



June 2023
Report from District 7
Honorable Miriam A. Perry

1. High Tea with the NAWJ!



NAWJ members gathered in Grand Rapids, MI to enjoy high tea.
Pictured, from left to right: Kevin Martin, Hon. Jacquelyn McClinton, Hon. Annette Smedley, Hon. Miriam Perry, Zenell Brown, Hon. Lisa Martin, and Hon. Deborah McNabb

1. NAWJ DISTRICT #7, Celebrating Our Members!



Judge Julie Gafkay has been appointed to the 10th Circuit Court serving Saginaw County.

The Appointment of NAWJ Member Judge Julie Gafkay

Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced the appointment of Judge Julie Gafkay on April 26th to fill the vacated seat for the 10th Circuit Court. Judge Julie Gafkay has been a longtime member of the NAWJ and served her Saginaw community as an acclaimed attorney. Judge Gafkay was featured in the 2012 Women In Law by Michigan Lawyers' Weekly, joined the Michigan SuperLawyers from 2011-present, in 2015 was selected for top 50 Women Lawyers in Michigan by SuperLawyers, and won the community service award by the Saginaw County Bar Association; SBM Champion of Justice in 2019. The NAWJ celebrates the success of our wonderful member Judge Julie Gafkay in this important appointment.

Judge Michelle Rick Gives Commencement Speech

NAWJ Member, Judge Michelle Rick gave a powerful commencement speech for the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law Graduation. Judge Rick served as a trial judge for the 29th Circuit Court from 2007 through 2020. She was then elected to the Michigan Court of Appeals in November 2020, representing the 4th Judicial District. Rick also serves as an adjunct professor at Detroit Mercy Law. She is also the Vice President of Districts for the National Association of Women Judges. In 2022 Judge Michelle Rick was awarded the Vaino Spencer Leadership Award. Watch her full commencement speech [here](#).



Judge Michelle Rick, Commencement Speaker at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law Graduation



Ms. Zenell Brown, celebrating her retirement from the 3rd Circuit Court

Retirement of Ms. Zenell Brown, Esq.

Ms. Zenell Brown's career has been one dedicated to service. She started as a paralegal and served as an Executive Administrator. Zenell is a member of the Institute of Court Management, the Michigan Judicial Institute, and the Michigan Women Lawyers' Leadership Academy. She has spent her career sharing knowledge with the next generation of lawyers and legal professionals. As a leader in justice administration and diversity, Zenell has received the ABA Robert Yegge Award, the National Association for Court Management Linda Perkins Award, and the National Sojourner Truth Award in 2021. Judge Zenell B. Brown also published "Coffee and Conversations: Inclusion and Belonging" during the pandemic. The legacy of Zenell B. Brown's legal career lives on with the next generation of lawyers and the NAWJ hopes she has more time for her creative passions of writing, painting, and creating mixed media art. A huge congratulations to Ms. Zenell B. Brown!

Congratulations to Judge Elizabeth Gleicher, 2023 Jean L. King Leadership Award Recipient!

Judge Elizabeth Gleicher began her legal career as an attorney in private practice for 27 years. She worked at Goodman, Eden, Millender & Bedrosian in Detroit then opened her own litigation practice in 1994. She shared her legal knowledge with the next generation as an adjunct professor at Wayne State University Law School. In 2007, Gleicher was appointed to the Michigan 2nd District Court of Appeals. She won her re-election for that position in the fall of 2018. She is a fellow with the International Society of Barristers and a fellow with the American College of Trial Lawyers. She won the 2005 Respected Advocate Award, Michigan Defense Trial Counsel and in 2001 she won the Champion of Justice Award from the State Bar of Michigan. Most Recently, Judge Elizabeth Gleicher won The Women Lawyers Association of Michigan 2023 Jean L. King Leadership Award!



Judge Elizabeth Gleicher,
Michigan 2nd District Court of
Appeals

2. WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

District # 7 has added several new members, and we are happy to include four of them below. We look forward to working with all of you in the coming months and years. Welcome to the leading voice for women in the judiciary!



Attorney Jessica Hoyer

Law Clerk Jessica Hoyer, Michigan Court of Appeals

Attorney Jessica Hoyer majored in sociology with a concentration on feminist political theory at Marygrove College before completing Law School at Wayne State University. Hoyer worked on the Sexual Assault Kit Task Force for the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office in 2015, she served as a student lawyer with Wayne Law's Disability Clinic, and she was awarded the Peggy Browning Summer Fellowship working with the United Auto Workers International Union at its Detroit headquarters. We are grateful for the experience and perspective Attorney Jessica Hoyer brings as a new NAWJ member!

Judge Alexis G. Krot, 31st District Court

Judge Alexis G. Krot received a bachelor's degree from Tulane University, her M.B.A. from the University of Detroit Mercy, and her J.D. from Loyola University. Before serving as a Judge, Krot worked as a magistrate for the 31st Judicial District Court and an assistant city attorney. She also had a family law practice. Judge Alexis G. Krot was appointed to serve on the Michigan 31st District Court on August 4th of 2016. She went on to win her election on November 3, 2020, securing her position as a Judge for the 31st District Court through January 1, 2027. We are excited Judge Alexis G. Krot has joined the NAWJ!



Judge Alexis G. Krot



Judge Annette Smedley

Judge Annette Smedley, 14th Circuit

Judge Annette Smedley received her undergraduate degree from Grand Valley State University and her J.D. from Western Michigan University's Thomas M. Cooley Law School. As an attorney, Smedley focused on criminal defense work and later served as a felony public defender for Mason County. In 2012 Judge Annette Smedley was elected to the 14th Circuit Court. We are honored to welcome Judge Annette Smedley to the NAWJ!

Judge Jennifer Dawn Towell, Summit County Court of Common Pleas

Judge Jennifer Dawn Towell served as a Judge Advocate General's Corp Lieutenant in the US Navy where she was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. Back home, Judge Jennifer Dawn Towell worked as a corporate litigation attorney then as a magistrate in Akron Municipal Court. Dawn also served as a "Connect" Developmental Disability Advisory Board member. Since the fall of 2022, Judge Jennifer Dawn Towell continues to serve on the Court of Common Pleas in Summit County. We are honored to welcome Judge Jennifer Dawn Towell to the NAWJ!



Judge Jennifer Dawn Towell

Thank you for your continued support and membership.

Best, Judge Miriam A. Perry, 15th District Court