



NAWJ Board Meeting – May 2021
Report from District 4 (District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia)
Honorable Anita Josey-Herring

DC EMPOWERMENT DISCUSSIONS FOR WOMEN RESIDENTS OF DOC

NAWJ is partnering with the D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC) on an Empowerment Series of conversations. The sessions goals are to provide information and tools to assist women residents of DOC in living as sustainable members of the community, and to connect residents with fellow members from different walks of life throughout the larger District of Columbia community to discuss shared experiences.

Planning Committee:

NAWJ

Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring
Judge Gwenlynn D’Souza
Judge Sharon Goodie
Judge Tanya Jones Bosier
Chief Judge Erika L. Pierson

D.C. Department of Corrections

Quincy Booth, Director
Michele Wilson, Attorney Advisor
Dr. Amy Lopez, College and Career Readiness

Over the next three months, the partnership will develop, record and distribute the first two of a potential year-long series. Themes for early sessions are drawn from the residents’ suggestions; they include Domestic Violence, Pay Equity and Re-Entry. DOC will produce the sessions, hosting, using their technical resources and personnel, finishing the final program file. Residents will ultimately experience the sessions as podcasts available on tablets.

NAWJ will provide two to three judges and/or other experts to speak on a recommended topic. Residents will provide two to three interviewers/moderators to voice their interests during the session recordings. Session length will vary between 60 and 90 minutes. Handouts and other session and topic supplements may be loaded to DOC’s online resources and made available for residents on tablets for review at their leisure.

The first session, Domestic Violence: Returning Home, is planned for June. NAWJ member, Chief Judge Erika L. Pierson (D.C. Commission on Human Rights) will join the second session on Pay Equity, slated for July. For May, the planning Committee will preview the series as an intro to the **D.C. Courts Law Day video** of Chief Judge Josey-Herring’s interview with an emerging leader, Yasmine Arrington, on the Rule of Law. Yasmine Arrington was born and raised in Washington, D.C. and she

earned her Master of Divinity degree at the Howard University School of Divinity. She produces and host her own radio show and podcast "Millennial Minds" that airs on Wednesdays from 6:30-7pm on WERA 96.7FM (also on WERA.FM) and airs on weekdays, Monday-Friday at 2pm on 96.3 HD4 (also on DCRadio.gov).

Additional session themes will be drawn from the list of topics shared by DOC residents:

- How can we improve rehabilitation and other services for women? Prisons and jails are designed with a "men first" mentality, but women are a rapidly-growing population. From programs, to treatment, to commissary items, women are an after-thought in carceral spaces.
- Rehabilitation. What does education, treatment, and reentry look like for women in other states? Many people believe the criminal justice system, from sentencing to incarceration, is designed to break people, not help them. A female resident at the DOC, noted that "I have so many opportunities to better myself through education at the DOC, but is that the norm."
- Parenting while incarcerated. Topics around parenting would be of interest to many of the women. One resident wrote "Weirdly, our kids are used to having no father around, but losing a mother to incarceration means losing the family foundation." What are some alternatives to incarceration for mothers?
- Gender bias driving inequality in hiring and pay. Why does gender equality matter? How do we empower our daughters (and how do we do that from JAIL)? How do we break the cycle of abuse when we go home?
- How does the criminal justice system work?
- How can we improve relationships and develop communication skills.
- The Pandemic. How has the pandemic affected the lengths of stay for people incarcerated (incarceration rates)? Discuss how the pandemic has disrupted the criminal justice system. The women were wondering how the court system has been impacted by the pandemic and what solutions the court has devised to navigate through the pandemic.

THE JUDICIARY AND THE RULE OF LAW

On May 4, 2021 Chief Judge Josey-Herring participated in a Georgetown University Law School panel (virtual), "The Judiciary and the Rule of Law," covering panelists careers of service and the role of the judicial branch in upholding the rule of law in a representative democracy. Eloise Pasachoff, Associate Dean for Careers, moderated the panel of distinguished alumni, which in addition to Chief Judge Josey-Herring (Superior Court of the District of Columbia) included U.S. Circuit Judge Thomas L. Ambro (Third Circuit); Joan Biskupic, CNN Legal Analyst and Supreme Court

Biographer; U.S. Circuit Judge Thomas M. Hardiman (Third Circuit) and NAWJ member U.S. Circuit Judge Margaret McKeown (Ninth Circuit).

NAWJ PAST PRESIDENT ISSUES LAW DAY STATEMENT TO ABA ON THE RULE OF LAW

The Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigby, Chief Judge of the D.C. Court of Appeals, issued a Law Day 2021 statement to the ABA - Advancing the Rule of Law. “The rule of law is the bedrock of American rights and liberties - in times of calm and unrest alike. You can read the full statement [here](#).

NAWJ MEMBER SELECTED TO LEAD ABA JOURNAL BOARD OF EDITORS

The ABA Journal Board of Editors selected a new Chair, **Judge Herbert B. Dixon Jr.** (Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Retired), who will take over the post after the ABA Annual Meeting in August. Judge Dixon is a senior judge who retired from active service in 2015 after 30 years on the court. He chaired the court’s electronic filing pilot project and its technology-enhanced courtroom project. He is a former member of the ABA Board of Governors and the ABA House of Delegates. He gave this statement to the Journal: “I am humbled by the responsibilities that face me as the chair-elect of the ABA Journal Board of Editors and enthusiastic about the opportunities. For reasons I cannot explain, I have gravitated to volunteer service in publication entities for much of my life. These experiences include my high school and college yearbooks, an engineering magazine in college, the editorial board of the ABA Judges’ Journal magazine, the ABA Judicial Division Book editorial board and the ABA Journal Board of Editors. Now, as chair-elect of the Journal’s Board of Editors, I am facing the most significant publication responsibility of my life. I am appreciative of this vote of confidence by the Journal’s Board of Editors. I promise to uphold the Journal’s standard of print excellence, be a catalyst for the continuing growth of the Journal’s dynamic online presence, and seek new ways to extend the Journal’s brand to meet the information needs of the worldwide legal community. Lastly, I promise the Journal’s board and staff a professionally rewarding and enjoyable experience as we strive to attain these goals.”

“NAVIGATING HATE,” A D.C. COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS EVENT

In response to recent events, on February 25, 2021 the D.C. Commission on Human Rights, in partnership with the DC Office of Human Rights and the DC Office of the Attorney General’s High School Advisory Council, held its first virtual youth event titled “Navigating Hate: Unity and Healing Through Community. “The program focused on the impact of the January 6, 2021 events at the Capitol and the role youth play in shaping the future. A student moderator joined a panel of speakers from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), D.C. Public Schools, Mental Health Professionals, Youth Coaches and Martha’s Table. It was a successful event. The recording will be available online soon.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES - EDUCATION

From Maryland (**Anne Arundel County**) Circuit Court Judge **Cathleen Vitale**:

“Education is an essential aspect of what judges can offer to the community which they serve. I enjoy the opportunities I have been given to participate in various levels

of the education process. Since COVID shut down a significant number of in-person opportunities, I took advantage of invitations to participate via ZOOM over the last three months as follows:

- Participated as a Judge in the **Mock Trial** competition held on April 25, 2021 between the **United States Naval Academy and United States Military Academy**. The competition, seen as a “friendly mock trial” had the midshipmen of Annapolis square off against the Cadets of West Point in the case of a modern day “who dun nit.”
- Was a guest speaker on March 11, 2021 at the Leadership Anne Arundel Flagship Program Law and Public Safety Day to **discuss the differences between District and Circuit Court and their respective functions**. Judge Vitale is a 2004 graduate of the Leadership Anne Arundel Flagship Program and is an active Alumni of the organization.

MARYLAND’S RE-ENTRY CONFERENCE

Judges Julia Weatherly and Cathy Serrette have tentatively scheduled the Women Moving Forward Program at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW) for Saturday October 23, 2021, provided the prison eases restrictions on visitors and programs inside the facility by then.

PLANS TO RESUME STORYBOOK FOR MCIW RESIDENTS

Judge Marielsa Bernard has been in contact with MCIW’s Warden’s Office to determine whether the Storybook Project can resume. If so, the technology needs to be updated from recording on CDs to using a streaming app available to the children and their mothers. Tablets available to the incarcerated mothers has not been achieved at MCIW.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Judge Brenda Murray reports that “I am alive and well in **New Hampshire**. I still co-chair the WIP committee with Judge Cheryl Gonzales (NY). The committee is trying very hard to get NH Senator Jean Shaheen who Chairs Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on DOJ, and the Deputy Attorney General active in improving conditions for federal women prisoners.”

If you did not know already, **Hon. Sherrie Lavine Krauser (Ret.)** and her husband, former Chief Judge Peter Krauser of the Maryland Court of Special Appeals, recently moved to Los Angeles to be near their married children and grandchildren. She reports: “Peter keeps busy with his passion for reading and learning--and our grandchildren! Between baby-sitting gigs and traveling, I will continue my arbitration and mediation practice with JAMS, working from both the Washington, D.C. and Century City offices. Give me a call if you plan to come to LA!”

AWARDS AND OTHER HONORABLE MENTIONS

In a virtual celebration on May 13, 2021, The Maryland Daily Record recognized **Judge Sharon V. Burrell** (Circuit Court for Montgomery County, Maryland) as one of Maryland’s Top 100 Women. As a third-time winner, Judge Burrell was inducted into

the **Circle of Excellence**, an honor The Daily Record gives high-achieving women who make an impact through their leadership, community service, and mentoring.

In December, the District's newest member **Judge Brandes Ash**, named Administrative Law Judge at the D.C. Office of Human Rights, was awarded the Rising Star award by GWAC (Greater Washington Area Chapter of the National Bar Association.)

Immigration Committee Chair, **Judge Joan Churchill** (Immigration Judge, Retired), is quoted (albeit not named) in President George Bush's recently published book ***OUT OF MANY, ONE - Portraits of America's Immigrants*** (page 166) for remarks remembered as inspiring and welcoming by Dr. Sumera Haque in her Asylum hearing before Judge Churchill in 2004. Dr. Haque, who went on to become a Presidential Leadership Scholar in 2019 and she is the subject of one of the portraits featured in President Bush's book. She is now a physician who leads the Johns Hopkins Women's Health Center at Sibley Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Judge Cathy Serrette presented at the 2021 Maryland Judicial Conference workshop, *You Can Make a Difference*, with Chris Wilson, an extraordinary individual who had been sentenced to life as a juvenile, and who, among other accomplishments, has published the important memoir-*The Master Plan: My Journey from Life in Prison to a Life of Purpose*. Judge Serrette had not sentenced Mr. Wilson, but she modified his sentence providing for his release.