



## **2023-2024 CIRCUIT REPRESENTATIVE** **NOMINEE BIOS**

### **1<sup>ST</sup> CIRCUIT: CHRISTIE CLIFFORD-PICHE**

Christie Piche is a Judicial Assistant to Chief Judge Jon D. Levy in the District of Maine. Christie joined the Federal Court in May 2014 when Judge Levy was nominated to be an Article III Judge. Christie started working with Judge Levy at the Maine Supreme Judicial Court in Portland in July 2005. Prior to that Christie worked with the Hon. Donald G. Alexander (now retired) at the Maine Supreme Court starting in 1998.

Christie has adult twins – a daughter and a son – and is a step-mother and step-grandmother to her husband's 3 adult daughters and 9 grandchildren.

### **2<sup>ND</sup> CIRCUIT: MICHELE CZARNECKI**

Michele joined the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit in December of 2019 and is the Judicial Assistant to the Hon. William J. Nardini. Michele's career started right out of college when she took her first job as a Paralegal and remained working in the private sector as a Paralegal for 32 years. She is a graduate of Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts where she earned her BA degree in Political Science & Sociology. After graduation from Merrimack, Michele immediately enrolled into the University of Bridgeport located in Bridgeport, Connecticut to undertake achieving an additional Associates Degree in an ABA approved Paralegal Studies Program. In 2018 Michele decided there was a need for a change in her career direction and was hired by the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Haven, Connecticut. There she supported Assistant United States Attorneys working in the areas of major crimes and cyber security. In 2019 she joined Judge Nardini in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit.

As a lifelong resident of Connecticut, born and raised, Michele is always happy to tell people that her hometown is not far from the infamous City of New Haven, Connecticut, where the best pizza exists (Frank Pepe Pizzeria, Sally's Apizza and Modern Apizza). Michele has two children and loves spending time with her family. She loves shopping, the beach and anything tropical, and outdoor adventures.

### **3<sup>RD</sup> CIRCUIT: IRIS LIRIANO**

Iris Liriano has been a Judicial Secretary to the Hon. Patty Shwartz since April 2003. Prior to joining the U.S. District Court, she worked at the United States Attorney's Office as a Legal Secretary for approximately 9 years. During her tenure there, Iris worked as a Legal Secretary for 2 years, as a Deputy Chief Secretary for less than a year and promoted to a Supervisory Legal Secretary for 6 years. Before joining the U.S. Attorney's Office, Iris worked for the Drug Enforcement Administration for approximately 4 years as a clerk-typist and later promoted to a Group Secretary.

Iris and her husband, Cristian have two children, Noel and Brian. She enjoys reading, traveling, dancing and boating.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT: LENA TAPSCOTT**

Lena Tapscott is the Judicial Assistant to the Honorable Richard M. Gergel, District Judge in Charleston Division, South Carolina. Lena began working with Judge Gergel when he came on the bench in August of 2010. Lena first came to work in the District Courts in July 2007 as a Case Manager (Intake), then as a Criminal Case Manager (Prisoner Docket) to the Honorable Magistrate Judge Robert S. Carr (Retired). Prior to that she worked as a Paralegal at Pro Bono Legal Services (Charleston, SC) and as a Paralegal at Wallace, Morris & Barwick (Kinston, NC).

Lena received her B.S. in Criminal Justice, and Minors in Human Services Counseling and Political Science from Old Dominion University (Norfolk, VA). She later completed the ABA approved Intensive Paralegal Training Program at Meredith College (Raleigh, NC) and received a Paralegal Certificate for the same.

Lena is married to Retired SMSgt Christopher S. Tapscott whom in 2018 retired from 26 years of honorable service in the US Air Force. They have one son, two daughters, two sons-in-law, three granddaughters, and one grandson. Lena enjoys Zumba, traveling, gardening, spending time outdoors, spoiling the grands, and supporting her 14-year-old granddaughter, Kyleigh, who plays competitive fast-pitch travel softball, travel volleyball, and runs track---Lena never misses a tournament or track meet.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT: PAMELA ANGELETTE**

Pamela Angelette is the Judicial Assistant to District Judge Jay C. Zainey for the Eastern District of Louisiana. She came to the Courts with Judge Zainey from his law office on February 19, 2022. She has been an active member of the FJAA for the past 20 years. She has served on the FJAA Conference Committee and is currently on the Audit Committee. Pamela served on the FJAA Board as Treasurer. She also serves as a board member on the Judicial and Justice Federal Credit Union.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT: DAWN SERNA GENSCH**

Presently, Judicial Assistant to Senior US District Judge James G. Carr in the Northern District of Ohio, since March of 2021. Judge Carr currently resides out of state and makes trips back to Toledo to hold his in-person hearings approximately every 4-6 weeks. We hold everything else remotely, via video ZOOM. Although he is on senior status, Judge Carr still carries a full draw and is very active in advisory groups as well as the local bar association. Which keeps me very active with his schedule and calendar!

Started my federal career with the US Bankruptcy Court, in the Northern District of Ohio as an ECRO/Case Administrator in May 2004. After 8 years there, in June 2012, I moved to the US District Court, where I became a judicial assistant to the Honorable Jeffrey J Helmick for approximately 7 years.

I have attended almost every FJAA conference I possibly could, throughout my career, and although I've never been in any type of representative role, (this is very new to me!) I am looking forward to taking part in a more active position, to learn, and do what I can to help promote and further the importance of our roles as JA's, as well as the association as a whole.

I reside in Northwest Ohio. I have 1 daughter, 21 years old, Asia-Lin. She is a senior at Miami University of Ohio.

I enjoy traveling and everything outdoors – gardening, hiking, biking, kayaking, golf. My daughter and I love to attend local farmers markets and art fairs as much as we can.

Also an avid reader, enjoy listening to music and attending concerts and shows.

## **7<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT: CATHY GEIER**

Cathy is Judicial Assistant to U.S. District Judge James E. Shadid in the Central District of Illinois, Peoria Division. Cathy joined the Judiciary in 2001 as JA to U.S. District Judge Michael M. Mihm. She worked for Judge Mihm until 2011 when he took senior status. Cathy began working as a legal secretary in 1980, working full-time until 1989 when she took a few years off to raise her daughter, returning to work in the legal field when she started kindergarten. Cathy spends her time with her partner Doug and between them they have two sons, Jarrod and Jacob, one daughter, Roxanne, and 5 grandchildren. In her spare time she enjoys quilting, crocheting and reading.

## **8<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT: KAREN MOLDENHAUER**

Karen Moldenhauer has been a Judicial Assistant to the Honorable John R. Tunheim for over 3 years. She started working for Judge Tunheim while he was Chief Judge for the District of Minnesota in January of 2020, just 2 months shy of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Prior to joining the U.S. District Court of Minnesota, she worked as an Executive Assistant at the University of Minnesota and as both an Office Manager and Executive Assistant in the software engineering industry for 10 years.

Karen and her husband Josh live in Shoreview, Minnesota with their 6-year-old son, Oliver, and 3 cats – Littles, Greyson, and Paws. Karen loves history, art, reading, being in nature, animals, and shopping.

## **9<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT: SUZANNE LOFTON**

Suzanne Lofton is the Judicial Assistant to the Honorable Chief Judge Derrick Kahala Watson at the United States District Court of Hawaii. Suzanne has 33 years of experience in the law field. Suzanne joined the Court family in May 2013. Prior to joining the U.S. District Court of Hawaii, she worked at the United States Attorney's Office as Judge Watson's legal assistant from 2007-2013. Before joining the federal sector, Suzanne was a legal secretary for 18 years at the law firm of Burke, McPheeters Bordner & Estes concentrating on medical malpractice defense. Suzanne and husband Randy are the proud parents of son Keenan, who recently graduated from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Suzanne enjoys spending time with her family, loves the beach, is active in her church, and has been dancing the hula since age 5. Suzanne has been the FJAA 9th Circuit Representative since 2017.

## **10<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT: ASHLEY KITTRELL**

Ashley Kittrell has been the Judicial Assistant to the Honorable William P. Johnson, Chief United States District Judge in Albuquerque, New Mexico since November 2020. Prior to her position with Judge Johnson, she was a Case Administrator for the Albuquerque Magistrate Judge Case Administration Team. Previous to federal court, Ashley provided support to Judge Cosgrove-Aguilar as a Judicial Specialist at the State of New Mexico's Metropolitan Court while completing her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice at Eastern New Mexico University. Ashley has a varied background that includes serving with the Military Police for the Army National Guard, aiding veterans in their educational pursuits through ENMU's Veterans Upward Bound Program, as well as a variety of other administrative and training support positions.

Ashley is a native of New Mexico, although she has lived throughout the southwestern states. She enjoys traveling, hiking, snowboarding, and shopping!

## **11<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT: SANDRA DE VARONA**

Sandra N. de Varona is the Judicial Administrator to the Honorable Donald L. Graham in the Southern District of Florida. She was selected to be his assistant in 2021. Judge Graham has served on the District Court bench since 1991. Judge Graham currently serves in Senior Status.

Prior to working with Judge Graham, Sandra worked for the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit as a Judicial Administrator to the Honorable Barbara Lagoa. Sandra worked as a Legal Assistant at the Akerman LLP law firm and prior thereto served as a Judicial Assistant to the Honorable Michael B. Chavies in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of the State of Florida.

Sandra attended FIU's Legal Studies Program, where she obtained her Paralegal Degree. She currently teaches in the same program.

In her spare time, Sandra participates in various physical fitness activities, including spinning, boxing, cross fit, and personal training.

She is the proud mother of Samantha, who oversees Media Relations and Digital Marketing for the Music City Bowl in Nashville, Tennessee. She also loves to spend time with her family and close friends.

## **FEDERAL & D.C. CIRCUIT: ELIZABETH DOUGLAS**

Elizabeth Douglas is a Paralegal to the Honorable Armando O. Bonilla. Elizabeth began her service to the Federal Judiciary in 2018 as a Case Administrator for the District and Bankruptcy Courts for the District of Columbia. In May 2020, she accepted a position as an Electronic Court Records Operator (ECRO) with the United States Court of Federal Claims. Before her service to the Court, Elizabeth served as a lead Criminal Analyst for the State of Washington's Office of the Insurance Commissioner's Criminal Investigations Unit. Elizabeth has an undergraduate degree from the University of Washington in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (Go Huskies!) and Masters Degree from Seattle University in Criminal Justice (MACJ). In December 2022, with the help of the FJAA Scholarship Program she successfully earned a Certificate in Paralegal Studies from Boston University Center for Professional Education.