October 2026

Monthly Report from District One

Honorable Debra A Squires-Lee & Honorable Lee M. Peterson

Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico and Rhode Island

POWERFUL PRESENCE AT NAWJ ANNUAL CONFERENCE



An amazing thing happened at the NAWJ annual conference this year. The board was discussing budgetary constraints and a former NAWJ president made an unexpected compelling speech and challenged the room to give by making a

generous donation. Women from across the country from all different courts, backgrounds and experiences more than met the challenge by spontaneously making donations and announcing how much NAWJ means to them and why. Several members became emotional and were embracing each other. Everyone supported each other. Now more than ever we as judges need organizations like NAWJ so that our voices are heard. Every year this conference reminds us that we are part of a larger community of amazing leaders who are at different stages of our lives and careers with a common purpose of service to our communities. This recharges our batteries and reminds us that we are not alone and we are stronger together. We were reminded of the African proverb by our former NAWJ President Pamela Washington, "if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Kindness and generosity have a profound and powerful impact on the world. As leaders and judges, we have a unique and special place in the rule of law, and we are part of a critical branch of government. We have an important contribution to make to the world serving our communities. The conference educational programs were well attended and received but by far the greatest gift was spending time together. If you missed the conference, fear not, there will be plenty of other opportunities. Keep showing up, we have important contributions to make to the world!








Please mark your calendars as follows, we look forward to seeing you again soon:

NAWJ regional meeting, San Diego, California, March 19-20.



18th IAWJ Biennial Conference, Quebec City, Canada, May 18–21, 2027.



NAWJ 2027 Annual Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah on October 7-9.



NAWJ Members gather for Probate & Family Law Conference on October 1, 2026



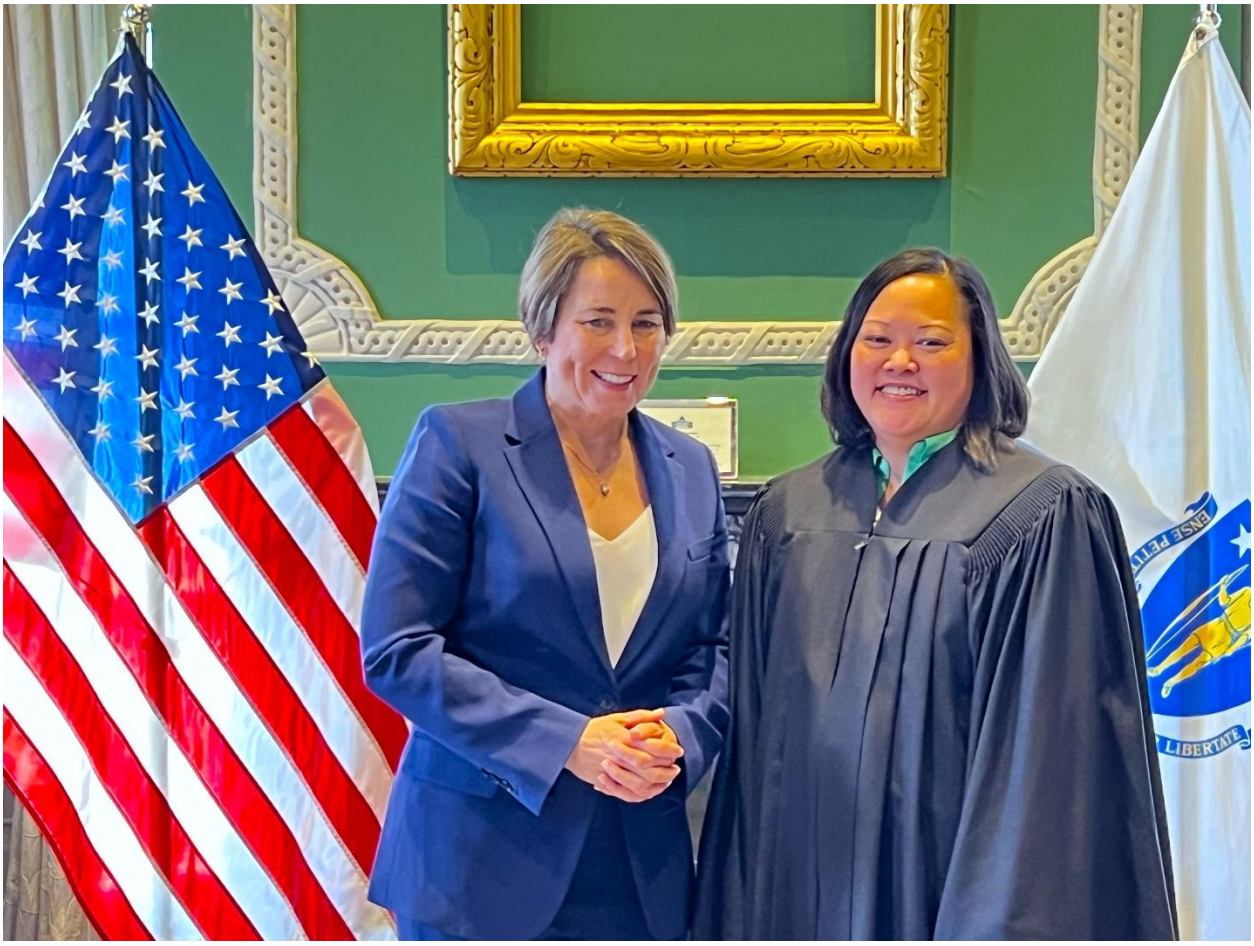
NAWJ Member Judge Frances M. Giordano is Co-Chair of the Probate and Family Court's Education Committee and organized an excellent conference. Several NAWJ members presented on educational panels including Judge Manisha H. Bhatt, Judge Jacqueline M. Burchill, Judge Jessica Dubin, Appeals Court Justice Marguerite Grant, Judge Mikalen E. Howe, Judge Caryn-Mitchell-Munevar, Co-Director for District One Judge Lee M. Peterson, Judge Toiya Taylor, Judge Elena Tsizer, and Judge Jennifer Ulwick.

NAWJ Members Honored by Greater Boston Family Law American Inn of Court



The Greater Boston Family Law American Inn of Court honored NAWJ Members Judge Jessica Dubin and Judge Elena Tsizer at their fall gathering on September 24, 2026. NAWJ Member Judge Frances M. Giordano and Co-Director for District One Judge Lee M. Peterson and were in attendance. The Greater Boston Family Law Inn of Court is a specialty chapter of the American Inns of Court, focused on promoting professionalism, civility, and ethical standards among family law attorneys, and on mentoring new lawyers. It is part of the Massachusetts Family & Probate American Inn of Court, which is one of the largest Inns of Court in the United States.

Suffolk University Law School Women's Law Association Alumni Relations Newsletter profiled NAWJ Member Judge Michelle A. Yee



For over twenty (20) years, Suffolk Law School has paired law students with judges around the state for judicial summer internships through the Karen Blum First year Summer Internship program. The Program places approximately 80 students in internships. NAWJ Member Judge Michelle A. Yee, an Alumna of Suffolk Law School, received rave reviews from the student intern who was assigned to her session. Judge Yee's summer intern said, "It was great to have that support and see a woman in such as strong field who so many people look up to in the courtroom." She described Judge Yee's female leadership as "awesome" and "really empowering." We are so proud to have you as a member of NAWJ Judge Yee- you are an awesome inspirational leader.

NAWJ Members Celebrate Employee Appreciation Day at the Norfolk Probate & Family Court





Co-Director for District One Judge Lee M. Peterson joins NAWJ Members Register of Probate Colleen Brierley and Judge Jessica Dubin to celebrate Employee Appreciation Day at the Norfolk Probate & Family Court on September 18, 2026. Employees enjoyed catered food and casual conversations outside on a beautiful fall day. Many thanks to all who participated.

News from Flaschner Judicial Institute

The Flaschner Judicial Institute will offer four in-person programs this fall, addressing a range of challenging issues facing Massachusetts judges – from harassment prevention orders and OUI cases to sentencing and the rapidly evolving use of artificial intelligence in the courtroom.

On Thursday, November 19, FJI will present **Practical Guidance on 258E Proceedings: Tough Decisions and Challenging Issues**. This half-day program will address the difficult issues judges face in harassment prevention order proceedings.

On Thursday, December 3, FJI will offer **OUI Case Essentials**, a half-day program designed to provide judges with a practical foundation for handling

OUI cases. Through discussion and hypothetical fact patterns, the program will explore key issues that arise in OUI proceedings.

The following week, on Friday, December 11, judges may attend **Sentencing: From Fundamentals to Complex Cases**, a full-day program covering sentencing from the fundamentals through more complex issues. The program will examine the legal and practical considerations judges encounter when imposing sentences and address emerging and appellate issues in sentencing.

Rounding out the series is **AI in the Courtroom: What Judges Need to Know**, which will examine the growing role of artificial intelligence in the justice system and the issues judges should understand as AI tools become increasingly prevalent in and around the courtroom.

All four programs are free and will be held in person. Judges may log in to the FJI website HERE to view additional program information. Advance registration is required, and registering early is encouraged.

Join us for the
Massachusetts Women's History Center
2026 Gala!

Inducting the Inaugural Class of the
Massachusetts Women's Hall of Fame!

Monday, November 9, 2026
6pm
Sheraton Boston
39 Dalton Street
Boston, MA

TICKETS AND SPONSORSHIP INFO

We are thrilled to announce for the 1st time the **LIVING INDUCTEES:**

Margaret Burnham - *Distinguished Professor of Law Emerita*
Freida Garcia - *Beloved Community Activist*
Doris Kearns Goodwin - *Pulitzer Prize-Winning Historian*
Margaret Marshall - *Precedent-Setting Jurist*
Boston Women's Health Book Collective/Our Bodies, Ourselves - *Writing the Book on Women, Health, & Sexuality*
Helen Chin Schlichte - *Pioneering Public Servant*
Nancy Schön - *Sculptor of Public Art*
Grace Sterling Stowell -*Trailblazing LGBTQ Activist*
Benaree (Bennie) Wiley - *Pioneering Corporate & Civic Leader*

Please visit MA Women's Hall of Fame **for photos and bios of HISTORIC and LIVING inductees!**

District One is proud to welcome the following new members:



Judge Mary Rudolph Black is a Probate and Family Court judge. She sits in Essex County. She was appointed to the bench in 2017. She is a graduate of Colby College and New England School of Law. She practiced family, probate, real estate and juvenile law in Gloucester Massachusetts and was a solo practitioner at Black & Pontisakos prior to becoming a judge.



Judge Bernadette Stark is a Probate and Family Court judge from Western Massachusetts. She represented clients in complex financial matters at Goulston & Storrs as a corporate associate and later in private practice as a founding partner of Dismore Stark, where she practiced primarily in the areas of domestic relations and immigration law.

WELCOME TO NAWJ! We are so proud and excited to have you as members-YOU WILL LOVE IT!