

THIRD CIRCUIT— IRIS LIRIANO

2020 was supposed to be the ultimate year. A significant year to celebrate milestones such as special birthdays, weddings, baptisms, communions, confirmations, graduations and proms. However, we found ourselves facing a silent enemy on lockdown, social distancing, wearing masks and washing our hands. While we are fortunate to have our health, our job, and our home, there were those less fortunate and it was tough to see the loss and grief people were experiencing.

This was supposed to be the year our family was looking forward to by celebrating our son's high school graduation and sending him off to college. He even had a Spanish Exchange Program scheduled for Easter Break. This of course never happened because Spain was experiencing a massive, high COVID-19 infection rate which eventually led to a lockdown. We were looking forward to the many activities a high school senior experiences towards the end of the school year such as senior prom, class trip, a Baccalaureate Mass, and graduation. It was the beginning of disappointment after disappointment watching the heart-wrenching news every day unfold as the pandemic worsened.

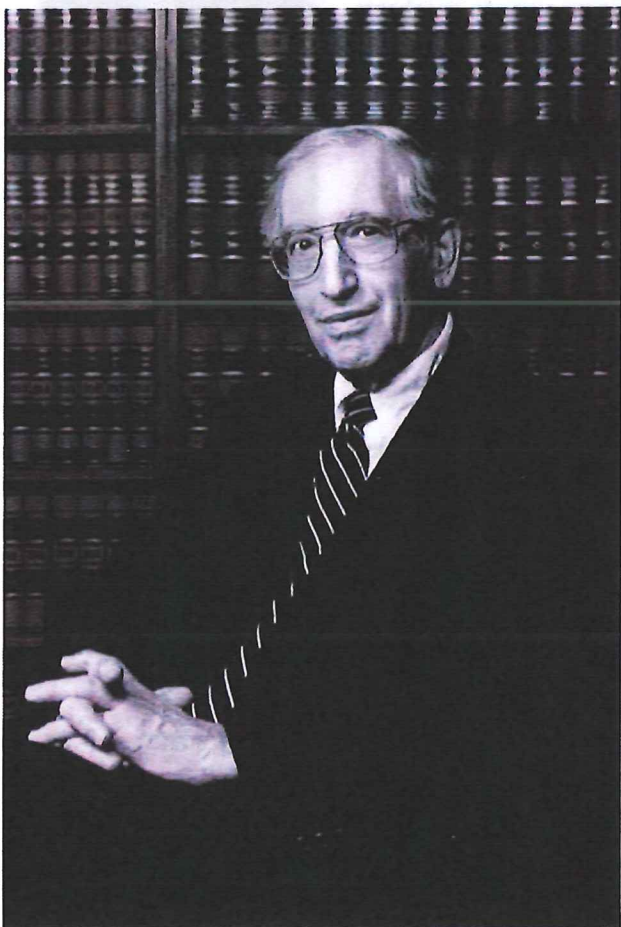
Like many others, during the pandemic, I took up several hobbies. Baking was a new hobby I discovered which was a way for me to cope with my anxiety. It calmed my nerves, and awakened the senses that the smell of cookies, cakes and pies can do. Reading was another hobby I took up as well as home improvement projects. Lastly, running was a stress reliever that helped me sleep better at night.

Having lived through 2020 during a pandemic was an experience that had its pros and cons. For example, working remotely meant having a flexible schedule, working from home or anywhere, spending more time with family playing board games, cooking more meals at home, connecting with family and friends via telephone or Zoom. I definitely saved money on gas, lunch, clothing and any other expenses you incur while working in an office setting. The disadvantages of working remotely have been isolation, lack of socializing with your friends or colleagues, separating work from home environment, inability to unplug which led to working more hours, and distractions. While in the beginning I learned to embrace working remotely, I now long for the time we can return to work to engage and collaborate with our colleagues, makeup and dress up to go to the office, and return to a structured environment.

Living through 2020 was quite difficult, but here we are in 2021 continuing to live through this pandemic. While I do see light at the end of the tunnel, somehow, it seems close yet far away. My hope is that we can somehow overcome this pandemic this year so we can move onto 2022 with a new normalcy where we can once again return to the office, meet up with friends and family, attend social events such as concerts and musicals and travel. Yes, I long for the day we can once again come together.



THIRD CIRCUIT— IRIS LIRIANO CONTINUED...



And now onto Court news,

On January 28, 2021, the Court of Appeals lost a legend. Hon. Morton I. Greenberg, United States Circuit Judge, died on January 28, 2021. On March 20, 1993, Judge Greenberg was born in Philadelphia, PA. He attended University of Pennsylvania and Yale Law School. Upon graduating law school, he moved to New Jersey where he started his career. Judge Greenberg was a law clerk at the NJ Attorney General's Office. Thereafter, he spent some time in private practice. Judge Greenberg has held many positions during his career such as a First Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Assistant Attorney General in Charge, and the Tax Court. In 1973, he was a presiding judge with the Superior Court in New Jersey for 14 years before joining the Court of Appeals in 1987. Judge Greenberg sat with the Circuit for 34 years in which 21 of those years he was a Senior Judge. Having served the state and federal judiciary for 47 years, Judge Greenberg is known for being the longest serving judge in New Jersey. During his tenure, Judge Greenberg received

many accolades and praised by his colleagues. The late Hon. Leonard I. Garth was quoted as referring to Judge Morton as “brainiest of the brainy” and “Mercury Mort” for being “one of the speediest judges in writing and filing his opinions.” He is survived by his wife, Barbara Ann, of 33 years, his 4 children, grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

On February 26, 2021, the U.S. District Court of New Jersey, lost a former Judge, Hon. Joel Pisano. Judge Pisano was born March 3, 1949 in Orange, NJ (one day after my mother was born). He grew up in Belleville, NJ and graduated from Belleville High School (my son is an alumni). I currently live in Belleville and have lived here for the past 28 years. Judge Pisano graduated from Lafayette College. Judge Pisano was a very active member of his community. So much so that he worked as a custodian at Belleville High School after he graduated from college. He attended and graduated from Seton Hall University School of Law in 1974. After law school, Judge Pisano worked for the Public Defender's Office in Newark, NJ. While working in Newark, he was involved in the community there as well as politics. On December 11, 1991, Judge Pisano

THIRD CIRCUIT— IRIS LIRIANO CONTINUED...



took the bench as a Magistrate Judge. He was later appointed as a District Court Judge by President Bill Clinton in 2000. Judge Pisano retired from the District Court in 2015 to work at the law firm of Walsh Pizzi O'Reilly Falanga, LLP. Judge Pisano was a warm, friendly, judge beloved by all. In 2003, I recall meeting Judge Pisano while taking an elevator down to the lobby. As I was waiting to take the elevator, I see him approaching when all of a sudden he greets me with a warm smile and introduces himself. I was new to the courthouse and had no idea who he was. I'll never forget how humble, professional, pleasant and wonderful he was. Judge Pisano was survived by his wife, Elizabeth Breckenridge Pisano, of 49 years.

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey celebrated Black History Month in February virtually. This year, the Black History Program decided to hold a series of sessions which concluded with the actual program. Participants were asked to watch the film, *One Night in Miami*, directed by Regina King before we began the film discussion schedule.

The schedule held were one hour long during lunch time which discussed the characters listed below:

February 4, 2021 – Muhammad Ali

February 11, 2021 – Sam Cooke and Jim Brown

February 18, 2021 – Malcolm X

On February 25, 2021, the Black History Program was held with guest speaker, Ilyasah Shabazz, daughter of the late Malcolm X. I was touched by her message and even more touched by the gift I received by the District Wide Black History Committee. Everyone who attended the program received a book titled, *The Awakening of Malcolm X*, written by Ilyasah Shabazz with co-author Tiffany D. Jackson. It is a compelling novel that touches on the life of Malcolm X's upbringing, his incarceration, and his involvement in the Nation of Islam. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to view the film, *One Night in Miami* and read *The Awakening of Malcolm X*.

Stay safe and healthy!

FOURTH CIRCUIT— LENA D. TAPSCOTT

A Huge Welcome to All of our 4th Circuit FJAA Members

*Sharon Callahan, JA to the Honorable James P. Jones; Abingdon, VA
Kathy Collins, JA to the Honorable Mary Lewis; Columbia, SC
Sheila Cox, JA to the Honorable Henry M. Herlong, Jr; Greenville, SC
Jacinta DeJesus, JA to the Honorable Joseph Dawson; Greenville, SC
Ursula Hamilton, JA to the Honorable J. Craig Whitley, Charlotte, NC
Vickie Hearn, JA to the Honorable Bruce Howe Hendricks; Charleston, SC
Jennifer Mattia, JA to the Honorable Robert G. Doumar; Norfolk, VA
Christina Marquez, JA to the Honorable Ivan Davis; Alexandria, VA
Dena Strickland, JA to the Honorable Sherri A. Lydon; Florence, SC
Lena Tapscott, JA to the Honorable Richard Mark Gergel; Charleston, SC
Sharon Tillman, JA to the Honorable Allison J. Ruching, Asheville, NC
Denise Williams, JA to the Honorable Brian Kenney; Alexandria, VA
Leslie Wooten, JA to the Honorable Brian S. Meyers; Raleigh, NC*

Thank you to our members both new and returning who have made a commitment to help our organization thrive and be all that it can be.

Why we need to support each other and our organization.....

I was saddened when I reached out to one of our faithful members who has been a JA long before I was even hired (2007). She always renews on time and I was surprised when as of early March I had not received her renewal. She returned my call only to inform me that unfortunately her position had been terminated as her Judge had made the difficult decision to employ another law clerk. I was heartbroken and felt her pain. Unfortunately, we know that that is indeed an option for Chambers. Let's support one another, keep serving our Judiciary, providing quality services, proving our worth, and praying for the best!!!

FOURTH CIRCUIT— LENA D. TAPSCOTT CONTINUED ...

This Past Quarter...

<i>Sharon Callahn</i>	<i>January 4th</i>
<i>Lena Tapscott</i>	<i>January 11th (I'm the big 50 and thankful for it!!!!)</i>
<i>Denise Williams</i>	<i>January 24th</i>
<i>Leslie Wooten</i>	<i>February 5th</i>
<i>Jennifer Mattia</i>	<i>March 29th</i>

The Current Quarter....

<i>Kathy Collins</i>	<i>April 1st</i>
<i>Shelia Flanders Cox</i>	<i>June 26th</i>

"Our hope this year, for you my dear, is a year of happiness and joy. May the coming year bring all you dream of and more!"

Quote from Catherine Pulsifer

Through the Eyes of 2020 in Charleston, SC Lena Tapscott

I must warn you that this article may seem a little nonsensical, convoluted, grammatically flawed, and a bit confusing but that also means that I accurately captured the essence of 2020.

Weeks of March 2nd and March 9th - Judge calls me into his office - "It's here and we need to prepare for a possible quarantine." Does the Court have laptops to issue our staff so we can continue to work from home? The answer is no- I'm bringing my personal one into IT so they can add the Court programs to mine, my old Court one is not the greatest but I'll bring it in as well and one of the law clerks can use it, the other Clerk only has a Mac, etc, etc, etc. What do I need to take home with me from the office to continue to perform my duties? How long will this last? How will my grandchildren continue their education? Where can I buy toilet paper?!? Are my children safe in their homes in North Carolina? Do they have everything they need to weather this for a few weeks? Surely this won't last long.....

FOURTH CIRCUIT— LENA D. TAPSCOTT CONTINUED ...

March 16, 2020 the Courthouse is closed indefinitely. School is closed and quickly switched to online learning from home. My husband, two grandchildren, and myself are all working/schooling from home - thank God we already had a desktop, laptops, and I-Pads to help us get through. Oh this is how you use Zoom. My daughter still goes into work but her staffing agency is now closed to the public - only she and her co-worker enter her office, potential employees must submit everything on-line or use the drop off box. When she arrives at my house to pick up the children - if you are coming in our staying for more than a minute, strip in the garage and at least change your close before you can enter. Our other daughter in Charlotte is a stay at home mom but here husband owns a construction business and I know he won't be able to stay home long. Fortunately he is able to just do renovations of unoccupied apartments for a few months- but he has staff. I don't want him going to work with his co-workers and possibly getting infected and bringing it home to my daughter and grandson!!! Our son in North Carolina is also working from home as of March 16th but he is 25 years old so you know how that goes - son please be careful and just stay home. But Mom, my friends and I have vacations booked-----and you can reschedule child!!!!

As team mom of my granddaughter Kyleigh's travel softball team, I cancel all softball practices indefinitely. I receive notices (one right after another) that our softball tournaments are cancelled. No Dear, our Florida tournament is cancelled so no Disney that weekend. Sorry Kyleigh, I had to cancel our flight and hotel - looks like we will not be able to travel to New York for Spring Break the week of April 6th as planned either. Kyleigh, I had to cancel our flight and hotel - looks like we will not be able to travel to New York for Spring Break the week of April 6th as planned either.

Now about those mask and hand sanitizer.... thank you to my neighbor who owns a supply store and ordered a healthy supply of both when all this got started - three weeks after everything shut down around here he is now filling orders from his driveway for anyone in our neighborhood who needs some. Thank you to my childhood neighbor back in Virginia who immediately started making mask for herself and her fellow radiologist and mailed mask to our family in South Carolina.

A trip to the grocery store..... You going this time hubby or you want me to? Whoever is the chosen one this time - make sure you have your mask, hand sanitizer, and gloves. I must upon your return place all bags in the garage or at the front door and the other comes out with gloves on, disinfectant spray and wipes in hand and/or a bucket of water with disinfectant in it. Every item is cleansed, unnecessary outer packing is discarded, and then items are placed in it's proper place in the kitchen. Whoever went to the store strips in the garage, clothes are placed directly in the washer and the individual heads straight to the shower and do not make any stops in between.

Yes, unfortunately this pandemic did "last long" and much of this still continues, this past year has been one of shock, disbelief, uncertainty, fear, prayer, leaning on our faith, and overall trusting that we will make it through. Many have lost their lives, loved ones, income, homes, health, and there are countless other consequences of this pandemic. If you are reading this that means that you are still here and for that one thing alone we can be grateful.

FOURTH CIRCUIT— LENA D. TAPSCOTT CONTINUED ...

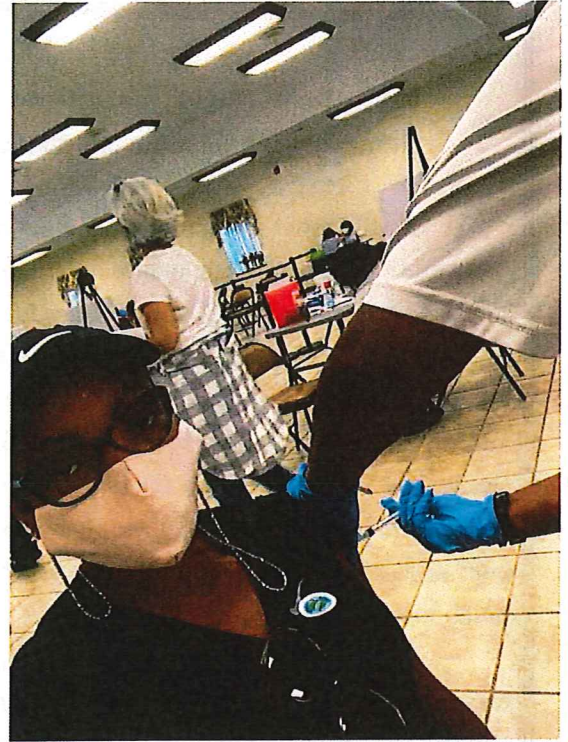
A Little Closer to Normalcy...

Submitted by Lena Tapscott,

JA to the Honorable Richard Mark Gergel

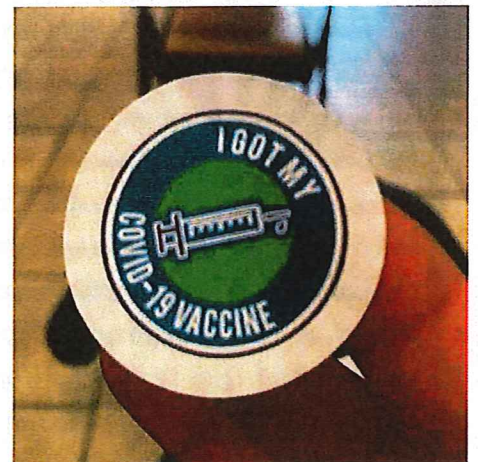
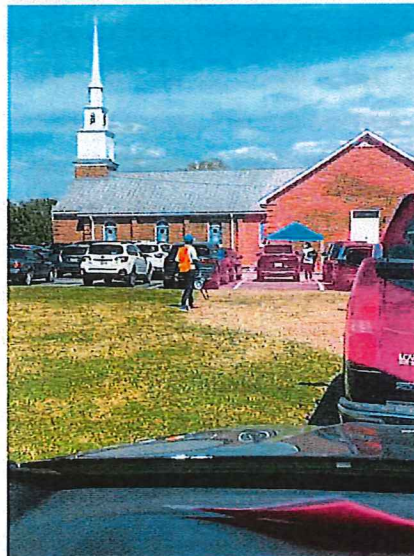
As my Judge, our law clerks, and myself have been vaccinated (HALLELUJAH!!!), we are all back in Chambers more frequently. Judge received the Pfizer vaccine, and the Clerks and I all received the Jansen vaccine. Judge was able to get his vaccine quickly and within about 10 miles of his home. Once Phase 1B opened the Clerks and I hawked the websites and were able to obtain ours within about a week of the opening of Phase 1B.

Our clerks scheduled appointments at pharmacies, and both drove about 120 miles to receive theirs. I drove about 65 miles to a first come first served site (which had been advertised on the news two days prior) to receive mine. I arrived about 3 hours prior to the scheduled start time of 2:00 and parked along with a few hundred others in a corn field for my chance to be vaccinated. Fetter Health Care, the system that



provided the opportunity was very organized and when the clock struck 2:00 p.m. we were directed to drive across the street to a huge church with beautiful facilities and numerous pleasant staff who functioned like a well-oiled machine to complete paperwork, administer the vaccine, provide 15 minutes of observation, and get us on our way. I didn't know the impact that I would feel once I finally sat in that chair to receive my vaccine, but I must admit ----I shed a few tears!!!!

We are happy to report that we experienced little to no symptoms. I experienced only minor body aches and felt a little under the weather for a few days very much like I feel after receiving my flu shot.



FOURTH CIRCUIT—LENA D. TAPSCOTT CONTINUED ...

Remote Witness Testimony During the Pandemic, Where Will We Be in 2022?

Submitted By: Jasmine Burns, Law Clerk to the Honorable Richard Mark Gergel

The District of South Carolina in Charleston is not currently conducting jury trials due to the pandemic. However, some judges are conducting bench trials remotely through WebEx technology. In January 2021, one of the District Judges heard a remote civil bench trial. The trial lasted several days and involved witnesses that testified remotely from out of the country. Several witnesses were Spanish speaking and an interpreter was required to translate the proceedings. All participants appeared via WebEx audio and/or video. The interpreter was visible through WebEx video and muted her audio while conducting simultaneous translation for the Spanish speaking parties and witnesses on a separate land line. The first few hours of the trial steadily progressed, but as Murphy's Law would dictate- "if something can go wrong it will" and as the first day of trial came to a close, the technology started to experience moments of breakdown.

Due to connection issues, the interpreter switched from simultaneous translation to translating after every few phrases, which slowed the proceedings down. Some of the witnesses who testified from out of the country experienced difficulty hearing questions and the questions were asked and translated multiple times. At times, the interpreter strained to hear the testimony of these witnesses and significant echoes reverberated through the technology that made it challenging to understand the testimony. At times, the technology's audio function would cease for one or two participants. These participants would signal through the video or through messages to all participants that audio function was lost. Throughout these technological glitches, all participants exercised patience and understanding. The courtroom deputy was adept at troubleshooting the WebEx glitches and helped ensure the proceedings continued to move forward. It was discovered that by having the participants wear headphones, the echoes decreased, and the interpreter experienced increased hearing function. In addition, a landline appeared to hold the strongest connection. Operating dual devices within proximity to the other, such as using a cell phone to join the WebEx meeting while also logging into the browser WebEx meeting contributed significantly to the creation of an echo. Despite these glitches, each witness testified, and the case was tried to completion.

Reflecting on the virtual bench trial, it was impressive the witnesses testifying from out of the country were able to testify remotely and were not required to travel to the United States to participate. I am curious to see in what ways remote video technology continues to improve and if the use of this technology will have an impact on how courts conduct witness testimony for witnesses located out of the state or out of the country. On the one hand, it would appear that remote technology is a cost-efficient resource for parties and counsel because certain witnesses would not have to travel long distances to testify. In addition, the technology could open access to the courts for a wider population of people. On the other hand, the technology carries certain unpredictable factors that may contribute to elongating court proceedings. As the world slowly begins to open up from the pandemic (whenever that may be), it will be interesting to track whether courts will continue to implement remote technology in the courtroom and in what capacity.

FIFTH CIRCUIT—BARBARA ALCON

26th Annual Black History Month Celebration

Thursday, February 25, 2021



Chief Judge Shelly D. Dick, Judge Brian A. Jackson, Judge John W. deGravelles, Magistrate Judge Richard L. Bourgeois, Magistrate Judge Erin Wilder-Doomes, Magistrate Judge Scott D. Johnson of the United States District Court, Judge Douglas D. Dodd of the United States Bankruptcy Court, and the agencies of the Middle District of Louisiana federal courthouse hosted the twenty-six annual Black History Month Celebration on Thursday, February 25th as a virtual event due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The keynote speaker was Honorable Brian A. Jackson, with remarks by Chief Judge Shelly D. Dick and Michael Jefferson, Assistant U.S. Attorney.

[Virtual Program Video: 26th Annual Black History Month Celebration \(Louisiana Middle District\)](#)

- **Resources:**

For more about Judge Frank M. Johnson, including videos, go to The Academy of Achievement: <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/joh2int-1>

More about the Rule of Law as It Affects Minorities: <http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/legal-concepts/rule-law.aspx>

More about Brown v. Board of Education – A Re-Enactment: <http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment.aspx>

SIXTH CIRCUIT— JENNIFER HODGE



2020 Transition into 2021

The year of 2020 began full of hopes and dreams for a perfect year for many. Not far into the new year, however, the vision became darkened. We have all been affected in some way by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020 was anything but perfect. There should be a huge rubber stamp that stamped every event as "CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19." Proms, formals, graduations, weddings, vacations, birthday parties, holiday gatherings, restaurants, shopping, travel, sporting events and concerts were only a portion of the events cancelled. Essentially, life as many knew it was cancelled. Not to mention that school and work took place right at the dining table. Parents had to become educators while also working from home.

Many Court users had to participate in virtual hearings with children and dogs in the background. Who knew that video would be the main source of Federal Court hearings? Somehow, we all adapted and made the transition that became the new norm for the rest of 2020 and into 2021.

As socially distance in-person hearings begin to evolve, it is now hard to fathom the transition back to being in an actual courtroom with people in it. I don't know about you, but I welcome a glimmer of hope in trying to remember what life was like before COVID-19, even though it may have changed some things forever.

It is disheartening to think about how many people have lost loved ones due to this virus, suffered with the virus themselves and/or lost their jobs. Please remember anyone who has struggled in any way. I personally know several of the Sixth Circuit members who have experienced extreme hardships, difficulties, and loss. My heart aches for every one of you. You are all in my thoughts and prayers. Please remember that we are a network and are here for you. Stay safe. Stay strong.

Happy Birthday Sixth Circuit Members!!!

First Quarter Birthdays:

January		February		March	
Susan Ferrell	January 13th	Bonnie Zaidel	February 3rd	Danielle Hardee	March 2nd
Tracy Young	January 19th	Elizabeth Claes	February 3rd	Debby Sawyer	March 26th
Melissa Seay	January 20th	Mary Doubrava	February 18th	Lisa Springmeyer	March 17 th
Chris Bockheim	January 21st	Carol Kronquist	February 24th		

2021 New FJAA Sixth Circuit Members

- Kate Bonner – Paralegal to Bankruptcy Judge Randal S. Mashburn TN/MD
- Susan Ferrell – Career Clerk to Magistrate Judge Sharon L. Ovington OH/SD
- Haley Hages - Paralegal to District Judge Thomas L. Ludington MI/ED
- Anna Seymore – Paralegal to District Judge Hala Y. Jarbou MI/WD

SIXTH CIRCUIT— JENNIFER HODGE, CONTINUED

In lieu of articles for the newsletter, Sixth Circuit members were asked to submit a few words of encouragement or share something that they learned as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Thank you all for your submissions!

“As someone that loathed going to the grocery store, I learned to love the Wal-Mart and Kroger pick-up apps for all of my grocery shopping.” – Jennifer Hodge J/A to District Senior Judge J. Daniel Breen TN/WD

“After a year of Zoom hearings (might I add, without any mysterious cat filters) I am adding Zoom Master to my list of skills!” – Michelle Howard J/A to District Judge David M. Lawson

“I am so very thankful that we appear to be seeing some light at the end of the COVID tunnel. We’ve all had to learn to do some things very differently. Since I discovered Amazon will deliver my heavy cat and dog food packages to my doorstep, I don’t think I’ll go back to lugging those things out of a store myself. I also enjoyed making and selling masks during this time – I figured if we had to wear them, they might as well be fun! I will continue to wear mine around others until I’m advised to do otherwise and even at that, I foresee that I’ll be wearing a mask on flights and in other situations long after COVID is (hopefully) very much under control and no longer presents the grave threat the past year brought to the world.” – Emily Smith J/A to Chief District Judge S. Thomas Anderson TN/WD

“During this year, my family and I renewed our love of working on jigsaw puzzles. It has been fun to put down the cell phones, turn off the TV, and just have fun talking to one another and working on the puzzles.” – Cathy Gray J/A to District Judge Sheryl Lipman

“Zoom hearings, Zoom family dinners, Zoom Bingo... Zoom is my new super power! It’s always great to see everyone!” – Tracy Young J/A to District Judge Linda V. Parker

“I think we all learned a lot in 2020. I learned that I like working from home. It makes for a good work/life balance. I love Instacart. As a bonus, I picked up a puppy in January, 2020 – my accidental covid puppy. Being stuck at home for a year with a young dog is dreamy. We have a strong bond and she well trained.” - Helen Norton J/A to District Judge Dan Aaron Polster

Jill Jenkins J/A to District Judge William Campbell, Jr. studied and took the bar during the pandemic. Even though she took some time off to study, with COVID she was able to take it from her dining room table. Kudos to Jill. We are so very proud of you!!! This is so inspiring!!!

“Just a little mask humor.” - Debby Sawyer, J/A to District Judge Aleta A. Trauger



SIXTH CIRCUIT— JENNIFER HODGE, CONTINUED



2020 Reflections & Gratitude

By: Tracy Young, President-Elect

Sixth Circuit, Eastern District of Michigan

Appreciation to all

FJAA Executive Board, Circuit Representatives, Committee Members and Members

Thank you

REFLECTIONS OF OUR STRONG ASSOCIATION

Executive Board

Standing Strong together, making tough decision yet keeping our members health and safety in mind

Moving forward holding monthly meetings

Leaning on each other to talk it all through

Circuit Representatives

Persevering through the changes

Striving to drive their memberships

STANDING by their Circuit members

Committees

Saying YES – I'm proud and I will continue to serve!

Members

Continuing to join and renew to build the Association

You ROCK!

YES!

WE ARE STONGER TOGETHER

Quarantine Habits

I'm "NOT" giving up

Priceless time with family

Learning new skills/new recipes

Learning new ways to gather outdoors

New ways of working remotely

By

Zoom, Microsoft Teams, JOU on Jnet