

## NAWJ District 4 Report And Newsletter 3/15/24

2023-2024 District 4 Board:

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As Director of District 4, which encompasses DC, VA, and MD, I have established an "Advisory Board" to serve as a central point for gathering information and ideas. This Board will help identify programs, or projects that might be shared with other members through articles or webinars, as well as provide information of new appointments or elevations in their jurisdictions as well as identifying judges who have received recognition or awards (such as the Rita Davidson Award given to Justice Michele D. Hotten). PLEASE send information you would like to share with our D4 members to your Advisory Committee representative. Members are:

Chair: Julia Weatherly <[julia.weatherly8601@gmail.com](mailto:julia.weatherly8601@gmail.com) or <[jbweatherly@co.pg.md.us](mailto:jbweatherly@co.pg.md.us)>,

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D4 Liaison for Afghan Judges Assistance Program: Beverly Cutler [bevcut@gmail.com](mailto:bevcut@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Events:

### **The Justice Irma S. Raker Dinner - Tuesday, March 26, 2024, from 6:00pm-8:00pm**

The **Justice Irma S. Raker Dinner** is one of our most eagerly anticipated events of the year! Organized by National Association of Women Judges, District 4, the Women Legislators of the Maryland General Assembly, and the Women Legislators of Maryland Foundation, Inc., the event will be held at the Government House of Maryland, 110 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401. Registration for the limited number of seats has now been CLOSED. If already registered, please note that for security purposes, you must still confirm your attendance or send regrets by 12:00pm, March 19, 2024, via the RSVP link emailed to registrants from the Government House of Maryland - Office Manager.

### **"The Art of Self Care"**

**Guest Speaker, Judge Carol King, Friday, March 22, at 6:30pm EST**

As we try to recover from Spring Break, and as the stress of preparing for our Mid-Year Conference and Easter Holidays loom ahead, we have a special treat for you!

Judge Carol King has agreed to share her time with us to pause - take a deep breath- and share her thoughts and experience on secondary trauma and self-care as our guest speaker on "The Art of Self Care"!

Judge King originally developed her presentation on "The Art of Self Care" several years ago as a "conversation starter" because she felt the issue was not being discussed or considered in most law firms or courtrooms and because she wanted people to start thinking about self-care in their career journey. While she always says that she is not a psychologist or social worker, nor an expert in trauma, she *is* a Judge with real life experiential "expertise" who is willing to engage us in dialogue about these issues.

I agree with Judge King that the issue of self-care is very important for judges in many different courtroom settings, where we hear traumatic stories day in and day out, we fear for our own safety and that of our court staff and other people in our courtrooms, we see escalating violence and attacks on judges in the news more and more frequently. Judge King invites us to pause - take a deep breath- and share our thoughts and experiences with each other through the lens of her presentation.

I will be sending a Zoom link for the presentation, **scheduled for next Friday, March 22, at 6:30 pm EST**, intended to give you time to return home and begin to unwind from the week with a glass of wine or cup of tea in hand and join us in conversation of "self-care"!

Please RSVP to the Zoom link invitation if you plan to attend so that we can determine how many break-out rooms we may need to facilitate our discussions.

### **\*NAWJ and NCJFCJ (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges) are partnering to host a Judicial Security webinar**

NAWJ and NCJFCJ are partnering to host a Judicial Security webinar with a facilitated panel of experts in this field to address personal safety as well as court-led strategic planning to mitigate threats to judicial officer and court staff safety.

We are making timely progress and are scheduling this important and timely webinar event. Anya Lynn-Alesker, Chief Counsel for the ABA Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence (ABA CDSV), connected us with Eryn Branch and Jennifer Arsenian at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to share key components of NCJFCJ's highly successful and informative "DV AWARE " program to present an effective and accessible webinar program for our NAWJ members.

Our planning team is working with NCJFCJ to develop a promotional flyer for both organizations to email to their lists. The webinar is Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> 1:00-3:00 PM EDT.

### **SPOLIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS:**

Congratulations again to **Judge Gwen D'Souza** who has recently transitioned from the DC Dept of Employment Services as an Administrative Law Judge to the Maryland Office of Administrative Hearings. Her Chief Judge even had an Indian News correspondent come out to write an article about her investiture! <https://www.newsindiatimes.com/indian-american-sworn-in-as-administrative-law-judge-of-maryland/>

We have Judge Gwen D'Souza to thank for four new members from the MD Office of Administrative Hearings:

Hon. Jennifer Burroughs,  
Hon. Tracee Fruman,  
Hon. Syeetah A. Hampton-El  
Hon. Jocelyn L. Williams

Also, the Honorable Stenise L. Rolle and the Honorable Cheri Nicole Simpkins are the newest women judges to the Prince George's County Circuit Court bench.

Judge Krystal Alves provided us with the below list of appointments and elevations of women judges in Maryland. She reports that she obtained this list from a judiciary newsletter she receives in Maryland from the Maryland Judiciary which contains the full names of the appointees.

Appointments/Elevations in Maryland:

Hon. Jennifer Michelle Alexander, District Court in Anne Arundel County  
Hon. Joanmarie Raymond Brubaker, Circuit Court for Frederick County  
Hon. Patricia M. DeMaio, Circuit Court for Baltimore County  
Hon. Ginina A. Jackson-Stevenson, Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County  
Hon. Julia A. Minner, Circuit Court for Frederick County  
Hon. Cheri N. Simpkins, Circuit Court for Prince George's County  
Hon. Hope Tipton (appointed on February 16, 2024), Circuit Court for Baltimore City  
Hon. Lara C. Weathersbee, Circuit Court for Howard County  
Hon. Jennifer Sue Hollander Fairfax, Montgomery County Circuit Court

Further, District 4 is pleased to acknowledge that the Honorable Donine Carrington-Martin and the Honorable Ada Clark-Edwards are recipients of the Maryland Bar Foundation's prestigious Legal

Excellence Award. They will be presented the award on April 11 at 6:00 p.m. at an event at the Turn House in Columbia, MD. The Link for the award is: <https://www.msba.org/product/Maryland-bar-foundation-open-meeting-2/>

DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby was this year's keynote speaker for the Administrative Office of the United States Court's African American Heritage Month celebration. The presentation was recorded in partnership with AO's Office of Fair Employment Practices. In her speech, she shares her family's background, the power of the law to provide equal justice in times of turbulence, the important role Black lawyers and public servants have played in the history of our nation, and more. Watch here at <https://bit.ly/3SPGx5L>

Judge **Allyson K. Duncan**, of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit is on the list of new NAWJ members! Judge Duncan, who was appointed to the Federal bench by President George Bush (II) in 2003. The U.S. Federal Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit --which has jurisdiction for the states of MD, VA, NC, SC, & WV— is headquartered in Richmond, VA a location within NAWJ District 4. While I would love to continue to claim her for District 4, it appears that Judge Duncan may be a member of District 5 since she retired from the bench in 2019 and is from NC.

Justice Michele D. Hotton of the Supreme Court of Maryland and Associate Judge Cathy H. Serrette of the Prince George's County Circuit Court are retiring in April but will continue, we hope, to be active members of District 4!

#### **JUDGES SERVING OUR COMMUNITY:**

\***Judge Beverly Cutler** has written a very informative article which was recently published in *CONTERBALANCE* ( *COUNTERBALANCE*, Volume 38, Issue 1, Winter 2024 on the NAWJ web site under NEWS and [directly here](#)) describing the wonderful work that she and other NAWJ members are doing to mentor displaced Afghan Judges. It was March 2022 when our International Director, **Judge Lisa Walsh**, contacted Judge Cutler regarding the first Afghan judges arriving in the DC area. Judge Walsh cobbled together a full Mentor Team for the DMV area to assist them. Two years later, 14 Afghan women judges have resettled in various parts of NAWJ District 4, with more coming, and mentoring efforts continue with Judge Cutler serving as the liaison for this initiative in District 4. Much is needed to support our "Sisters-In-Law" during this most difficult time, from something as small as donated household items to networking support for more complex issues of housing and employment. Please contact Judge Cutler at [bevcut@gmail.com](mailto:bevcut@gmail.com) if you would like to help!

#### ***Complimentary Happy Hour is a great way to say hello!***

Will you be attending the NAWJ mid-year meeting in Austin? If so, please join us in a complimentary happy hour on Friday April 5 from 5-6 in the lobby of our hotel to meet and greet other D4 members.

On another note, the International Association of Women Judges Bi-Annual Conference will be in Cape Town, South Africa April 9-12, 2025.