



2024-2025 CIRCUIT REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEE BIOS

1ST CIRCUIT: CHRISTIE CLIFFORD-PICHE

Christie is the Judicial Assistant to Chief Judge Lance E. Walker in Portland, Maine. Prior to working with CJ Walker, Christie worked for Chief Judge Jon D. Levy who retired in May 2024. Judge Levy and Christie both started in the federal courts in May 2014 (and Christie became the First Circuit Representative in 2014). Before that Christie worked with Justice Levy as his JA in the Maine Supreme Judicial Court for 9 years and the JA to Justice Donald G. Alexander for 7 years.

Christie is an identical twin and has fraternal adult twins – a boy and a girl. Christie married her husband Jean in 2019 and together they are traveling and enjoying life as much as they can.

2ND CIRCUIT: MICHELE CZARNECKI

Michele joined the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd 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 2nd 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.

3RD 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.

4th 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.

5th 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 since that time. She has served on the FJAA Board as Treasurer, Chaired the Audit Committee and served on the Conference Committee. She also serves as a board member on the Judicial and Justice Federal Credit Union.

6th CIRCUIT:

CURRENTLY VACANT

7th 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.

8th 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.

9th CIRCUIT: SUZANNE LOFTON

Suzanne is the Judicial Assistant to Chief U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Kahala Watson for the District Court of Hawaii. 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. She has been working with Judge Watson now for a total of 17 years.

Suzanne and husband Randy are the proud parents of son Keenan, who is a recent graduate of the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Suzanne enjoys spending time with her family, loves the beach, loves going to college football games at Notre Dame, is active in her church, and has been dancing the hula since age 5. Suzanne has been the FJAA 9th Circuit Representative since 2017.

10th 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!

11th 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: ISABEL ARMSTRONG

Izzy is the confidential assistant to the Honorable Joseph L. Toth at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims since his appointment in 2017. She's been with the Court since 2012, serving as an Assistant Secretary and Protocol Officer to former Chief Judges Bruce E. Kasold, Lawrence B. Hagel, and Robert N. Davis.

Izzy is a graduate from James Madison University and recently completed her Paralegal Certificate from George Mason University in April 2024.

She currently resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband, 2 year old son, and 2 dogs and enjoys trying new spots around the city with her family.