

USMJ Barbara Holmes Hosts Successful Program and Celebration of 100th Anniversary of 19th Amendment

National Association of Women Judges 43d Annual Meeting in Nashville October 2021

By Judge Bremer

A group of several hundred women judges from the United States along with over 50 international judges met to discuss issues of access to the Courts including programs featuring Special Treatment Courts, Importance of Victim-Centered language in Opinions, Safety and Rule of Law issues in International Courts, and Updates on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs offered by NAWJ.

The Conference began with a rousing Woman's Suffragist March; USMJ Celeste Bremer (IASD) appeared as Carrie Chapman Catt, urging everyone to support voting rights. Suffragists were dressed in the white clothing that the Suffragists had adopted to signal their views, wore yellow roses, and "Votes for Women" sashes. The Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court and Chief District Judge Waverly Crenshaw (TNMD) welcomed the group. Judge Holmes received a proclamation from the City of Nashville, recognizing the work NAWJ has done in improving access to justice, including their Informed Voter project. The conference programming included: "Pathways to Justice: How Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Impact Court Proceedings;" presentation by Ariel Simms; Retired Iowa District Court Judge Mary Pat Gunderson's discussion of "Gender Equity in Judicial Writing" program, based on her law review article analyzing changes in language when Courts without any women members reviewed attorney-discipline cases involving violence against women. <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/gender-journal/270-2/>.

Paying attention to how judges behave under stress was the topic for Dr. Terry Mahoney, as part

of her ongoing work on judicial mindfulness. Judge Emily Chafa (ret. IA ALJ) moderated programs on Access to the Courts by Pro Se litigants and Access to Justice for LGBTQIA+ youth, which offered concrete suggestions for ways judges could ensure that diverse groups have fair access to courts.

U. S. Magistrate Judge Barbara Holmes was honored for her service to NAWJ, not only for planning and hosting the successful Nashville program (originally scheduled for 2019, pushed to 2020, and finally held in 2021), but including her efforts for outreach to members, speakers, and sponsors to maintain the quality programming as planned. To ensure that everyone could safely travel, participants had to show proof of vaccination for Covid, and masks were required. This helped the international judges test Covid-negative, so that they could travel home at the end of the Conference, without quarantine.

Judge Holmes included the musical talent of Nashville at every opportunity, from a Gospel Choir, Drumming Group, Women Acoustic Guitar Singers and Songwriters performing at the Parthenon (they also perform on a weekly Podcast: as the Song Suffragettes at the

Listening Room Café, which features women performers, as women are 5 times less likely than men to get a music contract in Nashville). Participants were treated to a dramatic reading at the Nashville Library Theater, recounting Nashville's pivotal role in the passage of the 19th Amendment (as the 36th state to ratify). As author Elaine Weiss was one of the speakers, she hosted

the tour of the Nashville's interactive display on Women's Rights, which features print material, photos, and videos of interviews of famous women involved in voting rights.

Next year's annual meeting will be in Detroit. NAWJ's ongoing programs include: From the Bar

to the Bench; Color of Justice; Human Trafficking; Informed Voter: Fair Judges; MentorJet; The Storybook Project; and Women's Resource Fair for women in prison. You can learn more about these programs at www.nawj.org. ♫



USMJ Barbara Holmes (TNMD) and District Judge Karen Donohue were honored by NAWJ for their efforts in planning and the 43d Annual Conference in Nashville, October 6-9, 2021.



USMJ Celeste Bremer (IASD) meets up with Carrie Chapman Catt at the Hermitage Hotel, site of lobbying efforts for and against the 19th Amendment.



Iowa Judges Emily Chafa and Celeste Bremer take part in March for Women's Suffrage at the NAWJ Annual Conference in Nashville, TN October 7, 2021.



USMJ Barbara Holmes (TNMD) receives Proclamation from Nashville City Council Member Zulfat Suara, recognizing NAWJ's work to improve access to justice.