



**FJAA**

**OFFICERS  
2019 - 2020**

**IN BRIEF**

**FEDERAL JUDICIAL  
ASSISTANTS ASSOCIATION**

**VOLUME 18  
ISSUE 2**

**APRIL 2020**

## **Letter from the President Judith Stoyko**

Dear FJAA Members and all Judicial Assistants:

How our lives have changed since I wrote my last president's letter! We are now dealing with the coronavirus, COVID-19. "Social distancing" is the latest buzz-phrase. Most large cities have mandated shelter-in-place protocols and have ordered all group functions cancelled. Some federal courts have dramatically curtailed operations, and most of us are teleworking.

I struggled with what to write in this article amid these new stresses, so I thought I would focus on positivity. Staying positive is essential in successfully coping with a crisis. Positive emotions help us undo the negative effects of stress. Be proactive about creating small moments of happiness in your day.

Savor the small moments: Notice the smell of coffee, the feel of a warm shower, the sound of birds chirping. When you stop to take in these sensations, rather than let them rush by on autopilot, you are giving your brain a chance to process the pleasure. This helps elevate your mood and make you feel calm.

Strengthen your connections: Now is the opportunity to spend quality time at home with our loved ones. Take the time to hug your kids or partner, look them in the eyes, have long conversations with them. These gestures promote closeness and boost the hormones that have a calming effect on your body.

Look for the good in others: Philanthropists are donating money to scientists to find a cure. Doctors and medical staff are working overtime to help sick patients. Neighbors are going shopping or preparing meals for the elderly in their communities. People are posting positive messages on social media. Friends from across the globe are reaching out to each other. When we focus on these positive aspects of the crisis, we are united in hope.

By tuning into these silver linings, you can potentially change your brain chemistry and build up your energy stores to help you cope with the other aspects of your day that have been made more difficult.

Surely all of us are feeling a bit stir-crazy and out of synch by now. Be thankful that we have telephones, televisions, computers, and the Internet to help us pass the time and stay connected. Even though it's challenging, we can manage to stay at home for a few weeks to keep ourselves and others safe and well.

This, too, shall pass!

---

**Judith Stoyko— President**  
c/o Hon. Charles R. Breyer  
Philip Burton United States Courthouse  
450 Golden Gate Avenue, Room 17-5356  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3434  
Phone: 415-522-3660

---

**Tracy Young—President-Elect**  
c/o Hon. Linda V. Parker  
Theodore Levin Courthouse  
231 W. Lafayette Blvd Room 204  
Detroit, MI 48226  
Phone: 313-234-5525

---

**Bernita Henley — Vice-President**  
c/o Hon. Charmiane G. Claxton  
US District Court Clifford Davis &  
Odell Horton Fed Bldg  
167 N. Main Street Room 357  
Memphis, TN 38103

---

**Debby Sawyer—Secretary**  
c/o Hon. Arleta Arthur Trauger  
Estes Kefauver Federal Bldg. & U.S. Courthouse  
801 Broadway Suite 825  
Nashville, TN 37203

---

**Yvette Garcia—Treasurer**  
c/o Hon. Jacqueline M. Rateau  
Evo A. Deconcini U.S. Courthouse  
405 W. Congress Street, Suite 6650  
Tucson, AZ 85701-5063  
Phone: 520-205-4640

---

**Cathy Gray — Past President**  
c/o Hon. Sheryl Lipman  
Clifford Davis & Odell Horton Federal Building  
167 North Main Street 9th Floor  
Memphis, TN 38103  
Phone: 901-495-1337

---

**Melissa Hardin—Parliamentarian**  
c/o Hon. William M. Conley  
Robert W. Kastenmeier U.S. Courthouse  
120 N. Henry Street Room 560  
Madison, WI 53703

---



## Membership News

# Introducing...

## New and Former Members

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit

Czarnecki, Michele  
Liu, Connie  
Mikell, Shona  
Savona, Michele

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit

Dalfonzo, Erin  
Grallish, Dawn  
Lamantia, Kelly (**Former Member**)

### 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit

Blackmon, Ruth Lee (**Former Member**)  
Collins, Kathy A.  
Cox, Shella F.  
Holson, Meggie  
Kois, Rebecca  
Strickland, Dena D.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit

Aguilar, Betty A.  
Carruth, Tonia  
Firmin, Marie Poche (**Former Member**)  
Holliday, Michelle  
Schaeffer, Jamei  
Thornton, Cynthia

### 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit

Hardee, Danielle  
Jerkins, Jill  
Lane, Susan  
McGaugh, Jennifer  
Migliore, Cindy  
Rankin, Daphne  
Renaud, Marjorie  
Schultz, Andrea

### 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit

Mastagh, Patricia  
Meadows, Diane L.  
Zora, Marcy

### 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit

Langton, Tanya  
Moldenhauer, Karen

### 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit

Bailey, Melinda  
Brost, Colleen  
Cantor, Jodie  
Coloccia, Rosanne  
Enneman, Linda (**Former Member**)  
Gamez, Lorraine R  
McVay, Carrie  
Peer, Rebecca  
Richardson, Celesta

Riherd, Janice (Jan)  
Thoms, Laurie  
Villanueva, Monica  
**10<sup>th</sup> Circuit**  
Ditta, Carol  
Espinoza, Vincent  
Lang, Meredith  
**11<sup>th</sup> Circuit**  
Mull, (Norma) Jenine

# Welcome to the Team!!

## Being “In the Room Where It Happens”

If you’ve seen *Hamilton* or have listened to the sound track, you know that Arron Burr longed to be “In the Room Where It Happens,” that seemingly magical and mysterious place where deals are done and fortunes are made.

To quote the song, “No one really knows how the game is played, The Art of the Trade, How the sausage gets made, We just assume that it happens.”

I’ve served on our FJAA Executive Committee for several years as Vice President, President, Past President, and Parliamentarian, as well as a few years as the Seventh Circuit Representative. Before serving in these capacities, I certainly wondered what happens behind the scenes and how things get done. As members, we entrust our officers with the operations of FJAA, and we’re not “in the room.”

The meetings aren’t mysterious. All committees, including the executive board, give full reports at our annual Educational Conference. You can also find a ton of information on our FJAA website. For example, did you know that under the Members Only tab, you can find resources including Westlaw helpful tips, how to do a full text search in CM/ECF, current and prior newsletters, and our newest feature, “Who’s Who” photos.

But the process that happens during an officers’ meeting can be a bit magical. This is the safe space where anything goes and ideas are born, evolve, and eventually are presented to the FJAA membership for action. Some ideas may need further research or tweaking, which is where the other committees come in. Each committee receives its objectives from the President through the executive board and works to make the vision a reality.

Do you aspire to be “in the room where it happens”? I encourage you to seriously consider the possibility. Where to start? Come to our annual Educational Conference, sign up for a committee that interests you, and/or become a Circuit Representative. You can find information on all these options on the FJAA Website. Or reach out to our President, Judy Stoyko, and volunteer. Any FJAA member is eligible to serve. Doing so will put you “In the Room Where It Happens”!

**Submitted and written by Melissa Hardin—Western District of Wisconsin**

# FIRST CIRCUIT— Christie Piche

## New Hires

Meaghan Carlow – Case Manager – Bangor Clerk’s office – Started December 9, 2019

## Retirements

Don Marshal, IT Bangor, retired on December 31. Don started on January 22, 1996 working in Portland for many years and then to Bangor. He was our “can do” man and the happiest face in Bangor. Our loss is Don’s great gain as he and his wife Carol enjoy their retirement.



## All Time Office Super Bowl Luncheon – Held by U.S. Probation Office

The U.S. Probation Office held its inaugural “Greatest of All Time Office Super Bowl Luncheon” on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 in Portland. Their office decided just because the real GOAT (Quarterback Tom Brady of the Patriots) wasn’t playing in the Super Bowl this year, it didn’t mean that we couldn’t still eat.

There was a food competition and people were encouraged to submit their entries. The celebrity panel of judges was comprised of Chief Judge Jon Levy, Assistant US Attorney Dan Perry, and David Beneman, Esq. from the Federal Defender’s Office.

A great time was had by all and Scott Hastings won the food competition with his entry of “Scotch eggs.”

# FIRST CIRCUIT— Christie Piche

## Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions Program

We continue to host high schools for our Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions Program.

The following schools have attended since our last newsletter:

Greely High School attended on December 20, 2019 – Portland – Chief Judge Jon Levy presided

Mattanawcook Academy attended on January 9, 2020 – Bangor – Judge Lance Walker presided

Mountain Valley High School attended on January 17, 2020 – Portland – Chief Judge Peter Cary presided

Caribou High School attended on February 24, 2020 – Bangor – Judge Michael Fagone presided

Mountain Valley High School attended on January 21, 2020 – Bangor – Judge Lance Walker presided

Oak Hill High School attended on February 28, 2020 – Portland – Chief Judge Peter Cary presided





# SECOND CIRCUIT— Samantha Gencarello

## Court of Appeals

The Court of Appeals mourned the loss of Judge Lawrence W. Pierce, who passed away at the age of 95 on February 5, 2020.

Judge Pierce was only the third African American judge to serve on the Court of Appeals after Thurgood Marshall and Amalya Lyle Kearse. He was also the first African American judge to be appointed to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.

“Judge Pierce will be remembered as a fair, impartial and disciplined jurist, who weighed each decision carefully, on the merits, and applied the law meticulously,” said T. Christopher Donnelly, a former law clerk of Judge Pierce’s. “On the bench and off the bench, he was thoughtful, dignified, respectful and kind.”

On February 4, 2020, an induction ceremony was held for Judge William Joseph Nardini, in the Ceremonial Courtroom at the Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse, 500 Pearl Street, New York, NY.



At the Special Session of the Court, Chief Judge Robert A. Katzman, gave the opening remarks. We then had the privilege of Boy Scout Troop 63 of Woodbridge, Connecticut, in full uniform, carry the flags in a procession into the courtroom and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. This was especially noteworthy as Judge Nardini’s two sons are members of this troop and Judge Nardini is their Scoutmaster! Ms. Chrissy Gardner sang a wonderful rendition of the National Anthem, and the invocation was given by Rev. Robert Morgewicz, the Pastor at SS. Aedan & Brendan Church, New Haven, CT. Remarks were then given by U.S. Attorney, District of Connecticut, John H. Durham, and Bruce Swartz, Deputy Assistant Attorney General and DOJ Counselor for International Affairs. The Clerk of the Court, Catherine O’Hagan Wolfe, read the commission, and Chief Judge Katzmann administered the oath. The Robing Ceremony was very special as Judge Nardini’s Mother, Anne Marie Nardini, placed the robe on Judge Nardini with the help of Judge Nardini’s wife, Holly K. Grossetta Nardini, and their four children. Judge Nardini then proceeded to give warm remarks reflecting on his wonderful upbringing and his career thus far. Following the ceremony, we are all treated to a wonderful reception.

Judge Nardini’s chambers are located in New Haven, CT, and his Judicial Assistant is Michele Czarnecki. We send a hearty welcome to Judge Nardini and Michele and wish them all the best in their new roles!!!

(From Janet F. Hansen: As an aside, I had the distinct pleasure and honor of working with Judge Nardini in Judge Cabranes’s chambers in 1994-1995. As this was Judge Cabranes’ first term on the Court of Appeals, and I was newly hired coming from a law firm, we were all like “fish out of water”—floundering around just trying to figure everything out and how to make it work. Well, I guess we did...I’m still here with Judge Cabranes and look where Bill landed! I could not be happier about his appointment—so well-deserved! As all J.A.’s know, we love to see where our “kids” land and are so proud of them. Congratulations Judge Nardini!!!)

The Court of Appeals was slated to hold the induction ceremony of Stephen J. Menashi on April 2, 2020. Unfortunately due to the coronavirus situation, this ceremony has been postponed. We will report back once it has been rescheduled.

Stay safe and keep washing those hands!!

## Western District of New York

The Western District of New York sadly lost Judge Michael Telesca in early March. Judge Telesca announced his plans to retire shortly before his passing. He was appointed by Ronald Reagan and took his oath of office on May 3, 1982. In a statement, Chief Judge Frank Geraci said that, “Today, the world lost a champion for justice.” Geraci said that Telesca understood that the courts were a vehicle for citizens to receive a prompt and fair disposition of their disputes, and he says the judge’s motto was “Dignity in and Dignity Out,” meaning that all litigants needed to be respected throughout the proceedings.

## SECOND CIRCUIT— Samantha Gencarello

### Southern District of New York

The Southern District of New York recently welcomed two new judges, Lewis J. Liman and Mary Kay Vyskocil.

Judge Liman nominated to the court by President Donald Trump (R) on May 15, 2018, and confirmed by the United States Senate on December 19, 2019, by a vote of 64-29.[1][2] He received commission on December 31, 2019. He received his JD from Yale Law School and spent a brief period as an attorney at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational fund, clerked for Judge Pierre N. Leval of the Court of Appeals and clerked for Justice Paul Stevens of the Supreme Court of the United States. He worked as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York and was in private practice at Cleary Gottlieb from 2003 to 2019 prior to joining the bench.

Judge Vyskocil received her judicial commission for the Southern District of New York on December 20, 2019. She was also a judge on the Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York from 2016. Judge Vyskocil received her JD from St. John University School of Law and prior to her appointment to the bench she practiced general commercial litigation for almost thirty-three years at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett.

In sad Southern District news, the court suddenly and unexpectedly lost Judge Deborah A. Batts on February 2, 2020. Judge Batts served for a quarter-century on the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. She presided over many high-profile cases, including the decade-long civil litigation involving the Central Park Five. Judge Batts was the first openly gay judge to sit on the federal bench and the first African American faculty member at Fordham Law School.

One of Judge Batts's closest friends, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, recalled that they had both been recommended on the same day for judgeships in the Southern District.

"From that day forward, we became sisters," Justice Sotomayor said in a statement to The New York Times. "Most importantly, she lived her life openly and earnestly, with fortitude and conviction."

In May, during a recorded panel discussion held in Manhattan to commemorate Judge Batts's 25 years on the bench, she appeared with three other openly gay federal judges. The three — Judge Oetken, Alison J. Nathan and Pamela K. Chen — said she had been an inspiration.

Judge Batts "literally broke down the closet door and allowed the rest of us to walk through it," Judge Chen said.

Judge Batts, after hearing them speak, remarked, "There was this lone wolf sitting up here in the Southern District of New York, and I can't tell you — I can't tell you how happy I was when I got company."

Judge Batts will be greatly missed.

(Note from Samantha Gencarello): I hope that everyone is staying calm and healthy during these uncertain times in regard to Covid-19. I know the news is scary, but the best possible defense for us government workers who don't always have the option of working from home is to wash our hands! It is recommended you wash your hands for AT LEAST 20 seconds, which is actually quite a long time when you count them out! So, here are a few songs you can wash your hands to for the best defense in getting rid of ALL germs:

1. "Love On Top," by Beyoncé
2. "Truth Hurts," by Lizzo
3. "Jolene," by Dolly Parton
4. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," from the Wizard of Oz
5. "The Sound of Music," from The Sound of Music
6. "My Shot," from Hamilton
7. "Hands Clean," by Alanis Morissette
8. "Karma Chameleon," by Culture Club
9. "Stayin' Alive," by The BeeGees (also a favorite song for performing CPR)
10. "Toxic," by Britney Spears
11. "Livin' On a Prayer," by Bon Jovi
12. "No Scrubs," by TLC
13. "Raspberry Beret," by Prince
14. "Landslide," by Fleetwood Mac
15. "Love Shack" by The B-52's

## THIRD CIRCUIT—Iris Liriano



On February 27, 2020, The U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey held their annual Black History Program which is always a big success. I've attended countless Black History Programs but this one has been my absolute favorite. When we arrived the program, we noticed the committee members' attire was green. This color was worn for the topic of the program, "The Color of Money". How creative. Next, we noticed that there were several pieces of artwork hanging on the wall displaying the various southern states with currency. I just learned that back in the 1800's, several states had their own currency. Who knew!

The Master of Ceremonies was our very own U.S. Circuit Judge, Hon. Joseph A. Greenaway, Jr. Judge Greenaway did a fantastic job running the show with a great sense of humor. The crowd would occasionally erupt in laughter every time he made a funny statement. The keynote speaker was Sharon Epperson, Senior Personal Finance Correspondent, for CNBC. Sharon was there to talk to us about money. But what led to that topic would be a personal story she shared with us of the importance of saving. One morning, Sharon recounted a day she went to the gym when all of a sudden she had an excruciating headache. What she remembers next is a surgery to her head due to a ruptured brain aneurysms. She would later learn that this condition has been in her family for 4 generations and recalls the other 3 members who had it, didn't survive. She was the sole survivor. This condition affected her ability to work or do anything else for that matter. She was out of work for a year. Her husband, friends and family were there to assist her during this difficult period. She had to take physical therapy to be able to do the simple things we do that we take for granted such as walking.



Sharon cannot stress enough the importance of saving since this is what saved her the year she was out of work. She shared with us the following rule for saving. Spend 60% of your gross salary for your expenses, save 10% for short term goals, 10% for long term goals, 10% for your retirement and spend 10% for pleasure, or as she referred to it as "fun money." In addition, she highly recommends having a life insurance policy and disability insurance. As we have often heard, many people lose everything due to a medical condition and as a result declare bankruptcy. Having 3 to 6 months of savings in an emergency fund was another advice Sharon made. I hope you incorporate this savings rule into your budget and stay healthy!



## FOURTH CIRCUIT – Lena Tapscott



Submitted by Deb Reynolds

Have you heard about **AbilityOne**?

I was excited to learn about this wonderful program, which is supported by our employer, the Federal Government! Included with a supply order I received was a catalog, and just inside the cover was a letter from the U.S. AbilityOne Commission outlining their program, the single largest employer of people who are blind or disabled. The Commission works through a network of nonprofit agencies.

I don't know about you, but programs like this always tug on my heartstrings and make me want to support them in any way possible. As a single person one-income household, that does not always translate into financial donations, but I do my best to support the efforts of any organization trying to make the world better for those challenged by disability or otherwise at a disadvantage. So I wanted to bring it to the attention of my fellow employees in the federal system.

Many of the products we purchase for our offices support this program, so if you have to order supplies anyway, look for the ones that partner with AbilityOne. Many of our trusted major suppliers are on board. It only takes a minute or two to determine if there is a product you will love from a company which gives back.

Here are a few links to find out more:

AbilityOne History and Program Information

<https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/mission>

<https://www.abilityone.com/home>

[https://www.abilityone.gov/procurement\\_list/product\\_contractors](https://www.abilityone.gov/procurement_list/product_contractors)

[https://www.abilityone.gov/abilityone\\_program/faqs](https://www.abilityone.gov/abilityone_program/faqs)

I hope you find this both helpful and encouraging. I sure did!

Submitted by Dena Strickland



Judge Sherri A. Lydon

Judge Sherri A. Lydon has just recently been appointed as a U.S. District Judge in Florence. Her staff includes Dena Strickland, who serves as both a paralegal and a judicial assistant.

Dena came to Judge Lydon's chambers from the U.S. Attorney's office where she has been employed in many positions with the most recent being Legal Support Manager for the Columbia and Florence Division. Judge Lydon's law clerks are Sarah Nielsen and Curtis Copeland. Sarah came to Judge Lydon's chambers from nine years in private practice with a civil defense firm and, most recently, with the U.S. Department of Justice's National Advocacy Center where she managed publications and taught courses on various civil procedure topics. Curtis is a 2019 graduate from USC Law School and has worked for Debbie Barbier, Johnny Gasser and Greg Harris. Curtis leaves chambers in September to pursue a career with the US Marine Corp as a JAG attorney. He will be missed!!



Dena Strickland

# FOURTH CIRCUIT, Cont.

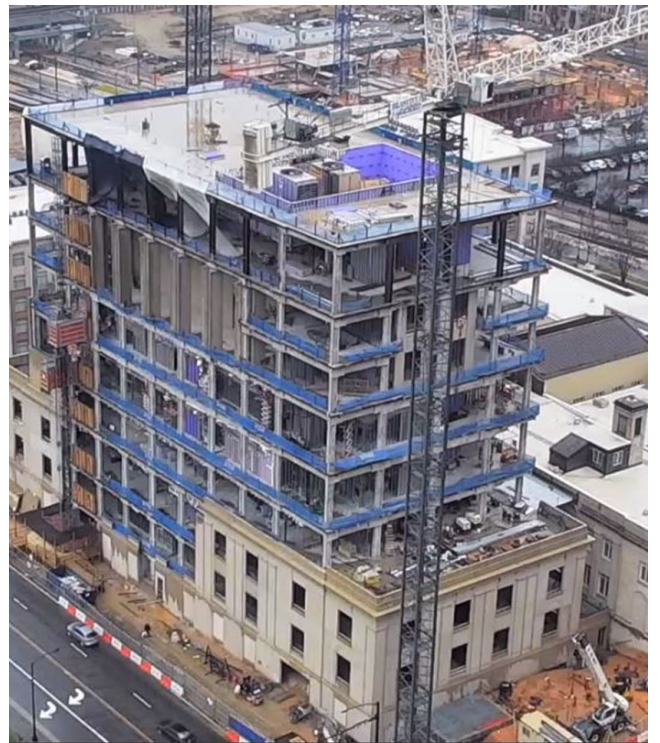


**U.S. Magistrate Judge David C. Keesler of the Western District of North Carolina** has been re-appointed for a third consecutive term beginning April 30, 2020.

## Annex to the Charles R. Jonas Federal Building

Submitted by Karen Boston

Work began in the fall of 2018 on the Annex to the historic Charles R. Jonas Federal Building in Charlotte, North Carolina. The new Annex is expected to be complete by May 2021, at which time renovation of the historic Jonas Building will commence. The Jonas renovation is expected to be complete by January 2023. The new Annex and the renovated Jonas Building will be home to the U.S. District Court, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, the U.S. Probation Office, the Bankruptcy Administrator's Office, the U.S. Marshals Service, and other federal agencies.





# SIXTH CIRCUIT – Jennifer Hodge

## Nashville, TN



There's an old English proverb that many of us learned in grade school about March, "In like a lion, out like a lamb." I've really been thinking more about that old proverb since the early March tornados came roaring in through much of middle Tennessee.

The mural pictured has become an iconic symbol to Nashville and Tennessee residents after devastating night and early morning tornados of March 2-3, 2020 reeked turmoil for residents of Nashville and middle Tennessee. It has been reported that

tornados ranging from F1 to F4 statuses stayed on the ground for nearly 50 miles, taking approximately 24 lives. The deadly nighttime tornados gave little warning, as most had less than five minutes to be awakened and to seek shelter.

With many of us traveling to the most recent conference held in Nashville, I feel like these events hit close to home for our association. Please keep Nashville and middle Tennessee in your thoughts and prayers as there

### TN/WD Active Shooter/Threat Simulation

Those in attendance at the Nashville conference may recall speaker Daniel Gaugh, with the U.S. Marshals Service's National Center for Judicial Security. Not only did his credentials check nearly every super hero box out there, but he gave the most informative active shooter education segment that I had ever heard, at least up to that point. I know, I know, some of you were thinking, "why this again, so repetitive, blah blah blah." I firmly believe that as repetitive as some topics can be, no one person will ever be over-trained in such an area. While our Federal Courthouses may seem to be secure and safe, we often become complacent and believe that nothing will ever occur while we are at work. Yet it has occurred at some, including the recent shooting at the Dallas Courthouse. Even with security enhanced in Federal Courthouses, making it rare, we are still exposed in churches, schools and even grocery stores. Please, sign this girl up for more training and help her have an overly trained brain and the reactive skills it takes to stay alive!

On October 23, 2019, the entire Western District of Tennessee, Eastern Division at Jackson, had just that opportunity for more active shooter/threat simulation training which was presented in a most unique and enlightening environment. The Court closed the doors to the public for an entire business day and hosted Marshal Gaugh, along with an entire team of Federal Law Enforcement Officers from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Washington D.C. While I thought Marshal Gaugh's hour long segment in Nashville was great, this mandatory event was over the top. It covered active shooter training, threat training, medical training, and actual simulations...repeat...actual simulations! While all court personnel, including Judges, participated from their perspective court rolls, Court Security Officers, Local Task Force Officers, and Local U.S. Marshals were being trained separately on responding to an active shooter event.

By mid-afternoon, both groups had to utilize skills learned throughout the day's training to get through a live simulation of an active shooter in the building, and in one instance, multiple shooters. Blank ammunition rounds were spent randomly, which gave off both sound and smell, as court employees, CSO's, and Marshals scurried to run, hide or fight during mock courtroom proceedings.

As CSO's and local officers took control of the simulated threat, court employees applied their newly learned medic skills to

## SIXTH CIRCUIT, Cont.

keep others alive until help arrived. Many learned how to seriously buy time for co-workers, including how to use tourniquets, chest seals and clotting gauze properly and even how to create makeshift tourniquets out of everyday supplies. The simulations also required practicing newly learned techniques of proper breathing to lower blood-pressure and remain calm which are required in order to think clearly during stressful situations.

During all the mass chaos, the law enforcement trainers and instructors observed and noted everyone's reactions or lack thereof. After each simulation, everyone reconvened for the instructors to point out the good, the bad, and the ugly in the reactions they observed. WOW! What an eye opener! Want to talk about what you know? Want to talk about what you DON'T know????

I cannot express enough my deepest gratitude to the Judges, the Clerk of Court, and the U.S. Marshals of our district for not only allowing us to participate in such an eye-opening training, but for making it mandatory. Even those with medical issues informed the trainers but were still allowed to participate in one way or another. I sincerely hope and pray that none of us are put in such a situation. However, I can honestly tell you that on August 25, 2017, my husband was involved in an active shooter incident at his employment. The shooter was high on methamphetamine. Thankfully, the assault rifle that spent off hundreds of rounds jammed, and my husband literally dodged bullets. This unexpectedly and literally occurred on my son's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. I will never be able to thank the Big Man upstairs enough for that gun jam! Not all stories end as fortunate as ours did and my heart aches for anyone affected by such violence. So again, please sign this girl up for more training! Encourage your Court to participate in this training. It is definitely an eye opener.

For more information please contact Daniel Gough at [DGough@usms.doj.gov](mailto:DGough@usms.doj.gov)



Court personnel, including a Judge and a Law Clerk, attend to a mock victim with multiple mock gunshot wounds, while trainers observe.





## What's on the JNet

### TEMPORARY DUTY ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM

#### TDY COLLABORATION GETS RESULTS



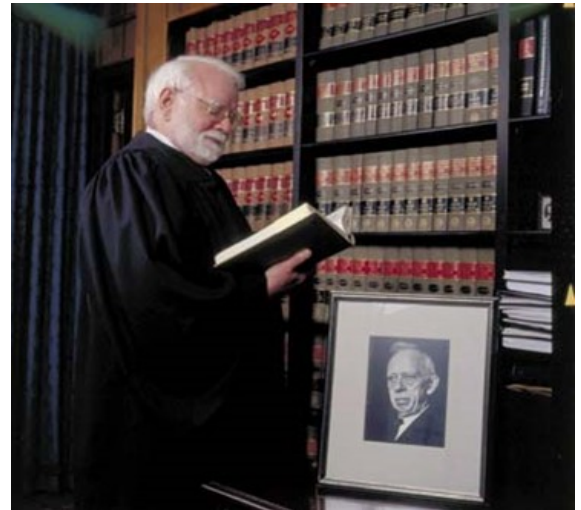
One of the many benefits of working for the Judiciary is the Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY) program, which gives court employees the opportunity to work on national initiatives with the AO.

### TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS BRING COURT STAFF TO CSO LIBRARY AND NEXTGEN PROGRAMS



*Looking to expand your professional skills and become a member of a team working on national initiatives with the AO*

<http://jnet.ao.dcn/human-resources/court-ao-exchange/account-portal/opportunities/d6bec400-051e-656d-861c-81fa5a39c72f>



## HONORABLE JOHN T. NIXON (1933 – 2019)

The US District Court-MDTN expresses great sorrow in reporting that Retired Honorable John T. Nixon passed away on December 19, 2019. He was 86.

Judge Nixon was appointed as a United States District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee by President Jimmy Carter on May 12, 1980, and faithfully served on the bench for almost 36 years.

Born in New Orleans on Jan. 9, 1933, he graduated from Harvard University with his bachelor's degree in 1955. He earned his law degree from Vanderbilt University Law School in 1960 and worked in private practice and then as city attorney in Anniston, Alabama. He later joined the U.S. Department of Justice as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division. He returned to Tennessee to serve as staff attorney with the state comptroller, as a circuit court judge and as a general sessions judge. He served as the court's chief judge for seven years and took senior status in 1998. He assumed inactive senior status in 2016.

Judge Nixon was highly respected, and he will be greatly missed.

By: Debby Sawyer

**E-MAIL TIPS**  
by Debby Sawyer

E-mail has become one of the top avenues for communication with others. While it is convenient and fast, there are definitely downfalls, especially when we respond from our cellphones. Although e-mail is less formal than other forms of correspondence, you still want to make a good impression. E-mails sent from your office address are a reflection of you, your court, your judges, and your peers, so be conscientious when sending and responding to e-mails. Here are a few suggestions and recommendations when sending work emails:

- Type the recipient's name last. Draft your e-mail and attach any attachments. Then, type in the recipient's address. This way, you lessen the chance of sending an incomplete e-mail or forgetting to include an attachment.
- Type a subject line that helps the recipient know what the e-mail is about. Having a subject line helps when searching through our always full mailboxes.
- Limit the use of "reply all". If everyone on the initial e-mail does not need to receive the response, don't copy them. A prime example is when someone is trying to schedule something and asks for available dates. Only the person sending the e-mail needs the response.
- Be polite, courteous, and professional. Be mindful of the tone, e-mails can easily be misinterpreted.
- Always proofread your emails. Don't rely on spellcheck.
- Don't use emojis. While they can be fun, they are not appropriate for business communications.

**Quarterly Report from the History and Archives Committee**

Submitted by Suzanne Gammon

It's that time of year again when *In Brief* rolls out promotional information for the Annual FJAA Educational Conference. Did you know, as reported in the November 1993 newsletter issue, the first secretarial seminar was held in 1972? That means our Association has provided nearly **50 years** educational opportunities to our membership. Of course, there were years when conferences were cancelled due to budget constraints. The History and Archives Committee is working to compile a registry of dates, locations and unique tidbits of information from each conference held. If you have any information you would like included in this effort, please send it to me at [Suzanne\\_gammon@mied.uscourts.gov](mailto:Suzanne_gammon@mied.uscourts.gov). Once completed, the list will be available at the FJAA website.

If you haven't visited our website lately, you may not be aware that the list of FJSA/FJAA past executive board members has been updated. I encourage everyone to review it and if any inaccuracies are noticed, please contact me so the list may be corrected.



## SEVENTH CIRCUIT— Cathy Geier



### Retirement of Neva Kanelos, Past Seventh Circuit Representative



As much as I have enjoyed working for the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals over the past thirty-four years, my heart has been leading me to make a change. I am single with two adult children who live in opposite directions of my home in the Midwest. In retirement, I plan to stay in Hawaii two to three months per year to be near my daughter. I plan to stay in New York City two to three months per year to be near my son. And, I plan to stay in Brazil at least two months per year to be near the many Brazilian homestay English students I hosted in Chicago. In addition to these plans, I was offered a seasonal job with a CPA to prepare income taxes. Also, I am certified to teach English as a second language, so I am processing which way to go – prepare taxes or teach online English. I'm not exactly sure how the scheduling will work out, but I'm looking forward to all of it.

Even though I decided on the end of August, I ended up leaving the end of January. We had an excellent applicant Judge Manion hired who is a perfect fit. I could have waited until August, but everything happens for a reason, and I was ready to go. In spite of my short notice, I had some really nice surprises. I work in both South Bend, Indiana, and Chicago, Illinois, but for these past two years, I have been mainly in South Bend. When I traveled with the Judge to Chicago for oral arguments on January 30, the Judicial Assistants in Chicago had put together a going away event when I only gave them 24 hours' notice. We had cake and a really nice time visiting and saying goodbye. When I returned to South Bend, Judge Ripple's JA and Judge Barrett's JA took me out to lunch along with Judge Manion's new Paralegal. I worked an additional thirty days as a volunteer to help out in chambers and to continue training my replacement, and on my last day of volunteer work, I was again surprised with a staff lunch, beautiful flowers, and more cake. How wonderful to leave with so much appreciation for my years of service.

Cathy Geier is the new Seventh Circuit Representative. Cathy has been extremely helpful (as she took over our newsletter project for the October issue while I was in Brazil), and she is eager to take over the Circuit Representative responsibilities. In addition to her work as a committee member for our nationwide newsletter, she has also been and is on several committees for the Central District of Illinois. Cathy is the Judicial Assistant to U.S. District Judge James E. Shadid in the Central District of Illinois, Peoria Division. She joined the Judiciary in 2001 as JA to U.S. District Judge Michael M. Mihm. Cathy worked for Judge Mihm until 2011 when he took senior status. She 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 her daughter started kindergarten. She enjoys family life with her partner, Doug, two sons, one daughter, and five grandchildren. In her spare time, she enjoys quilting, crocheting and reading.

Again, thank you for the privilege and honor to have served as your Seventh Circuit Representative, and thank you, Cathy, for generously taking over this position.

Sincerely,  
Neva Kanelos  
nlk7536@yahoo.com





## SEVENTH CIRCUIT— Cathy Geier, Cont.

### *News From the Central District of Illinois*



Senior U.S. District Judge Richard Mills from the Central District of Illinois Springfield Division was recently interviewed by Jayne Reardon, Executive Director of the Illinois Supreme Court. During the interview, Judge Mills discusses lessons he has learned from more than 50 years on the bench. A link to the interview is below. Judge Mills was appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1985.

<https://www.2civility.org/judge-richard-mills-lessons-in-civility-from-mr-lincolns-prairie/>



On February 13, 2020, the Central District of Illinois lost a beloved co-worker, Genise Bailey. Genise earned her master's degree in criminal justice from Illinois State University in 1998. She was a volunteer on the crisis hotline for PATH and worked as a counselor at Chestnut Health Systems as well as a specialized domestic violence probation officer for McLean County Adult Court Services. Genise joined the Courts on October 18, 1999 as a U.S. Probation Officer assigned to the Presentence Report Unit. Genise's stunning beauty and radiant smile lit up a room. Her laughter was contagious. We all benefited from her gentle, generous, loving spirit and fierce advocacy. Equal rights and justice were important to Genise, as reflected in her education and career. Above all however, Genise valued her time with family and friends, especially interacting with her grandson. She will be greatly missed by her Court family.

### *Welcome New Members*

*We're glad you can join us*

**Marcy Zora**, Career Law Clerk to United States Magistrate Judge Eric Long, CDIL, Urbana Division

**Diane Meadows**, Courtroom Deputy to United States District Judge Sue Myerscough, CDIL, Springfield Division

**Patricia Mastagh**, Judicial Assistant to United States Senior Circuit Judge Daniel Manion, 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, South Bend, Indiana

# SEVENTH CIRCUIT— Cathy

## News from the Western District of Wisconsin

Submitted by Melissa Hardin

Our court is updating the soft finishes in our courtrooms. The large ceremonial courtroom was just finished, with new carpeting, chairs, and new cushions in the public gallery. Gone is the mauve-colored fabric that was popular in the early 1980s, when the courthouse was built. In its place is an updated look featuring grey carpeting, black & grey plaid for the public benches, and a more subdued red fabric for accents.

### Courthouse Cookoff

Our hotly-contested annual Courthouse Cookoff was held the first week of March. This year's theme was carnival/mardi gras, and featured gumbo and jambalaya as entries.

Chambers came up 4 votes short of winning, as Probation prevailed with their tomato-based gumbo. Other entries came from the Clerk's Office, CSO's, Bankruptcy, Marshal's Office.



### Filings Increase

Finally, our *pro se* filings have increased to be about half of our civil cases. As a result, we now qualify for an additional part-time *pro se* law clerk, giving us the equivalent of 3 ½ full-time positions, which means we have almost twice as many *pro se* law clerks as judges. (We're a small court with just 2 district judges.) Our goal is to have the new clerk start in early April.



# SEVENTH CIRCUIT— Cathy Geier, Cont.



Submitted by Jonna Anderson

Judicial Assistant to the Honorable Michael S. Kanne

Jasper (formerly known as “Jett”) belongs to Jonna Anderson, Judicial Assistant to the Honorable Michael S. Kanne. He is a year old and was adopted from the Jasper County Animal Shelter in Rensselaer, Indiana three months ago.

Jasper is a St. Bernastiff (St. Bernard/Mastiff cross) and a true gentle giant, showing nothing but love and kindness to everyone he meets. Jasper was able to enjoy a “take your dog/child to work day,” while the remainder of the Lafayette chamber’s staff teleworked from home due to the Coronavirus prevention measures in place.

Although he’s big, with a deep timber, mighty bark (that he rarely shares), his temperament isn’t conducive to a job as a guard dog for the day. However, we did find some essential things for him to do. At 120 lbs., he made for an excellent door stop to prevent entry, was a comforting companion which improved productivity in the unusually quiet office, and tested out equipment, like the office rubber-band ball – to be sure the bands were secure and wouldn’t fling off and flick someone, causing injury. He also demonstrated essential relaxation techniques like napping (which we don’t encourage at work), taking a break from your desk for a short brisk walk to relieve your mind (or whatever else needs relieving), and last but not least, he kept a positive watchful attitude all day long, ever ready to socially interact with a happy demeanor.

In this day and time, practicing and teaching those techniques are essential, don’t you think? Job well done, Jasper!



## **EIGHTH CIRCUIT— Judith Kirby**

Greetings from the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit. I don't have much to add this quarter, because I am sure that this finds you all hunkered down trying to make things work in this new circumstance. I hope you all stay healthy (and not going stir crazy) as we move through the pandemic. What follows are a few light-hearted items from our part of the country.

Take care and stay healthy!

**FJAA EARLY BIRD WINNER:  
HEATHER ARENT-ZACHARY  
FROM THE 8TH CIRCUIT IS THE WINNER.**

### **Schelp confirmed to federal judgeship**

By [Jessica Shumaker](#), Missouri Lawyers Weekly, February 12, 2020

The U.S. Senate has confirmed St. Louis attorney Matthew T. Schelp as a U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri. The Senate voted 72-23 to approve his confirmation on Feb. 12. Five senators did not vote.

Schelp is a partner at Husch Blackwell in St. Louis, with a practice focused on government compliance, investigations and litigation. Before joining Husch Blackwell, he founded a boutique litigation firm in St. Louis, Jensen, Bartlett & Schelp, in 2009. He also previously served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Eastern District of Missouri for nearly a decade, focusing on investigating and prosecuting fraud and criminal health care matters. He earned his law degree from the University of Missouri. He also served in the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps after law school. In 2007, he received Missouri Lawyers Weekly's Up & Coming award.



*Matthew T. Schelp*

Schelp's confirmation was lauded by Sen. Roy Blunt. "Matthew Schelp is a bright, experienced attorney who understands the role of a judge is to interpret and apply the law as it is written," he said in a statement. "I was proud to recommend Mr. Schelp for this position and look forward to seeing him sworn in."

*Based on an article by Jessica Shumaker, Missouri Lawyers Weekly, February 12, 2020. The article appeared in U.S. Courts Library - 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Newswatch – February 14, 2020.*



## EIGHTH CIRCUIT— Judith Kirby.. continued

### A bit about the 'White House' on the federal courthouse construction site

By Kathy Bolten, Business Record,  
February 26, 2020

*A view of the construction of the federal courthouse from the top of the Ruan Center. The two-story construction house used by Ryan Cos. And U.S. General Services Administration can be seen on the left side of the site, located at 101 Locust St. Photo by Joe Crimmings*



When construction managers at the site where a new federal courthouse is being built in Des Moines meet to discuss the project, they gather in the oval office or situation room of the two-story white structure on the northeast corner of the construction site.

The site at 101 Locust St. wasn't large enough to hold the modular trailers that often are used for offices and conference rooms, said Brad Thomason, senior project executive of construction for the Minneapolis-based Ryan Cos. Instead, officials decided to build a two-story house that was painted white, he said.

John Jarvey, chief district judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa, "jokingly called it the 'White House' so we named the different conference rooms after rooms at the White House," Thomason said.

Construction of the house began last August shortly before a groundbreaking for the \$136.6 million project. The house was framed with two-by-fours that were screwed together. Drywall was also screwed on rather than nailed, Thomason said.

"Everything will get repurposed after the project is done," he said. That includes furnaces, water heaters and plumbing fixtures.

Ryan Cos. oversaw the construction of the federal courthouse in Cedar Rapids on a site that also didn't have space for modular trailers. At that site, a one-story building was constructed that included meeting rooms, offices and break rooms. When construction was nearing completion, the house was dismantled and parts donated to the local Habitat for Humanity.

Parts of the Des Moines "White House" will be donated to the local Habitat for Humanity, Thomason said.

About 25 people work out of the Des Moines construction house, including field managers and supervisors for Ryan Cos. and the project management team.

## EIGHTH CIRCUIT— Judith Kirby... continued

### 'Part of this country': At Capitol, Minnesota welcomes newest citizens

Brian Bakst, Minnesota Public Radio, February 26, 2020

Fifty-one of Minnesota's newest U.S. citizens waved flags and recited the Pledge of Allegiance after being sworn in at the State Capitol on Wednesday.

They came from countries around the globe — almost every continent — and met federal requirements for naturalization. Whether it be for family, professional or other reasons, they settled in Minnesota and have lived here for at least three months, many much longer.

Federal Judge John Tunheim administered their oath and gave them a hearty welcome. Tunheim told the citizens and spectators in the Capitol rotunda that there have been 17,000 citizens naturalized in Minnesota in the last year.



“Citizenship is a very precious thing. I don’t need to remind each of you of that,” he said. “We have a lot of Americans we need to remind how precious citizenship is, but I encourage you all to become active, productive, contributing citizens of this country and this state.”

He urged the new citizens to exercise their right to vote and noted the presidential primary election next week. “You can vote quickly if you want to, you can start right away,” Tunheim said.

After they got their official papers, the new citizens handed in voter registration forms.

Mohit Agrawal, who is originally from India, arrived in the United States 20 years ago for an IT developer job. He lives in Apple Valley.

“I’m looking forward to voting,” he said. “What changes is my rights and my responsibilities as a citizen. I was not a part of this country’s democratic rights and now I can vote.”

Restaurant manager Matar Ndaiye immigrated from Senegal and now lives in St. Paul.

“I am part of this country and I feel like I am born here because they gave me everything,” he said. “Thank you, America.”

*Based on an article by Brian Bakst, Minnesota Public Radio, February 26, 2020. The article appeared in U.S. Courts Library - 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Newswatch – February 28, 2020.*



## **NINTH CIRCUIT—Suzanne Lofton**

While Flagstaff is considered home base for Judge Bibles, “away” court allows her to hike and explore the most beautiful places as she conducts court hearings in Page, Grand Canyon, Kingman and Flagstaff. Here are just a few gorgeous photos taken by Judge Bibles in the Grand Canyon, Bright Angel Trail, Antelope Canyon, and Coyote Butte. Judge Bibles had the opportunity to show Judge Kohler (Magistrate Judge for Southern Utah) around Antelope Canyon which is just outside Page, on a Navajo Nation Park. The Ooh Aah Point sign is located at the South Kaibab trailhead at the Grand Canyon. Fun fact: the same sign can also be found in Judge Bibles’ robing room. Lastly, check out the beautiful new chairs in the Grand Canyon courtroom! The last time the courtroom had been decorated was in 1977 by Magistrate Judge Thomas McKay who was the presiding

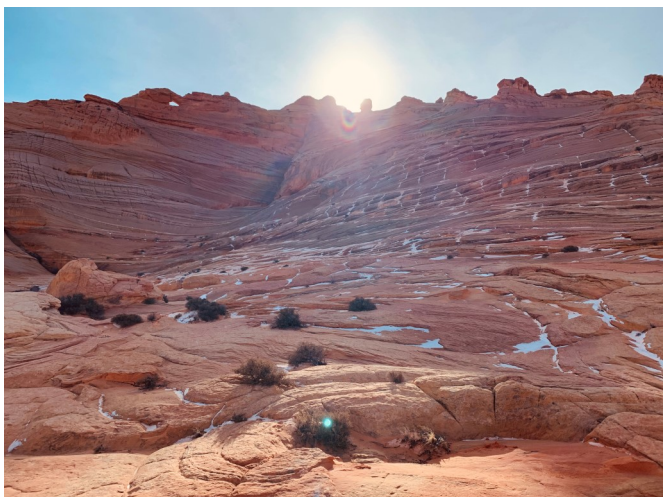
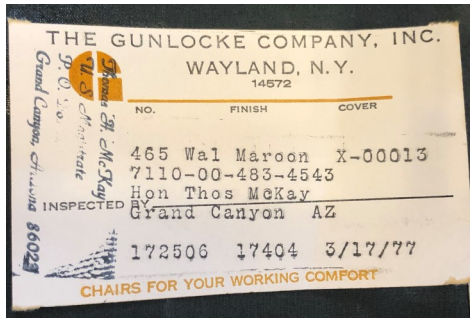


stand-in Judge over Grand Canyon. Needless to say, Grand Canyon court was due for an upgrade and Judge Bibles took care of it!





# NINTH CIRCUIT—Suzanne Lofton





From the desk of the VP



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Kathy Collins	4th	1-Apr	Gail Jackson	4th	24-May
Susan Lenburg	7th	1-Apr	Celesta Richardson	9th	25-May
Karen Baca	10th	2-Apr	Luz Probus	5th	26-May
Bettye Rhinehart	6th	3-Apr	Suzanne Gammon	6th	26-May
Kathy Thobe	8th	7-Apr	Portia Muniz	9th	26-May
Emily Smith	6th	10-Apr	Phyllis Simmons	5th	28-May
Laurie Thoms	9th	12-Apr	Carol Ditta	10th	29-May
Michele Johnson	5th	19-Apr	Jackie Phipps	8th	30-May
Terri Flowers	5th	22-Apr	Gabriela Ma	9th	4-Jun
Sylvia Fontenot	5th	24-Apr	Donna Vinson	6th	7-Jun
Michal Belayneh	Fed/DC	25-Apr	Rebecca Baertsch	8th	9-Jun
Ann Pisacano	2nd	26-Apr	Melissa Kruger	8th	12-Jun
Shona Mikell	2nd	3-May	Michele Savona	2nd	13-Jun
Karen Straub	9th	3-May	Lorraine Gamez	9th	16-Jun
Barbara Alcorn	5th	5-May	Jennifer Hodge	6th	18-Jun
Rebecca Peer	9th	10-May	Whitney Gingrich	7th	23-Jun
Christine Stewart	2nd	11-May	Deanne Bader	10th	26-Jun
Theresa A. Hall	10th	12-May	Sheila Cox	4th	26-Jun
Adalia Mora	5th	12-May	Robert Welles	6th	27-Jun
Ilene Lee	9th	12-May	Marie Firmin	5th	28-Jun
Dwendy Pennell	5th	14-May	Kathrine Burleson	10th	29-Jun
Karen Burton	4th	17-May	Carianne Sawyer	1st	29-Jun
Bernadette Aurio	9th	19-May	Jacqueline Logue	6th	30-Jun





*Please stay in touch with your circuit representative with newsworthy items for the next issue of the newsletter.*

**1<sup>ST</sup> CIRCUIT CHRISTIE PICHE**

c/o Hon. Jon Levy  
U.S. District Court  
156 Federal Street  
Portland, ME 04101 Ph: 207-245-3200

**2<sup>ND</sup> CIRCUIT & Court of International Trade  
SAMANTHA GENCARELLO**

c/o Hon. Daniel Patrick Moynihan  
U.S. Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street Room 2220  
New York, NY 10007 Ph: 212-805-4848

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

c/o Hon. Patty Shwartz  
United States Post Office and Courthouse  
Two Federal Square, Room 477  
Newark, NJ 07102 Ph: 973-645-6596

**4<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT LENA TAPSCOTT**

c/o Hon. Richard Mark Gergel  
United States District Court  
J. Waties Waring Judicial Center  
83 Meeting Street  
Charleston, SC 29401 Ph: 843-579-2610

**5<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT CHRISTINE ABADIE**

c/o Hon. W. Eugene Davis  
U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals  
600 Camp Street—Room 210  
New Orleans, LA 70130 Ph. 504-310-8036

**6<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT JENNIFER HODGE**

c/o Hon. J. Daniel Breen  
U.S. Courthouse  
111 S. Highland Ave Suite 417  
Jackson, TN 38301 Ph: 731-421-9252

**7<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT CATHY GEIER**

c/o Hon. James E. Shadid  
U.S. District Court  
100 N.E. Monroe, Suite 204  
Peoria, IL 61602 Ph: 309-671-4227

**8<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT JUDITH KIRBY**

c/o District of Minnesota  
Warren E. Burger Federal Building  
316 North Robert Street Room 772  
St. Paul, MN 55101 Ph: 651-848-1900

**9<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT SUZANNE LOFTON**

c/o Hon. Derrick Kahala Watson  
Prince Kuhio Federal Building  
300 Ala Moana Blvd Room C-461  
Honolulu, HI 96850 808-541-1470

**10<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT KAREN BACA**

c/o Hon. Harris L. Hartz  
Frank Carlson Federal Bldg. & US Courthouse  
444 Southeast Quincy St Room 420  
Topeka, KS 66683 Ph: 505-843-6196

**11<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT GAIL SHAFER**

c/o Hon. J. Randal Hall  
U.S. District Court  
600 James Brown Blvd.  
Augusta, GA Ph: 706-823-6460

**FEDERAL/DC CIRCUITS****CONNIE ROY**

c/o Hon. Elaine Kaplan  
U.S. Court of Federal Claims  
Howard T. Markey National Courts Building  
717 Madison Place, N.W. Room 705  
Washington, DC 20439 Ph: 202-357-6604

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE**

Gabriela (Gaby) Ma (Chairman) – [gabriela\\_ma@azd.uscourts.gov](mailto:gabriela_ma@azd.uscourts.gov)  
Katherine Kassel (1st, 2nd, 3rd) – [katherine\\_kassel@ohnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:katherine_kassel@ohnd.uscourts.gov)  
Jonna Anderson (4th, 5th, 6th) – [jonna\\_anderson@ca7.uscourts.gov](mailto:jonna_anderson@ca7.uscourts.gov)  
Cathy Geier (7th, 8th, 9th) – [cathy\\_geier@ilcd.uscourts.gov](mailto:cathy_geier@ilcd.uscourts.gov)  
Rachel Tutor (10th, 11th, Federal/DC) – [rachel\\_tutor@ca10.uscourts.gov](mailto:rachel_tutor@ca10.uscourts.gov)

**WEBSITE MANAGER AND WHO'S WHO DIRECTORY**

Melissa Hardin / WI Western District - [Melissa\\_hardin@wiwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Melissa_hardin@wiwd.uscourts.gov)