



VIRGINIA WOMEN ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

Sender's Phone No.: (757) 622-3317
Sender's Email: mparker@decklaw.com

December 7, 2017

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KATIE HOVDA
Administrative Director

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

E-Mail: VWAA@live.com

Senator Mark D. Obenshain,
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Pocahontas Building
Room No: E502
Senate of Virginia
P. O. Box 396
Richmond, VA 23218
district26@senate.virginia.gov

Representative Robert B. Bell
Vice Chair, Court of Justice Committee
Pocahontas Building
900 E. Main St,
Richmond, Virginia 23219
DelRBell@house.virginia.gov

Re: Judicial Vacancy in 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia, Prince
William County Circuit Court

Dear Honorable Sirs:

On behalf of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association ("VWAA"), a judicial committee (the "Committee") was impaneled to evaluate candidates for a vacancy in the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia, Prince William County Circuit Court occasioned by the retirement of the Honorable Craig Johnston, as well as any vacancies that may occur in the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia District Courts in the event a currently sitting lower court judge is elevated during this process creating additional vacancies.

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, 2017, the Committee interviewed eleven (11) candidates. One candidate, Kevin Leahy, was unable to interview with the VWAA due to his son's surgery, therefore, his candidacy was not rated by this Committee.

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 for Reviewing Qualifications for Judicial Office ("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 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:

Circuit Court

The Honorable Angela Horan is found *Highly Recommended*.
James Willett is found *Highly Recommended*.

The Honorable Lisa Baird is found *Recommended*.
Claiborne T. Richardson, II is found *Recommended*.
Kristina Spitler is found *Recommended*.
Barry Zweig is found *Recommended*.

General District Court

Tracey Lenox is found *Highly Recommended*.
Claiborne T. Richardson, II is found *Highly Recommended*.
Kristina Spitler is found *Highly Recommended*.
Barry Zweig is found *Highly Recommended*.

Turkessa Rollins is found *Qualified*.
Ashleigh Sutton is found *Qualified*.

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Tracey Lenox is found *Highly Recommended*.
Claiborne T. Richardson, II is found *Highly Recommended*.

Amy Tobias is found *Recommended*.

Turkessa Rollins is found *Qualified*.
Ashleigh Sutton is found *Qualified*.
Jenifer Zary 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:

Amy Ashworth: Ms. Ashworth is an associate attorney with Farrell & Croft, P.C. She focuses her practice on criminal defense and family law matters. Ms. Ashworth is a former Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney for Prince William County and was a member of the Special Victim's Unit prosecution team. She is an adjunct professor at George Mason University. She has over ten years of family law experience and twenty years of criminal prosecution experience. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 1995.

Jessica H. Foster: Ms. Foster is a partner at the law firm of Foster McCollam, PLLC. She focuses her practice on family law and criminal defense primarily in the Prince William Juvenile and Domestic Relations and Circuit Courts. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar and the Prince William County Bar Association since 2009.

Andrea Morisi: Ms. Morisi is a solo practitioner who focuses her practice on Trusts and Estates, including assisting in the probate of estates and serves as Executor. She serves as an Adult Guardian ad Litem and as a Guardian and Conservator for incapacitated adults. She previously spent 18 years as general counsel and corporate secretary to a non-profit organization. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2000.

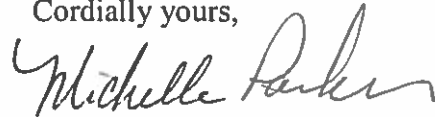
Tenecia Pitts Reid

Ms. Reid is a solo practitioner who focuses her practice on family law. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2009.

Sally Merchak: Ms. Merchak is a partner at Ryland and Merchak, P.C. Her first ten years in practice focused primarily on criminal defense where she litigated many serious felony jury trials. She now focuses her practice on family law. She is also experienced in real estate law and litigation. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 1977 and a member of the Prince William County Bar Association since 1978.

Krista Yancey: Ms. Yancey is an associate attorney with Compton & Duling, L.C. in the firm's domestic relations practice. She has served as Secretary of the Prince William Chapter of VWAA since 2016. She is a 5th District Representative for the Young Lawyers Conference of the Virginia State Bar and has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2014.

Cordially yours,



Michelle Parker
President

Virginia Women Attorneys Association

Enclosures: Executive Summary of the Honorable Lisa Baird
Executive Summary of the Honorable Angela Horan
Executive Summary of Tracey Lenox
Executive Summary of Claiborne T. Richardson, II
Executive Summary of Turkessa Rollins
Executive Summary of Kristina Spitler
Executive Summary of Ashleigh Sutton
Executive Summary of Amy Tobias
Executive Summary of James Willett
Executive Summary of Jennifer Zary
Executive Summary of Barry Zweig

cc (by email only): Hon. Lisa Baird
Hon. Angela Horan
Tracey Lenox
Claiborne T. Richardson, II
Turkessa Rollins
Kristina Spitler
Ashleigh Sutton
Amy Tobias
James Willett
Jennifer Zary
Barry Zweig

THE HONORABLE LISA MICHELLE BAIRD

Experience and Legal Ability: Judge Baird has served as full-time judge of the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court since July 2013 and is currently the court's Chief Judge. Prior to that, she was in private law practice for approximately thirteen years. During her career in private practice, Judge Baird gained experience on both sides of the criminal law field as a prosecutor for traffic and misdemeanor cases as well as a criminal defense attorney in misdemeanor and felony cases for adults and juveniles. Judge Baird's civil practice included real estate and zoning matters as well as cases with the Department of Social Services. As a member of the bench, Judge Baird regularly presents at Continuing Legal Education programs and participates in panel discussions. Judge Baird is an active member of numerous community organizations, including the Prince William County Bar Association and Kiwanis Battlefield, and sits on several judicial committees.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, The Honorable Lisa Michelle Baird has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that The Honorable Lisa Michelle Baird possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that The Honorable Lisa Michelle Baird is very well qualified for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Recommended**.

THE HONORABLE ANGELA LEMMON HORAN

Experience and Legal Ability: From 1987 through 2015, Judge Horan practiced municipal law, representing the government of Prince William County. She practiced primarily in the areas of civil rights, employment law, contracts, construction, land use and government finance. Judge Horan has a variety of experience in the courts of the Commonwealth. In addition to extensive practice in the circuit court, she has briefed and argued workers compensation cases to the Virginia Court of Appeals and briefed land use cases to the Supreme Court of Virginia. She also briefed an excessive force case to the United States Supreme Court, and has filed amici curiae briefs in government finance and tax cases on behalf of the Local Government Attorneys of Virginia. Judge Horan served as an instructor for the George Mason University Public Policy Institute in 2014. Since July of 2015, Judge Horan has served as a judge in the General District Court of Prince William County where she has presided over a variety of civil matters from motor vehicle accidents to breach of contract cases. She has also presided over misdemeanor and traffic trials and preliminary hearings in felony matters.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, The Honorable Angela Lemmon Horan has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that The Honorable Angela Lemmon Horan possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that The Honorable Angela Lemmon Horan is especially well qualified for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

TRACEY LENOX

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. Lenox has practiced in various federal, state, and administrative courts for immigration, civil and criminal matters. Since 2006, she has lead her firm's criminal division handling criminal and traffic cases varying in degree of severity, to include a capital murder case that went to trial in March 2017.

Ms. Lenox has handled a number of appeals beyond the Circuit Court including three criminal appeals to the Virginia Court of Appeals and one civil appeal to the Virginia Supreme Court. Ms. Lenox has participated as a faculty member in various training programs to include local Continuing Legal Education seminars, police academy training, and guest lectures at George Mason Law School.

Ms. Lenox was appointed as a substitute judge in the District Courts of Virginia in 2008 and was re-appointed in 2014. As such, she has presided over thousands of matters over the span of nine years in both General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in several different jurisdictions.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Ms. Lenox has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Tracey Lennox possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District] Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: Through her submissions and interview, Ms. Lenox has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite experience and legal ability for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts of the 31st Judicial District of Virginia. The Committee finds that Tracey Lennox is especially well qualified for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

CLAIBORNE (CLAI) T. RICHARDSON, II

Experience and Legal Ability: Mr. Richardson's qualifications meet the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and integrity. He warrants an affirmative recommendation from the Committee based on his extensive experience within the criminal court system, his years in practice and his reputation for honesty, industry and diligence. The Committee rated Mr. Richardson as "Recommended" for the Circuit Court as his intellect and extensive experience, lead the Committee to believe he would be suited for this Court. The Committee rated Mr. Richardson as "Highly Recommended" for the General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court because of his expansive experience in both the civil issues and criminal justice system. The Committee also considered his years of practice and service to the community, particularly his current outreach activities.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Claiborne T. Richardson, II has demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Claiborne T. Richardson, II possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Claiborne T. Richardson, II is very well qualified for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Recommended**.

The Committee also finds that Claiborne T. Richardson, II is especially well qualified for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

TURKESSA BYNUM ROLLINS

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. Rollins gained experience through her work as a law clerk from January 2001 to October 2001. She then began her career as a civil litigator at Fullerton & Knowles, P.C. (formerly known as Fullerton, & Wise and Fullerton and Associates). Ms. Rollins currently serves as a substitute judge and was appointed to this position in June of 2012. Through review of her submissions and information gained from her interview, the committee determined that Ms. Rollins qualifications meets the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament professionalism and integrity.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Turkessa Bynum Rollins has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Turkessa Bynum Rollins possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Turkessa Bynum Rollins meets the minimum requirements for the position of Judge of the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Qualified**.

KRISTINA KEECH SPITLER

Experience and Legal Ability: Kristina Keech Spitler has been practicing law for 29 years and is presently a shareholder with Vanderpool, Frostick & Nishanian, P.C. Throughout her practice she has litigated civil and criminal matters and has experience with both jury and non-jury trials. Until recently, Ms. Spitler prosecuted traffic and misdemeanor cases in addition to maintaining her broad civil litigation practice. Ms. Spitler's civil litigation experience spans a variety of practice areas including real estate, business, wills and estates, contract disputes, employment law, and tort claims. In addition, Ms. Spitler presents regularly on these topics. Ms. Spitler has received numerous awards and honors in recognition of her contributions to the law and to our community. She has been actively involved in many community organizations throughout her career, including the Prince William County Bar Association, the Virginia Women Attorneys Association, the Prince William Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Prince William. The Committee found that Ms. Spitler demonstrates the experience, intellect, and commitment to justice suited for a member of our judiciary.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Kristina Keech Spitler has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Kristina Keech Spitler possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Kristina Keech Spitler is very well qualified for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Recommended**.

The Committee also finds that Kristina Keech Spitler is especially well qualified for the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

ASHLEIGH LANDERS SUTTON

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. Sutton's qualifications meet the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and integrity. She warrants a qualified recommendation from the Committee based on her experience within the Juvenile Court system which includes her current position as Assistant Commonwealth Attorney. In this position she represents the Commonwealth in prosecuting juvenile defendants as well as prosecuting adults who commit crimes against juveniles, including Computer Crimes Against Children.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview Ashleigh Landers Sutton has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ashleigh Landers Sutton possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ashleigh Landers Sutton meets the minimum requirements for the position of Judge of the Prince William County General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Qualified**.

AMY TOBIAS

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. Tobias' qualifications meet the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and integrity. She warrants an affirmative recommendation from the Committee based on her wide and varied experience within the Juvenile Court system including her previous work as a Guardian *ad litem*, her representation of adults and juveniles in the criminal justice system, and her representation of clients in cases involving protective orders, child support, spousal support and custody/visitation. She also has a broad range of experience in the Circuit Court, including criminal jury trials. Ms. Tobias has appealed domestic relations cases successfully to the Virginia Court of Appeals. The Committee is also aware of her professional demeanor and service to legal community through the local bar associations and foundation.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Amy Tobias has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Amy Tobias possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Amy Tobias meets the minimum requirements for the position of a Judge of the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Qualified**.

JAMES A. WILLETT

Experience and Legal Ability: Mr. Willett began his career as the Clerk of the Middlesex County, New Jersey, Superior Court from 1978-1979. In 1979 he became an Assistant in the Commonwealth Attorney's office for the city of Richmond, where he served until 1983 when he entered private practice for a period of four years. In 1987 Mr. Willett joined the Commonwealth Attorney's office in Prince William County, where he currently serves as Chief Deputy. He has had extensive jury and non-jury experience trying misdemeanor to major felony cases in the Circuit Courts of the Commonwealth over the past 30 years. He has been an adjunct professor at George Mason School of Law since 2001.

Throughout his tenure with the Commonwealth Attorney's office, Mr. Willett has received numerous honors. He has been awarded the following: Excellence Award, Virginia Homicide Investigation Association (2000), Warren Von Schuch Distinguished Prosecutor Award (2002), Trial Advocacy Award, Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation (2003-2004), and the Directors Award, FBI (2005). He is currently a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, James A. Willett has demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that James A. Willett possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that James A. Willett is especially well qualified for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

JENNIFER ZARY

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. Zary concentrates her practice in criminal defense litigation with a small percentage of her practice dedicated to domestic relations matters. She appears in court on a regular basis and accepts appointments to represent indigent criminal defendants from all three levels of court. She represents the Division of Child Support Enforcement as outside counsel for the Office of the Attorney General. She has previously represented the Department of Social Services for child abuse and neglect matters. She has participated as a faculty member in local Continuing Legal Education Seminars.

Through her submissions and interview, Ms. Zary has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite experience and legal ability for a position as judge on the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Jennifer Zary has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Jennifer Zary possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Jennifer Zary meets the minimum requirements for the position of Judge of the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Qualified**.

BARRY ZWEIG

Experience and Legal Ability: Mr. Zweig's qualifications meet the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and integrity. He warrants an affirmative recommendation from the Committee based on his extensive experience within the criminal court system, his years in practice and his reputation for honesty, industry and diligence. The Committee rated Mr. Zweig as "Recommended" for the Circuit Court as his intellect, experience, and comments on fairness, lead the Committee to believe he would be suited for this Court; however, the Committee is concerned with his lack of experience in handling civil matters. The Committee rated him as "Highly Recommended" for the General District Court because of his expansive experience in the criminal justice system including his experience as a public defender, defense attorney and prosecutor. The Committee also considered his years of practice and service to the community and to the state and local bar associations.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Barry Zweig has demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Barry Zweig possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Barry Zweig is very well qualified for the Prince William County Circuit Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Recommended**.

The Committee also finds that Barry Zweig is especially well qualified for the Prince William County General District Court of the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.