

LAWYERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES – September 10, 2024

Present: Alexandra Jacobs, Arnold Calmann, Carlos M. Bollar, Charles M. Lizza, Elizabeth Sher, James R. Birchmeier, Jeffrey Greenbaum, Jennifer A. Hradil, John Basiak, K. Anthony Thomas, Karen Confoy, Keith Miller, Kelly Crawford, Kerri E. Chewning, Kevin Walsh, Lisa J. Rodriguez, Matthew J. Platkin, Melissa E. Rhoads, Michael A. Galpern, Patricia A. Staiano, Peter C. Harvey, Vikas Khanna, Ricardo Solano, Jr., Shoshanna Schiff, Steven M. Richman, Thomas R. Curtin, Victor Afanador, Wayne Fang, William Cook

Chief Judge Bumb, Judge Quraishi, Judge Padin, Judge Hammer, Judge Wettre, Judge King, Judge Adams, Judge Hillman (Ret.), Judge Brown (Ret.), Judge Kugler (Ret.), Judge Wolfson (Ret.), Judge Bissell (Ret.)

The Lawyers Advisory Committee (LAC) met at the Park Chateau, where the meeting was convened by the Chair, Thomas R. Curtin, at 6:00 p.m., and the following occurred:

1. The Chair, Tom Curtin, recognized the loss of Donald A. Robinson and initiated a moment of silence.

Judge King announced this year's Gerry Award recipient is Judge Kugler (Ret.) and the reception will be held in October.

The Chair acknowledged the formation of three LAC subcommittees and indicated their reports will be provided at a future meeting.

2. The Chair invited a motion to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2024, meeting. The motion was made and seconded and the minutes were approved.
3. Chief Judge Bumb reminded members that Judge Sheridan retired June 30, 2024 and welcomed Judge Adams who joined the bench in June. Chief Judge Bumb announced the next Board of Judges' meeting being held on September 19th and invited members to send any agenda items to her.

Chief Judge Bumb thanked everyone for their support of Danny's Pantry, especially the grand opening event in Newark held on July 18, 2024. Camden and Trenton will open pantries in the coming months and Judge Arleo's vision is for nationwide pantries in all U.S. courthouses.

Chief Judge Bumb informed everyone that the library in Trenton has been designated as the location for the Court's Civics Learning Center.

She encouraged everyone to review upcoming events on the agenda.

4. Vikas Khanna reported on behalf of U.S. Attorney Phillip Sellinger that hiring has decreased from 2023 to 2024. He updated members on a new process regarding judicial threats to judges and staff. The collaborative process involves the USMS working with the AUSA's to present any threats to the USAO for consideration.
5. Matthew Platkin, Attorney General, commended Vikas for a great working relationship, with violent crime down 20% which is a significant reduction.

He discussed his offices' Honors Program and thanked judges for their efforts in fostering a great pool of young attorneys.

6. K. Anthony Thomas, FPD, reported that his numbers are down because crime is down. His office is working in alternative ways including accepting direct appeals from the 1st circuit and sending attorneys to other districts, which also helps less experienced attorneys gain trial experience.

He highlighted the Defender Services Diversity Fellowship Program which has 12 fellows. Various courts throughout the country serve as host courts, including the District of NJ. He discussed the capital litigation unit focused on death penalty eligible cases and the offices' Mitigation Specialist whose analysis of socioeconomic factors helps in the preparation of mitigation reports in case appropriate instances.

7. Victor Afanador reported, on behalf of the Association of the Federal Bar of NJ (AFBNJ), an upcoming event from October 31, 2024 – November 1, 2024, *Defending the Judiciary*, in conjunction with Duke University. Panelists will discuss attorneys' efforts to combat negativity toward the judiciary. Judge Salas will be honored during the program and two AFBNJ representatives (Sue Leming and Rebekah Conroy) will attend.

Victor Afanador reported on the following upcoming events:

- a. Bankruptcy Chapter 13 Symposium - November 15, 2024;
 - b. Federal Practice Bench Bar Symposium - April 10, 2025 at the Law Center;
 - c. William H. Gindin Bankruptcy Bench Bar Conference - May 2, 2025;
 - d. New Attorneys/Judges Reception, including swearing-in ceremony – November, 2024 at the Trenton Courthouse.
8. Keith Miller reported on behalf of the Historical Society. The Society co-sponsored the grand opening of Danny's Pantry in Newark. He reported that the Great Trials event in Newark was a huge success, and the next one will be in Camden on a date to be determined. He reminded everyone the Donald Robinson Celebration of Life event will take place in Newark's Ceremonial Courtroom on September 25, 2024.

9. New Business:

- a. Tom Curtin announced Karol Corbin Walker is one of two NJSBA's Medal of Honor recipients with a reception on September 24, 2024 at Park Chateau.
- b. Tom announced the annual holiday luncheon is December 11, 2024.
- c. Rule amendments:
 - i. Shoshanna Schiff reported on behalf of the bankruptcy rules subcommittee that proposed local rules regarding bankruptcy appeals are being reviewed.
 - ii. Judge Wettre added the local rules regarding mediation are also being reviewed to potentially include bankruptcy appeals.
 - iii. Chief Judge Bumb requested a subcommittee be formed to look at a rule amendment regarding motions to reconsider decisions of judges no longer with the court.
 - iv. Judge Padin asked for the same subcommittee to consider if page limits for briefs should be reduced, particularly in comparison with other districts. She offered her research to the subcommittee.
 - v. The following members volunteered, at the meeting, for the subcommittee:
 - 1. Arnold Calmann
 - 2. Charles Lizza
 - 3. Beth Sher
 - 4. John Basiak
 - 5. Kerri Chewning
 - 6. Lisa Rodriguez
 - 7. Michael Galpern
 - 8. Steven Richman
 - 9. Jennifer Hradil
 - 10. Jeffrey Greenbaum
 - 11. Judge Hillman
 - 12. Judge Bissell

10. The next LAC meeting will be on Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa E. Rhoads