

LAWYERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES – March 4, 2025

Present: Alexandra Jacobs, Arnold Calmann, Charles M. Lizza, Danielle Corcione, David M. White, Dennis Drasco, Dennis Gleason, Edward Hartnett, Elizabeth Sher, Eric Abraham, James R. Birchmeier, Jennifer A. Hradil, Joe Braunreuther, John Basiak, John T. O'Brien, Joseph L. Linares, K. Anthony Thomas, Karen Confoy, Keith Miller, Kelly Crawford, Kerri E. Chewning, Kevin Marino, Kevin Walsh, Lisa J. Rodriguez, Jeremy Feigenbaum, Melissa Rhoads, Michael Zogby, Patricia A. Staiano, Peter C. Harvey, Vikas Khanna, Shoshanna Schiff, Steven M. Richman, Sue Leming, Thomas R. Curtin, Victor Afanador, William Cook

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

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

1. The Chair, Tom Curtin, provided an overview of the mission of the LAC and welcomed new members.
2. The Chair invited a motion to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2024, meeting. The motion was made and seconded and the minutes were approved.
3. Chief Judge Bumb began by thanking the AFBNJ for the editorial regarding their support for the judiciary. Chief Judge Bumb introduced an organizational chart to explain the structure of the LAC. She indicated the Civil Practice Committee has already been formed and anyone interested in joining the newly formed Criminal Practice Committee should email Tom Curtin after the meeting.
4. Chief Judge Chagares informed members of two current vacancies for circuit judges, left by Judges Greenaway (New Jersey) and Jordan (Delaware).

Chief Judge Chagares announced that on May 22, 2025, there will be a memorial court session for Judge Stapleton.

Chief Judge Chagares reported the percentage of pro se appeals makes up 55% of their docket but, overall, the caseload is still down. Some circuit judges are handling hearings in district courts, as needed. He also cited rule and procedural changes including giving more notice for hearings and the use of focus letters to lawyers.

Chief Judge Chagares informed everyone that the bankruptcy judge vacancy application deadline is March 10, 2025.

Chief Judge Chagares announced a Circuit-wide AI committee has been created.

Chief Judge Chagares noted that a Circuit history book is being authored by Marion Purcell with anticipated release date in early, 2026.

5. Vikas Khanna reported on behalf of the United States Attorney's Office. He informed everyone John Giordano was sworn-in as the new Acting United States Attorney and the office is working on a seamless transition. Vikas indicated while the office is busy with new priorities, the core mission remains the same. He thanked Chief Judge Bumb for her commitment to the office.
6. K. Anthony Thomas, started off with well wishes to Vikas. K. Anthony announced the focus from Washington is two-fold – illegal reentry cases and death-penalty cases. He indicated there are 14 death penalty-eligible cases in the district, with most, if not all, gang-related charges. He also indicated the Public Defender's Office is preparing for another CR.
7. Sue Leming reported on behalf of the AFBNJ and thanked Chief Judge Bumb for her support. She acknowledged the statement made by the AFBNJ and noted the executive board has been proactive in recognizing those in the judiciary who have taken an oath and discharge their duties every day. Sue reminded members that the Judicial Conference will be held on March 12, 2025, at the Marigold and noted additional upcoming events: Federal Practice Bench/Bar Symposium on April 10, 2025 at the Law Center, Bankruptcy Bench/Bar Conference on May 2, 2025 at the Palace at Somerset Park, where Judge Gravelle will be sworn in as the Bankruptcy Chief Judge and the Brennan Reception at the Park Chateau on June 10, 2025, with the swearing-in of the new AFBNJ officers including president, Rebekah Conroy.
8. Keith Miller reported on behalf of the Historical Society, noting last week was a success with the second Great Trials event held in Camden and asked members to send suggestions on trials for the Trenton event to be scheduled at a later date. He announced the Historical Society is in the planning stages of the 100th anniversary of Probation and Pretrial Services.
9. Kevin Walsh reported on behalf of the Civil Practice Committee, noting after review of Local Rule 7.2, the Committee recommends no changes. The Committee will next look at Local Rule 201.1 and Appendix M to determine if a sub-committee should be formed to recommend changes to the Rules Committee and Board of Judges.
10. William Cook reported on behalf of the Model Civil Jury Charges Committee and indicated the Committee will be reaching out to the bar for feedback.
11. Shoshanna Schiff reported on behalf of the Bankruptcy Local Rules Committee, noting rules are being finalized to be presented at the June Board of Judges meeting. Additionally, she discussed a bankruptcy appeal mediation amendment.

12. The following issues were raised for potential rule amendments and Committee formation:

- a. Chief Judge Bumb - Rule 7.1 Motion to Reconsider – does the court need a rule, and if so, should there be an exception if a case is assigned to a new judge because the prior judge has left the bench.
- b. Chief Judge Bumb – Mitigation reports – asked that the Criminal Law Committee determine if parameters should be defined if the filing of mitigation reports continues.
- c. Judge Padin – Rule 104.1 (b)(1) – when discipline is imposed in another court and is self-reported to the District of NJ, can the Chief Judge enter an order imposing reciprocal discipline.

Tom Curtin asked for any member interested in examining any of these topics, to please email him by 3/5/25.

13. Patricia Staiano reminded everyone that Judge Gambardella's retirement party will be on April 2, 2025, at The Park Savoy.

The next meeting will be on June 3, 2025, at 6:00pm.