell College of Law."

February

In February 2022, Amber Brennan was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District. The Governor's press release stated: "Ms. Brennan is Chief of the Firearms and Violent Crime section of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota. Ms. Brennan is also an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, where she teaches litigation skills. Previously, Ms. Brennan served as an Assistant Hennepin County attorney and as a Minnesota Assistant Attorney General. She has also served as an attorney for the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis. Ms. Brennan co-founded a task force to recruit and train volunteer lawyers to represent victims of predatory lending and foreclosure rescue scams. Ms. Brennan earned her B.A. from San Diego State University and J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School."

Additionally, in February 2022, Stacey Sorensen was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota's First Judicial District. As noted in the Governor's press release: "Ms. Sorensen is an attorney for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. Her legal practice includes personal injury, premises liability, commercial liability, workers compensation, and complex insurance litigation. Ms. Sorensen also serves as an adjunct professor in Mitchell Hamline School of Law's trial advocacy program, and she is a Minnesota State Bar Association Certified Civil Trial Specialist. She has served as an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association and as a volunteer faculty member for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy. Ms. Sorensen coaches high school mock trial and serves on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented (MCGT), as well as the Prior Lake chapter of MCGT. Ms. Sorensen earned her B.A. from Macalester College and J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law."

March

On March 22, Governor Tim Walz appointed Leah duCharme and Heidi Schultz as District Court Judges in Minnesota's Seventh Judicial District.

Leah duCharme is "a senior shareholder at Gjesdahl Law, where she practices primarily family law, including marriage dissolutions, child custody, paternity, child and spousal support, domestic violence, protective orders, adoption, and guardianships. Her community involvement includes serving on the YWCA of Cass/Clay Board of Directors, the YWCA Racial Justice Committee, the YWCA Women of the Year Committee, the Moorhead City Charter Commission, the State Bar Association of North Dakota (SBAND) Ethics Committee, the SBAND Volunteer Lawyer & Lawyer Referral Committee, and the North Dakota Child Support Guidelines Quadrennial Review Committee. Ms. duCharme earned her B.A. from Moorhead State University and J.D. from the University of North Dakota School of Law."

Heidi Schultz "is an Assistant Todd County Attorney, where she prosecutes adult criminal cases of all levels. She was previously a partner at Swenson Lervick Syverson Trosvig Jacobson Schultz Cass. Ms. Schultz also served as an assistant county attorney in Douglas, Olmsted, and St. Louis Counties. Earlier in her career, she clerked for the Honorable Mark A. Munger in the Sixth Judicial District. Ms. Schultz's community involvement includes serving on the

board of directors for the Alexandria Dollars for Scholars foundation and the Alexandria Figure Skating Club. Ms. Schultz also served on the Minnesota Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules of Criminal Procedure. Ms. Schultz earned her B.A. and J.D. from Valparaiso University.”

April

On April 19, Kathryn Iverson Landrum was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota’s First Judicial District. As stated in the press release, “Ms. Iverson Landrum is a manager and assistant attorney general at the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General, where she leads a division defending state agencies and employees during all stages of employment, tort, and constitutional litigation. Ms. Iverson Landrum previously served as an honors attorney for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. She also clerked for the Honorable Richard A. Griffin on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and the Honorable Richard H. Kyle on the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota. Ms. Iverson Landrum’s community involvement includes volunteering at the Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services Housing Clinic and serving as the co-chair of the Attorney General’s Pro Bono and Volunteer Committee. Ms. Iverson Landrum earned her bachelor’s degree from Macalester College and her J.D. from Hamline University School of Law.”

On April 28, Elise Larson was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota’s Fourth Judicial District. “Ms. Larson serves as the Water Program Director and senior attorney at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. She also is an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, where she teaches environmental law and supervises the Environment and Energy Law Clinic. Ms. Larson was previously a law clerk for Chief Justice Lorie Gildea on the Minnesota Supreme Court, Judge Myron Bright on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and Chief Judge John Tunheim on the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota. She was also an attorney at Briggs and Morgan P.A., where she represented private-sector clients in complex litigation matters. Ms. Larson’s community involvement includes service on the United States District Court’s Federal Practice Committee, the Minnesota State Bar Association’s Appellate and Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy Law Sections, and the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources Trust Fund Citizen Selection Committee. Ms. Larson earned her B.A. from Concordia College and J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School” as stated in the press release.

May

On May 4, Maria Mitchell was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota’s Second Judicial District. “Ms. Mitchell is an assistant county attorney in Ramsey County, where she serves as the Director of the Youth Justice and Wellness Division, which handles juvenile delinquency, truancy, and educational neglect matters. She previously served as an assistant public defender in Hennepin County in the Adult Criminal Division and as a law clerk to the Honorable Tanya M. Bransford in the Fourth Judicial District. Ms. Mitchell’s community involvement includes serving on the board of Women’s Advocates, a domestic violence shelter and advocacy organization in St. Paul. She previously served as a trustee for the Sheltering Arms Foundation and as President of the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers. Ms. Mitchell earned her B.A. from Fisk University and J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School” as stated in the press release.

June

On June 1, Greta Smolnisky was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota’s Seventh Judicial District. As noted in the press release, “Ms. Smolnisky is a district court referee in the Seventh Judicial District, where she handles the family court calendar. She was previously an assistant public defender in the Seventh and Eighth Judicial Districts for over a decade, and she was also an attorney with Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. Ms. Smolnisky also spent time in private practice, where she represented clients in immigration, family law, civil commitment, appellate, and probate matters. Her community involvement includes serving as a trainer for the State Public Defender Sentencing Advocacy Program and volunteering as a judge for the Minnesota State Bar Association Mock Trial competition. Ms. Smolnisky earned her B.A. from Concordia College and J.D. from Hamline University School of Law.”

On June 7, 2022, Melissa Houghtaling was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota’s Fourth Judicial District. Melissa Houghtaling “is a district court referee in the Civil and Criminal Divisions of the Fourth

Judicial District, presiding over housing, harassment, and petty misdemeanor cases. She previously worked as a human services judge at the Minnesota Department of Human Services and as a law clerk for Judges Bradford Delapena, Joanne Turner, and Thomas Haluska of the Minnesota Tax Court. Prior to her public service career, Houghtaling was a shareholder and attorney at Heltzer & Houghtaling, P.A. She has also served as an adjunct professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Hamline University, and Inver Hills Community College. Houghtaling is the former chair of the St. Paul Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Commission and the former co-chair of the Minnesota Lavender Bar Association.

Her community involvement also includes volunteering as a mock trial judge for the MSBA High School Mock Trial Program and serving on the Fourth Judicial District Equal Justice Committee. She earned her B.A. from Hamline University and J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law” as stated in the press release.

On June 23, Kristine Weeks was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota’s Fifth Judicial District. According to the press release, “Kristine Weeks is an assistant public defender in the Fifth Judicial District, where she represents indigent clients in misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, felony, and probation violation proceedings. She also represents clients in child protection and delinquency matters. Weeks previously was an assistant public defender in the Second Judicial District, a law clerk to the Honorable Diane R. Alshouse in the Second Judicial District, and an adjunct professor in Hamline University’s Legal Studies department. For the past ten years, she has served as a union steward for Teamsters Local 320. Weeks is a board member of the Blue Earth County Law Library and a member of the Minnesota Women Lawyers’ South Central chapter. Her community involvement has also included volunteering as a mock trial judge with the Minnesota State High School League, a conflict screener for Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, and an adoption assistant at the Animal Humane Society. Weeks received her B.A. from Hamline University and J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law.”

July

On July 8, Natalie Martinez was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota’s Third Judicial District. As stated in the press release, “Natalie Martinez is an associate attorney at Donnelly Law Office, a part-time public defender in Freeborn County, and a Mower County conciliation court referee. She works primarily in the areas of family law, criminal defense, and child protection. Martinez previously was an attorney with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, providing representation to victims of domestic abuse in family law matters. Her community involvement includes volunteering with her local community theater, holding various leadership positions within the Freeborn County and Tenth District Bar Associations, and serving on the boards of the First Lutheran Church and the Crime Victim’s Crisis Center. She earned her B.A. from St. Olaf College and J.D. from Hamline University School of Law.”

August-September

In August 18, Jean Burdorf was appointed by Governor Walz as District Court Judge in Minnesota’s Fourth Judicial District. According to press release, “Jean Burdorf is the managing attorney of the Special Litigation Division at the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office, where she handles criminal appeals, complex financial crimes, and municipal misdemeanor prosecutions. She has also handled a wide range of civil and criminal matters for the office, including mental health, child protection, white-collar crime, and litigation defense for county departments. Burdorf is an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, where she teaches evidence, trial advocacy, and legal writing. Her community involvement includes serving as a member of the Rules of Evidence Advisory Committee, a mock trial judge for the National Hispanic Bar Association, and a youth sports coach through the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. She earned her B.A. from Michigan State University and J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law.”

Currently, there are no reports from North Dakota or South Dakota.