



March 1, 2024

Report from District 8

Honorable Patrice Ball-Reed and Julie P. Verheye

Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky

Member News

On January 24, 2024, St. Joseph County Superior Court Judge Cristal C. Brisco was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana. Judge Brisco during her time as a State Court Judge served on one of Indiana's 10 commercial courts. Before her appointment to the Superior Court, she served as general counsel to St. Mary's College; corporation counsel for the City of South Bend; and in private practice with Barnes & Thornburg, LLP.

On January 30, 2024, the Indianapolis Bar Association hosted a retirement ceremony for Judge Heather Welch in recognition of her remarkable career in public service and commitment to her community. Guests from the various facets of her life presented remarks about Judge Welch. Judge Welch closed the ceremony with her thoughts and reflections on her career and gave thanks to all of the significant importance to her life.

Chief Judge Tanya Walton Pratt of the Southern District of Indiana together with attorney Richard Bailey gave a presentation on February 9, 2024, on "The Storied History of Black Judges and Lawyers in Indiana".

Judge Yolaine Dauphin invited District 8 members to participate in the benefit organized by the Committee for Higher Education in Haiti to build a center for higher education in St. Marc, Haiti. Judge Dauphin was on the organizing committee for the event. She reported the event was well attended. Christian Farr of NBC 5 was the event MC. U.S. Congresswoman Schakowsky gave cogent remarks. The guest speakers, Guerrier and Verret, were informative and engaging. Judges from all levels of the judiciary attended the event including Justices Neville and Rochford of the Illinois Supreme Court. District 8 was recognized in the program as an event supporter.

District Meeting

The district members met for the first time this year on February 21, 2024. Approximately 10 members attended. We had a guest speaker Dr. Darryl Heller, the director of

the Indiana University South Bend Civil Rights Heritage Center as a guest speaker. Dr. Heller shared his thoughts on social justice and the courts. Dr. Heller is also on the faculty of the women's and gender studies faculty at IU South Bend. All the members enjoyed his remarks. He also shared that he leads a group of judges and lawyers reading on the history and construct of race and racism. All the members expressed an interest in his group's reading list. The list was forwarded to all district members after the meeting.

Judge Deborah Thorne, of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court of the Northern District of Illinois shared information about her mentoring work with Afghan Judge Sulhani Gulistani. Judge Gulistani has found a job and has made considerable progress in her English proficiency. Judge Thorne hopes to recruit some additional mentors from the Illinois state courts and the legal community for Judge Gulistani. The members also discussed that it might be beneficial for the Afghan judges to form a support group to share and encourage each other as they start a new life in the U.S.

Respectfully submitted,

Judge Patrice Ball-Reed and Magistrate Julie Verheye, District co-Directors