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December 10, 2018

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & FACSIMILE:

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:

Senator Mark D. Obenshain
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Senate of Virginia
Pocahontas Building, Room E502
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23219
district26@senate.virginia.gov

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:

Representative Robert B. Bell
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Virginia House of Delegates
Pocahontas Building, Room E311
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
DelRBell@house.virginia.gov

Re: Anticipated Vacancy in the 19th Judicial Circuit of Virginia,
Fairfax County Circuit Court

Dear Governor Northam, Senator Obenshain, and Representative
Bell:

On behalf of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association
("VWAA"), a regional committee ("the Committee") was impaneled
to evaluate candidates for the anticipated vacancy in the 19th Judicial
Circuit of Virginia, Fairfax County Circuit 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 28, 2018, the Committee interviewed 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 applicants whose qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements 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 has approved, in accordance with its procedures, the following endorsements of the Committee for this judicial vacancy:

Dontae L. Bugg is found *highly recommended*  
Tina L. Snee is found *highly recommended*  
Thomas P. Sotelo is found *highly recommended*

August W. Steinhilber, III is found *recommended*

Anita V. McFadden is 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:

Lisa Barnett: Ms. Barnett is a senior attorney with Shevlin Smith. She focuses her practice on handling plaintiff's cases in the area of medical malpractice and catastrophic personal injury cases. Ms. Barnett began her legal career as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable J. Howe Brown, Jr. of the Fairfax County Circuit Court. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 1994.

**Maureen E. Carr:** Ms. Carr is a shareholder at Bean, Kinney & Korman, where she focuses her practice on employment law and commercial litigation. Ms. Carr is the Chair for the VWAA Judiciary Committee. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2006.

**Jennifer S. Joffe:** Ms. Joffe established the Law Office of Jennifer S. Joffe PLC in January 2017. Previously, Ms. Joffe was a shareholder in the law firm of Colton Cummins Watson & Vincent, P.C. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. Prior to entering private practice, Ms. Joffe was a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Jane Marum Roush of the Fairfax County Circuit Court. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2002.

**Michelle Kaminsky:** Ms. Kaminsky is a partner at the law firm of Hite Kaminsky Family Law & Mediation, PLLC. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. Prior to joining Hite Kaminsky Family Law & Mediation, PLLC, Ms. Kaminsky served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable David S. Schell of the Fairfax County Circuit Court. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2009.

**Carolé C. Krogmann:** Ms. Krogmann is a partner at the law firm of Masterman Krogmann, P.C. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 1997.

**Margaret M. Marks:** Ms. Marks is a shareholder in the law firm of Odin Feldman & Pittleman, P.C. She focuses her practice on civil, commercial, and estate litigation. Prior to joining Odin Feldman & Pittleman, P.C., Ms. Marks served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Jan L. Brodie of the Fairfax County Circuit Court for two years. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2008.

**Laurie Forbes Neff:** Ms. Neff is a senior attorney with the Geller Law Group. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. Previously, she was a clinical professor of law at the George Mason School of Law, where she ran the Mason Veteran & Servicemembers Legal Clinic. Ms. Neff has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2001.

**Natalia Wilson:** Ms. Wilson is a principal at Ain & Bank, P.C. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. Prior to entering private practice, Ms. Wilson served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable John Ramsey Johnson of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2005.

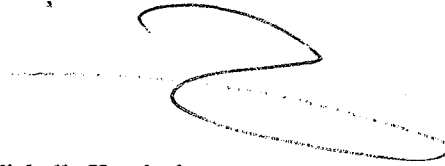
**Dana M. Wolfson:** Ms. Wolfson is an associate at The Susan Hicks Group, PC. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2013.

We hope that this information will prove helpful to you during your selection process for this very important judicial position.

Respectfully yours,



Claire E. Keena  
President  
Virginia Women Attorneys Association



Michelle Kaminsky  
Judicial Chair, Northern Virginia Chapter  
Virginia Women Attorneys Association

Enclosures:            Executive Summary of Dontae L. Bugg, Esquire  
                              Executive Summary of Anita V. McFadden, Esquire  
                              Executive Summary of the Honorable Tina L. Snee  
                              Executive Summary of the Honorable Thomas P. Sotelo  
                              Executive Summary of August W. Steinhilber, III, Esquire

CC (by email only):    Dontae L. Bugg, Esquire  
                              Anita V. McFadden, Esquire  
                              Honorable Tina L. Snee  
                              Honorable Thomas P. Sotelo  
                              August W. Steinhilber, III, Esquire

CC (by email only):    Senator Adam Ebbin  
                              Senator Barbara Favola  
                              Senator David Marsden  
                              Senator George L. Barker  
                              Senator J. Chapman Petersen  
                              Senator Janet D. Howell  
                              Senator Jennifer T. Wexton  
                              Senator Richard L. Saslaw  
                              Senator Scott Surovell  
                              Delegate Alfonso Lopez  
                              Delegate Kathy KL Tran  
                              Delegate Jennifer B. Boysko  
                              Delegate David Bulova  
                              Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn  
                              Delegate Karrie K. Delaney  
                              Delegate Mark H. Levine  
                              Delegate Charniele L. Herring  
                              Delegate Kathleen J. Murphy  
                              Delegate Kenneth R. Plum  
                              Delegate Patrick A. Hope  
                              Delegate Kaye Kory  
                              Delegate Mark D. Sickles  
                              Delegate Mark L. Kearn  
                              Delegate Marcus B. Simon

Delegate Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.  
Delegate Timothy D. Hugo  
Delegate Vivian E. Watts

CC (by email only): Lisa Barnett, Esquire  
Maureen E. Carr, Esquire  
Jennifer S. Joffe, Esquire  
Michelle Kaminsky, Esquire  
Carolé C. Krogmann, Esquire  
Margaret M. Marks, Esquire  
Laurie Forbes Neff, Esquire  
Natalia Wilson, Esquire  
Dana M. Wolfson, Esquire

Alison Mullins, Esquire, VWAA, Northern Virginia Chapter, President

**DONTAE L. BUGG**

**Experience and Legal Ability:** Dontaé L. Bugg earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Richmond, T.C. Williams School of Law in 2006. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2007.

Mr. Bugg is the founder of the Bugg Law Firm, PLLC. Prior to founding his own firm, Mr. Bugg gained substantial trial and litigation experience as an associate attorney for two Virginia law firms. He has consistently concentrated his practice in the areas of criminal defense, domestic relations, and serious traffic matters in Virginia and the District of Columbia. He practices regularly in federal and state courts. He presently serves as a Virginia Indigent Defense Commission Certified Counsel, a Qualified Guardian *ad litem* for children, and a Federal Criminal Justice Act Panel Attorney.

Mr. Bugg is active in the legal community and is a member of the George Mason American Inn of Court, Northern Virginia Black Attorney's Association, Northern Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce, the Fairfax Bar Association, the Arlington Bar Association, the National College of DUI Defense, and the Virginia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He generously donates his time providing *pro bono* services for the Legal Services of Northern Virginia Attorney of the Day program and the DC Superior Attorney Negotiator program. He also remains active in the local community, where he is a frequent guest speaker at schools and for community groups throughout the Commonwealth. He has organized clothing, food, and toy drives to benefit the underprivileged. He has also served as a mock trial participant for the Color of Justice and Kamp Kappa programs. Mr. Bugg was appointed to serve a six-year term as a Substitute Judge of the District Courts of Fairfax County on November 1, 2016.

**Fairness and Temperament:** Through his submissions, interview, and professional references, Mr. Bugg demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court.

**Professionalism and Integrity:** The Committee finds that Mr. Bugg possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Circuit Court.

**Overall Evaluation:** The Committee finds that Mr. Bugg is especially well-qualified for the position and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

**TINA L. SNEE**

**Experience and Legal Ability:** The Honorable Tina L. Snee earned her Juris Doctor degree from University of Buffalo in 1987. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1987.

Judge Snee was appointed to the Fairfax General District Court on July 1, 2015, where she currently presides over criminal, civil and traffic matters. From 2013 to 2015, Judge Snee served as a Substitute Judge in both the General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, overseeing criminal, civil, traffic, juvenile and domestic matters.

Prior to her appointment to the bench in 2015, Judge Snee was the founding partner and owner of Tina L. Snee & Associates, PLLC, a boutique litigation firm that specialized in civil litigation. Judge Snee represented businesses, individuals and insurance companies in trial, mediation, and arbitration regarding employment, personal injury, construction and declaratory judgment actions. Judge Snee began her career with Slenker, Brandt, Jennings & Johnston in 1988, became a partner in 1995, and remained with the firm until starting her own firm in 2004.

Judge Snee currently works cross-agency on issues involving mental health in the judicial system. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Snee participated in the Model Judiciary Program, the Fairfax Bar Conciliation Program, and the Court Tour program. While in private practice, Judge Snee had an AV rating with Martindale-Hubbell and was repeatedly chosen as one of Washington D.C. Area's Best Lawyers, Virginia's Best Lawyers, Virginia Super Lawyers, and Virginia Legal Elite.

**Fairness and Temperament:** Through her submissions, interview and professional references, Judge Snee demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court bench.

**Professionalism and Integrity:** The Committee finds that Judge Snee possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Circuit Court.

**Overall Evaluation:** The Committee finds that Judge Snee is especially well-qualified for the position of Circuit Court judge and her application merits special recommendation. Judge Snee warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

**THOMAS P. SOTELO**

**Experience and Legal Ability:** The Honorable Thomas P. Sotelo earned his Juris Doctor from the Marshall-Wythe School of Law, College of William and Mary in 1990. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1990.

Upon graduating from law school, Judge Sotelo first clerked for the Honorable Richard J. Jamborsky, Chief Judge of the Fairfax County Circuit Court from 1990 to 1991. He then developed a litigation practice (both as a solo practitioner and in several law firms), which involved domestic relations and family law, criminal, juvenile and traffic proceedings, trusts and estates litigation, guardianship and conservatorship proceedings, and appellate matters. Judge Sotelo also served as a Guardian *ad litem* in custody and visitation matters, abuse and neglect matters, and other proceedings prior to going on the bench.

Judge Sotelo has served as a judge on the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for Fairfax County since 2008. He served as the Chief Judge of the same court from 2016 to 2018. During this time, he oversaw a comprehensive review of the court's docket and implementation of docket changes with the goal of allocating more time to the civil side of the court for the timely resolution of cases. Among other accomplishments, Judge Sotelo also led efforts to meet the goal of eliminating docketing backlogs at the end of each month for matters filed with the Pre-Court Section of the Clerk's Office.

Judge Sotelo is an active member of the legal community. He has served as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Judicial Mentoring Program, Supreme Court of Virginia, since 2015, and as a Mentor Judge of the same program since 2014. He has served as a member on the Parent Education Advisory Committee, Dispute Resolution Services, Office of the Executive Secretary, Supreme Court of Virginia, since 2017. Among other impressive appointments, Judge Sotelo also served as a faculty member on the Virginia State Bar Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Course from 2014 to 2017. Judge Sotelo has also served as a panelist or speaker on approximately 50 legal panels or Continuing Legal Education presentations since 2008.

**Fairness and Temperament:** Through his submissions, interview, and professional references, Judge Sotelo demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court.

**Professionalism and Integrity:** The Committee finds that Judge Sotelo possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Circuit Court.

**Overall Evaluation:** The Committee finds that Judge Sotelo is especially well-qualified for the position and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.



**AUGUST W. STEINHILBER, III**

**Experience and Legal Ability:** Mr. Steinhilber received his Juris Doctor degree from the Marshall-Wythe School of Law, College of William and Mary in 1984. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1984.

Mr. Steinhilber is a partner in the firm of Brault Palmer Grove Steinhilber & Robbins, LLP. He joined the firm in 1984 as an associate and became a partner in 1991. His primary practice is in the field of civil litigation, focusing on civil defense work for insurance companies. He also represents individuals in traffic, criminal and domestic relations cases. Further, Mr. Steinhilber performs some estate work, including the drafting of wills, trusts, and powers of attorney, and also engages in some transactional work, including drafting, reviewing, and negotiating contracts. Mr. Steinhilber has represented clients in matters involving personal injury, wrongful death, products liability, complicated construction, homeowner and condominium associations, premises liability, municipal liability, declaratory judgment, insurance and surety, and subrogation cases and trucking. He tries ten or more Circuit Court trials per year and more than ten District Court trials per year.

In 2008, Mr. Steinhilber was appointed to serve as a substitute judge for the General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, and he has continued to serve in that capacity. As a substitute judge, Mr. Steinhilber has presided over various matters including CHINS, criminal and traffic cases, detention hearings, arraignments, small claims, landlord-tenant disputes, protective orders, and preliminary hearings.

Mr. Steinhilber handles one to two cases each year *pro bono*, representing clients mainly in the areas in personal injury, property damage, defense of debt collection, and traffic/misdemeanors.

Within the legal community, Mr. Steinhilber is an active member of the Fairfax Bar Association where he has served on the following Committees: Circuit Court Committee (serving as Chair for 2 ½ years); Technology Committee; Continuing Legal Education Committee (serving as Chair for one year), Judicial Selection Committee, General District Court Committee, Courthouse Construction Task Force, as well as various other appointments. He is also a member of the Virginia Bar Association, the Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys, and the Defense Research Institute. He serves as Master and on various committees for the George Mason American Inn of Court. In addition, Mr. Steinhilber has participated in various Continuing Legal Education courses over the past five years as a faculty member.

Mr. Steinhilber is also active within his local community and has volunteered with the Cub Scouts as a Chair, Cubmaster and Den Leader for the past eleven years. He has also volunteered as an Assistant Scoutmaster and Advisor for the Boy Scouts for the last seven years.

**Fairness and Temperament:** Through his submissions and interview, Mr. Steinhilber demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court.

**Professionalism and Integrity:** The Committee finds that Mr. Steinhilber possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Circuit Court.

**Overall Evaluation:** The Committee finds that Mr. Steinhilber's qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of a Circuit Court judge and merit the Committee's rating affirmative recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Recommended**.

**ANITA V. MCFADDEN**

**Experience and Legal Ability:** Anita V. McFadden earned her Juris Doctor from the Georgetown University Law Center in 1993. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1993.

Ms. McFadden began her legal career as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in Richmond, Virginia, where she litigated numerous felony and misdemeanor cases from 1994 to 1999. From 1999 to 2005, Ms. McFadden practiced with several different firms in various areas of law, including family law, business law, civil and criminal litigation, and personal injury. In 2005, Ms. McFadden founded The A. Van McFadden Law Office PLLC, now known as The McFadden Law Office, PLLC. Her practice primarily focuses on family law, general civil litigation, and criminal and traffic defense.

Ms. McFadden currently serves as a court appointed attorney on the Fairfax County Court Appointed Attorney List. In this capacity, she represents indigent defendants charged with criminal offenses including but not limited to DUIs, assaults, filing false police reports, obstruction of justice and possession of marijuana.

Ms. McFadden is an active member of the legal community. She currently serves as a Sub-Committee Chair on the Disciplinary District Committee for the Virginia State Bar. She has served in various capacities for the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association, including President (2011 and 2012), Vice President (2003-2006), Secretary (2000-2003), Continuing Legal Education Committee member (2014), and Color of Justice Program participant (2015). She presently serves on the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association's Judicial Evaluation Committee and is Chair of the Membership Committee. In addition, Ms. Fadden is a member of the Fairfax Bar Association and has served on the General District Court Committee, the Continuing Legal Education Committee, and the Circuit Court Committee. She presently is a member of the Family Law Section and the Circuit Court Committee. Ms. Fadden volunteers for the Mount Vernon High School Initiative, where she speaks to youth about the legal profession. She also volunteers as a GED tutor with the Adult High School Completion program of the Fairfax County Public Schools.

**Fairness and Temperament:** Through her submissions, interview, and professional references, Ms. McFadden demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court.

**Professionalism and Integrity:** The Committee finds that Ms. McFadden possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Circuit Court.

**Overall Evaluation:** The Committee finds that Ms. McFadden meets the minimum requirements for the position of a Circuit Court judge. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Qualified**.