

NAWJ District 4 November Newsletter

Link to and notes from our Nov 6, 2023 virtual "Meet and Greet" :
<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AqngLhaLcB04DulBHSCz58JFKml?e=PBITeW>

2023-2024 District 4 Board:

Bobbie McCartney b.mccartney.esq@gmail.com	District Director
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Krystal Alves KQAlves@co.pg.md.us	Secretary
Jacinta Alves JacintaAlves@gmail.com	Treasurer
Judge Francine Applewhite Applewhite.Francine.L@dol.gov	Chair of the Maryland Chapter
Judge Judith Wheat jwheat@arlingtonva.us	President/Chair of the Virginia Chapter

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

In recognition of her outstanding contributions and tireless efforts on behalf of District 4 for many years, **Judge Julie Weatherly** has been selected as the 2024 recipient of the Edna B. Parker award! Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby will be making the award presentation at the DC Court of Appeals Historic Courthouse. A committee will be appointed to work on event details to make this a truly special even for her. Judge Weatherly has also agreed to serve as the Chair of our newly formed Advisory Committee.

Congratulations 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. She tells us that she is really enjoying her new position. 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/>

Upcoming Events:

*The Irma S. Raker Dinner is one of the most eagerly anticipated events for District 4 and is organized by D4 and the executive director of the Women Legislative Caucus. Judge Raker has once again stepped up to help us plan this great event and will be working with Judge Toni Clarke on a specific date. Preference for the venue is the Government House but the DC Circuit Court of Appeals is also a great option. The legislative session runs from January through April 1. Judge D'Souza is waiting to hear back about the Governor's House availability for March 27, 28 or 29.

*The annual meeting for 2024 will be held in San Diego, California in October.

*The midyear meeting will be in Austin Texas in early April, dates will be confirmed soon.

*The International Association of Women Judges meeting in 2025 will be in Capetown, South Africa.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS:

Judge Cathy Serrette, a long-time member and supporter of NAWJ D4, was asked to share a little about her ongoing work with the youth homeless population. This project was started with the idea of building a housing complex with wrap-around services for the youth homeless population, kids that have been in foster care and have aged out. Efforts to get property for a "home" have been unsuccessful so far but they did get a commitment from the County for "x" number of units for these kids in the developments being built along the blue line metro station. They have successfully created a wraparound service center for kids between 21 and 26 and housing services will be available through state and federal voucher programs, but they are still working on trying to get enough housing for these kids. Healthcare will also be made available. They have tried through the University of MD Healthcare system and then with the Health Dept, because most of these young folks will qualify for Medicaid, so they are looking for the best fit for these kids. The center is on 1801 McCormik right near the new hospital so that would be great, but they may end up using the same medical services that the County uses. This is a fantastic initiative that is still a work in progress.

Our newest member, **Liz Lee**, was introduced by Judge Gwen D'Souza and asked to share a little about herself and her work with "Our Children's Trust" on intergenerational justice, youth-led rights-based climate litigation and how trauma-informed lawyering supports young plaintiffs experiencing climate trauma. She shared with us that former NAWJ President White invited [Julia Olson](#), Chief Legal Officer of Our Children's Trust, to be the keynote at the [2022 Mid-year meeting](#) to present on "Children, the Constitution, and Climate Crisis" and were overwhelmed by the positive response. Former NAWJ President Clarke invited OCT to kick-off a webinar series celebrating National Native and Alaskan American Heritage Month with a November 2022 webinar on the "[Fundamental Rights of Indigenous](#)

[Youth, the Climate Crisis, and Access to Justice.](#)” facilitated by Tribal Judge Sherigan. She explained that OCT’s indigenous youth plaintiffs from Alaska and Florida reservations felt empowered and heard after sharing their unique harms from the climate crisis with women judges. Julia Olson, OCT’s Executive Director, made the recent [inaugural TIME100 most influential climate leaders list](#), while the 16 *Held v. Montana* plaintiffs made the [Business Insider's Climate Action 30 top global leaders](#) working toward climate solutions in 2023. The 103 page Court Order in *Held* was very significant in addressing the climate crisis science and impacts on children’s constitutional climate rights. OCT’s next trial in Hawaii. Several Judges including Judges White, Rick, Sage, Pasichow and Wheat, have expressed interest in learning more about OCT’s cutting-edge work at NAWJ’s annual conference in San Diego.

JUDGES SERVING OUR COMMUNITY:

On Saturday, November 4, 2023, District 4 members **Judge Toni Clarke (Past President)**, and **Judge Francine Applewhite** participated in Howard University’s First Annual Law School Fair. The fair was the vision of Howard’s chapter of The Black Women in Pre-Law Society. Toni and Francine introduced NAWJ to the many young women and men who were eager to learn of our organization, the opportunities for membership as law students, and the opportunity to meet and talk with female judges. The overwhelming question placed to us was “what was your journey like”. Each student left with NAWJ swag and information on NAWJ and District 4. Over 100 students attended!

On October 26, 2023, 16 NAWJ Judges, including District 4 **Judges Toni Clarke, Francine Applewhite, Bobbie McCartney and Victoria Willis**, participated in “Speed Networking with the National Association of Women Judges and JD Advising Scholars” - a very fun virtual event that connected a diverse group of 1Ls from across the country. The JD Advising Scholars Program seeks to enhance diversity in the legal profession by providing historically underrepresented law students with access to academic and career resources during their first year of law school. The Scholars were incoming first year law students from across the country from 23 different law schools, including schools such as Harvard, Stanford, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, Howard, and many others.

*The **Maryland Chapter** held its 13th Women Moving Forward Re-entry Conference at Maryland's prison for women on Oct. 21, which was very successful.

*At the **Maryland Judicial Conference** for the state circuit and district court judges, about 30 judges showed up for a breakfast meeting which was very promising.

***Judge Beverly Cutler** has written a wonderful Counterbalance Article that should be coming out in the next edition (Judge Joan Churchill, Chair of the Retired Judges Committee, persuaded her to write it), 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. Nearly two years later, seven 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.

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If you have not had time to do so, please take a moment to respond to this short survey. Your response need only come to me at b.mccartney.esq@gmail.com and will not be shared!

- 1)How long have you been a member of NAWJ? District 4?
- 2)How many District 4 members have you met personally during your District 4 membership tenure? virtually?
- 3)If you had to pick only one, who would you say is your most admired District 4 member? Why?
- 4)If you had to pick one, what would you say is the most fun District 4 event that you've attended? Why?
- 5)Would you like to see more District 4 meetings held in person? If so, do you have preferences for activities, time, place or venue?
- 6)What would you like to see more of to enhance your District 4 membership in the coming year? Less of?

Thank you for taking the time to inform me of your preferences with this short survey!