



October 14, 2025
Annual Report
Report of District 4
Honorable Francine L. Applewhite – District Director

District 4 Board Members:

Judge Francine L. Applewhite (Ret.) f_applewhite@yahoo.com	District Director and MD Chapter President
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Judge Gwenlynn D'Souza (Ret.) gwdsouza@outlook.com	Vice President
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Judge Krystal Alves KQAlves@co.pg.md.us	Secretary
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Judge Jacinta Alves JacintaAlves@gmail.com	Treasurer
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Judge Judith Wheat jwheat@arlingtonva.us	VA Chapter President
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Returning from NAWJ's wonderful Annual Conference, Judge Cathy H. Serrette was recognized by the Prince George's County Family Justice Foundation on October 26, 2024, for her 7-year dedication and unwavering commitment to the establishment of the Prince George's County Family Justice Center.

In November 2024, District 4 honored Judge Julia Weatherly with the Edna B. Parker award in recognition of her outstanding contributions, tireless efforts (creating, growing, and maintaining The Women Moving Forward Reentry Program), and dedication. The event was held at the DC Court of Appeals Historic Courthouse. Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby welcomed us. In attendance were several NAWJ's Past Presidents, District Directors, and Judge Weatherly's former law clerks.

On March 14, 2025, the First Lady of Maryland hosted District 4, the Women Legislators of the Maryland General Assembly, and the Women Legislators of Maryland Foundation Inc. at Government House for the Justice Irma S. Raker dinner. Justice Raker, the second woman to be appointed to the Maryland Court of Appeals, was this year's honoree. Governor Wes Moore attended and offered remarks. First Lady Dawn Moore, who dined with us, acknowledged the significance of the gathering.

during Women's History Month.

Also in March, the VA Chapter hosted a statewide Happy Hour to commemorate International Day of Women Judges. To round out March, several members attended the Mid-Year Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan including Past President Judge Joan Churchill who fondly recalled the beginning of a long fulfilling legal career.

April began with the investiture of the Honorable Tanya M. Jones Bosier, as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Later in April, MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) presented its Excellence in Legal Service Award to Judge Kenia Seoana Lopez, Associate Judge, Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

In June, the VA Chapter awarded three scholarships to high school students. Each applicant had to address the topic: Do Virginia laws adequately protect and address the needs of those in our society who experience mental health issues? Thirty applications were received.

On August 24, 2025, the Honorable Heidi M. Pasichow's retirement after 44 years in all three branches of government, including 17 years on the District of Columbia Superior Court.

In late August, the Justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia unanimously elected Justice Cleo E. Powell as the next Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The historic appointment makes Justice Powell the first African-America woman to hold the Chief Justice position.

This month of October began with the Women Moving Forward Reentry Program at Maryland Correctional Institute. On October 4, 2025, Judge Julia Weatherly and many others, including Judge Cathy Serrette, and Laurie Denham participated in the meaningful program.

The month of October and our year ended with NAWJ's participation at Howard University, Black Women in Pre-Law Society Law School Fair. This year's fair was held at the Armour J. Blackburn University Center Ballroom with over 40 law schools in attendance. The mostly female sophomore students were astonished to learn that a national organization of women judges existed and that they could become members as law students. All asked the same question, "what was my journey?"



Judge Julia Weatherly Receiving the Edna B. Parker Award



Maryland Governor Wes Morre and Justice Irma S. Raker addressing attending at the Irma Raker Dinner held in the Government House in Annapolis, MD.



The Sterring Committee and volunteers at the Women Moving Forward program in Jessup, MD