



VIRGINIA WOMEN ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

RACHEL ROBINSON
President
BRETT CALLAHAN
President-Elect
ALISON MULLINS
Secretary
LU ALOUPAS
Treasurer
MARGARET HARDY
Immediate Past President

Board of Directors
STACY BORDICK
TIFFANY BURTON
MAUREEN CARR
JANET CHO
ANGELA DIAZ
SHEMEKA HANKINS
KAY HEIDBREDER
CLAIRE KEENA
ANNE C. LAHREN
DARREL TILLAR MASON
JOAN MCKENNA
MICHELLE PARKER
NANCY REYNOLDS
ELIZABETH ROSS
JAMEL ROWE
SARAH SCHMIDT
BETSY SUE SCOTT
LISA SHEA
CORRIE SIRKIN
ZAIDA THOMPSON
JOHNEAL WHITE

CLAIRE BAKER
Executive Director

POST OFFICE BOX 3806
MERRIFIELD, VIRGINIA 22116-3806
PHONE: 804-282-6363
www.VWAA.org

E-Mail: VWAA@live.com

December 10, 2021

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & FACSIMILE:

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:

Senator John S. Edwards
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Senate of Virginia
Pocahontas Building, Room E506
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
district21@senate.virginia.gov

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:

Representative Charniele Herring
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Virginia House of Delegates
Pocahontas Building, Room E606
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
DelCHerring@house.virginia.gov

**Re: Vacancy in the 17th Judicial Circuit of Virginia,
Arlington County Juvenile and Domestic Relations
District Court**

Dear Governor Northam, Senator Edwards, and Representative Herring:

On behalf of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association (“VWAA”), a regional committee (the “Committee”) was impaneled to evaluate candidates for an anticipated vacancy in the 17th Judicial Circuit of Virginia, Arlington County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

The VWAA requested that interested candidates complete the VWAA Judicial Candidates Questionnaire (the “Application”), submit a short biography, and participate in an interview with the Committee. On November 18, 2021, the Committee conducted virtual interviews of five (5) candidates.

It is worth noting that the VWAA ratings are based upon a review of each candidate’s merits against published standards and guidelines, including the following: fairness, integrity, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and *pro bono* service. Ratings are not a function of a general vote by the VWAA membership, nor are they a comparison of candidates within the “pool” presented.

The following rating categories are used by the VWAA:

- (1) NOT QUALIFIED: Applied to any applicant who fails to meet the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, integrity and/or other basic criteria set forth in the ABA Guidelines.
- (2) QUALIFIED: Applied to any applicant who meets the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, integrity and/or other basic criteria set forth in the ABA Guidelines.
- (3) RECOMMENDED: Applied to any applicant whose qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, integrity and/or other basic criteria set forth in the ABA Guidelines to warrant the Committee’s affirmative recommendation.
- (4) HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: Reserved for any candidate who is especially well-qualified for the position and merits special recommendation.

The VWAA’s procedures provide that ratings of “Qualified” and “Recommended” require a vote in support by at least a simple majority of the Committee. A rating of “Highly Recommended” requires a vote in support by at least a two-thirds majority of those voting. In order for the Committee to find that a candidate fails to meet the minimum qualifications and is “Not Qualified,” at least two-thirds of those voting must so find.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the VWAA approved, in accordance with its procedures, the following endorsements of the Committee for this judicial vacancy:

W. Michael Chick, Jr. was found *highly recommended*.
Courtney McCarthy was found *highly recommended*.
Jason McCandless was found *highly recommended*.

Marcia O. Payne was found *recommended*.

Adam Krischer was found *qualified*.

Executive summaries of the qualifications of each of the above candidates are attached to this letter.

For your further information, the Committee members participating in the interview process were as follows:

Christie Leary: Christie Leary is a partner at Leary Law, PC in Fairfax, Virginia. Ms. Leary graduated from the College of William and Mary and received her law degree from George Mason University School of Law. Ms. Leary is a past President of the Fairfax Bar Association and the Fairfax Law Foundation and past chair of the Virginia State Bar's (VSB) 5th District Disciplinary Committee. Currently, Ms. Leary serves on the VSB Bar Council as a representative from the 19th Judicial Circuit.

Jamel Rowe: Ms. Rowe is a senior associate at Livesay & Myers, P.C., where she exclusively practices family law. She handles matters such as separation, divorce, custody, visitation, support and adoption. Ms. Rowe has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2012.

Alexandra Ribe: Ms. Ribe is a partner at Murray Osorio, PLLC. She focuses her practice on immigration law. She is also an adjunct professor of immigration law at the Georgetown University Law Center. She has been barred in Colorado since 2011 and in Virginia since 2017.

Jill C. Seiferth: Ms. Seiferth is a shareholder at Bean, Kinney & Korman, P.C. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, support matters, property agreements, and equitable distribution. Ms. Seiferth has been licensed to practiced law in the Commonwealth of Virginia since 2011.

Elizabeth M. Bookwalter is an associate attorney at ShounBach. Her practice focuses exclusively on domestic relations. Ms. Bookwalter is barred in the Commonwealth of Virginia (2015), District of Columbia (2016), and Maryland (2014).

Respectfully yours,



Rachel Robinson
President
Virginia Women Attorneys Association

Christie A. Leary
Judicial Chair, Northern Virginia Chapter
Virginia Women Attorneys Association

Enclosures: Executive Summary of W. Michael Chick, Jr., Esquire
 Executive Summary of Adam Kirscher, Esquire
 Executive Summary of Courtney McCarthy, Esquire
 Executive Summary of Jason McCandless, Esquire
 Executive Summary of Marcia O. Payne, Esquire

CC (by email only): W. Michael Chick, Jr., Esquire
 Adam Kirscher, Esquire
 Courtney McCarthy, Esquire
 Jason McCandless, Esquire
 Marcia O. Payne, Esquire

CC (by email only): Senator Adam Ebbin
 Senator Barbara Favola
 Senator Janet D. Howell
 Delegate Alfonso Lopez
 Delegate Patrick Hope
 Delegate Mark H. Levine
 Delegate Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.

CC (by email only): Tiffany M. Bruton, Esquire, VWAA, Northern Virginia Chapter, President
 Christie A. Leary, Esquire
 Jill Seiferth, Esquire
 Elizabeth Bookwalter, Esquire
 Jamel Rowe, Esquire
 Alexandra Ribe, Esquire

W. MICHAEL CHICK, JR.

Experience and Legal Ability: William Michael Chick, Jr. (“Mike Chick”) earned his Juris Doctor from the George Washington University Law School in 2005. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2005.

He currently serves as the Deputy Commonwealth’s Attorney for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church. In that capacity, he works primarily within the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court. Prior to that he was a partner and trial attorney with the firm Carrol & Nuttall, P.C.

Mr. Chick is the Commonwealth Attorney Office’s liaison with the Arlington Public Schools (APS) and serves on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Racial and Ethnic Diversity Team. He sits on the advisory board for the APS Second Chance program.

He is a member of the Arlington County Bar Association and is on the Executive Board of the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association. He was appointed to the Criminal Justice Act list in federal court and served on the Virginia capital defense appointment list. Mr. Chick also represented immigrant children to obtain special immigrant juvenile status and served as pro bono counsel for a traumatized child eyewitness in a capital murder case in Virginia.

In the community, Mr. Chick volunteers as the head coach and co-operator of the Falls Church Force Wrestling Club. He is also an active member of the Grace Community Church as a musician, singer, and community group leader.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions, interview and professional references, Mr. Chick demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Chick possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Chick is especially well-qualified for the position of Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court judge, and his application merits special recommendation. Accordingly, the Committee rates him as **Highly Recommended**.

ADAM M. KRISCHER

Experience and Legal Ability: Mr. Krischer earned his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Denver College of Law in 2003 after receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree from the George Washington University in 2000. Mr. Krischer was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2003.

Mr. Krischer has served as a substitute judge since 2019, where he presides over civil and criminal proceedings, including bench trials.

Mr. Krischer began his legal career as a staff attorney with the National Center for the Prosecution of Violence Against Women. He subsequently worked as an Assistant Commonwealth Attorney for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church. Upon relocating to Germany temporarily on military orders, he volunteered with U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Legal Office. Since returning to the United States in 2010, he has been partner at Dennis, Stewart & Krischer, PLLC. In his private practice Mr. Krischer is a criminal defense attorney and, prior to his appointment as a substitute judge, served as a Guardian *ad Litem* and represented parents in abuse and neglect cases.

Throughout his career, Mr. Krischer has devoted a significant amount of time to the legal community. He has been the Chair of the Arlington County Bar Association, the Chair of the Arlington County Bar Foundation, as well as the Chair of the Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program Policy Board. In addition, Mr. Krischer has served as a legal instructor for the Arlington Crisis Intervention Team in 2020 and 2021 as well as an instructor for the Arlington Bar Association Appellate Update from 2016 to 2017.

Mr. Krischer is the recipient of the U.S. Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal (2009), U.S. Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service (2010), Northern Virginia Magazine Top Lawyer (2020) and Virginia Lawyers Weekly Leader in the Law (2021).

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions, interview, and professional references, Mr. Krischer demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Krischer possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Krischer meets the minimum requirements for the position of Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court judge. Accordingly, the Committee rates him as **Qualified**.

JASON MCCANDLESS

Experience and Legal Ability: Mr. McCandless earned his Bachelor of Arts from Duke University in 1994 and his Juris Doctor from the College of William and Mary School of Law in 1997. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2001.

Mr. McCandless is currently serving as an Assistant County Attorney for Arlington County handling child welfare litigation on behalf of the Child and Family Services Division of the Department of Human Resources. In that capacity, Mr. McCandless' practice focuses primarily on cases before the Arlington Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for child abuse and neglect, foster care, CHINS, family abuse protective orders, delinquency, custody and child support. He also handles appeals of those matters to the Arlington County Circuit Court and Virginia appellate courts. In that role, Mr. McCandless provides counsel to multiple teams in the Child & Family Services Division including CPS, foster care, adoptions and the Child Advocacy Center.

Prior to becoming an Assistant County Attorney, Mr. McCandless prosecuted cases in Arlington for more than a decade as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney. As a prosecutor, he handled both bench and jury trials before courts of the 17th Judicial Circuit including critical accident and DUI prosecutions and vehicular homicides. He also served as the financial crimes liaison with the Arlington County Policy Department.

Jason McCandless is an active member of the legal community and has served on the Arlington County Bar Association Board of Directors since 2019. In addition, for more than a decade, Mr. McCandless has worked as a paramedic with the Sterling Volunteer Rescue Squad and a Lieutenant with the Falls Church Volunteer Fire Department. His service to the community is also demonstrated through his participation with Safe House and Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence Hotline Staffer for Doorways for Women and Families.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Mr. McCandless has demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament to serve on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. McCandless possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mc. McCandless is especially well-qualified for the position of Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court judge, and his application merits special recommendation. Mr. McCandless warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

COURTNEY K. MCCARTHY

Experience and Legal Ability: Courtney K. McCarthy earned her Juris Doctor degree from Syracuse University College of Law in 1995. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1995.

Ms. McCarthy is the founder and principal at McCarthy Law, PLLC, located in Arlington, Virginia. Prior to starting her law firm, Ms. McCarthy was an associate attorney at Robert Tomlinson & Associates, in Arlington from 1995 to 1998. Her practice initially consisted primarily of criminal defense (court appointed and retained), mental health commitments, bankruptcy, personal injury, landlord/tenant, contract disputes, child abuse and neglect matters, domestic relations, and guardian *ad litem* work for children. After leaving Robert Tomlinson & Associates, Ms. McCarthy practiced at Law Offices of Earl Shaffer, in Arlington from 1998 to 2013, where she added elder law matters, estate planning, estate administration, estate litigation, and real estate settlements to her practice, before narrowing her focus to domestic relations, trusts and estates, and elder law/guardianships.

Ms. McCarthy was appointed as a substitute judge in Arlington County in February 2019. She currently adjudicates cases in Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court and General District Court, handling criminal and civil matters.

Ms. McCarthy is a member of Virginia Collaborative Professionals, Collaborative Professionals of Northern Virginia, Virginia Women Attorneys Association, Fairfax County Bar Association, Virginia Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, and Arlington County Bar Association. She has served as the Director of the Arlington County Bar Foundation since July 2021. She is a member and Treasurer of Friends of Argus and Aurora House. Ms. McCarthy served on the Board of Directors of Virginia Academy of Elder Law Attorneys from 2011 to 2012; as a Judicial Selection Committee Member for the Arlington County Bar Association from 2011 to 2012; and on the Board of Directors for the Arlington County Bar Association from 2013 to 2015.

Ms. McCarthy has been recognized extensively by the legal community for her professional abilities and contributions. She has been recognized as a Virginia Super Lawyer for Family Law, Elder Law, Trusts and Estates since 2020; recognized as a Top Attorney in Family Law by Arlington Magazine in 2019; recognized by Best Lawyers since 2018 for Family Law, Elder Law and Trusts and Estates; received the Advocacy Award from the Arlington County Bar Association for guardian *ad litem* service and the Pro Bono Advocacy Award for her work on behalf of incapacitated and disadvantaged Arlington County residents.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions, interview, observation on the bench by a Committee member, and professional references, Ms. McCarthy demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament to serve on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. McCarthy possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. McCarthy is especially well-qualified for the position of Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court Judge, and her application merits special recommendation. Ms. McCarthy warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

MARCIA O. PAYNE

Experience and Legal Ability: Marcia O. Payne earned her Juris Doctor from the Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law in 2003. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in May 2004.

Ms. Payne is currently a Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for Prince William County, a position she has held since July 2021. Ms. Payne is assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit and primarily prosecutes felony and misdemeanor domestic crimes and ancillary offenses in Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court as well as in Circuit Court.

Prior to becoming a Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, Ms. Payne managed her own firm (Wright Law & Advocacy, formerly Walker Wright, PLLC) for approximately fifteen years. Ms. Payne's private practice consisted of criminal, domestic relations, and general litigation. Ms. Payne also served as a Guardian *ad Litem* for children and incapacitated adults in the 17th, 18th, and 19th judicial districts.

From 2004 to 2006, Ms. Payne was an Associate at Bynum & Jenkins, PLLC, a general practice firm in Alexandria, Virginia, where her practice included criminal defense and civil litigation, as well as a family law practice she established at the firm.

Within the legal community, Ms. Payne is a member of the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association, District of Columbia Bar, Arlington County Bar Association, Prince William County Bar Association, and Old Dominion Bar Association. Ms. Payne is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, is a board member of WHT Rites of Passage Mentoring Program in Washington, D.C., and recently served on the Board of Trustees and Legal Teach Chair for Union Temple Baptist Church, among several other past community involvements.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Ms. Payne has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament to serve on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. Payne possess the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. Payne's qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court judge and merits the Committee's recommendation. Accordingly, the Committee rates her as **Recommended**.

