

## **Chief Justice Harold D. Melton**

**CHAIR, CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONALISM**

Chief Justice Harold Melton was appointed to the Georgia Supreme Court by Governor Sonny Perdue on July 1, 2005. Prior to joining the Court, Justice Melton served as Executive Counsel to Governor Perdue. Before that, he spent 11 years in the Georgia Department of Law under two Attorneys General where he dealt with issues ranging from the creation of the Georgia Lottery Corporation to the administration of Georgia's tobacco settlement.

Justice Melton received a Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn University and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Georgia in 1991. He serves on the Board of Atlanta Youth Academies and is on the local and national board for Young Life youth ministry. A native of Washington, D.C., Justice Melton currently resides in Atlanta with his wife, Kimberly, and their three children.



**Judge T. Russell McClelland III**  
**PROGRAM CHAIR**

Judge McClelland is the Chief Judge of the State Court of Forsyth County. He has served as a Judge of the State Court since December 2003, and as Chief Judge since January 2013.

Judge McClelland was born and raised in Savannah, Georgia. He graduated from Armstrong State College (now part of Georgia Southern University) in 1979 with a B.S. in Political Science and obtained his law degree from the University of Georgia in 1982.

Judge McClelland began practicing law in Forsyth County in 1984 as Assistant District Attorney, and later served as Chief Assistant District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit. In 1992, he opened his own law practice, then eventually co-founded the law firm of Dreger & McClelland.

Judge McClelland is the Immediate Past President Council of State Court Judges and served on the Judicial Council for the past two years. He also is a member of the Judicial Council COVID-19 Task Force where he serves as the Chair of the Civil Subcommittee. Judge McClelland also was an inaugural member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Accountability Court Judges and has presided over the Forsyth County DUI County DUI since it began operation in 2006. He has been a long-time active member of many community organizations, including the Cumming-Forsyth County Optimist Club, Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Forsyth. The Judge and his family are actively involved at The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, where he currently serves on the Vestry. Judge McClelland is also an active adult leader with Sea Scout Ship 2222 and Venture Crew 39 in Cumming.

Judge McClelland and his wife, Janice, have been married for 31 years. They have one son, Matthew, who in May of this year graduated from the United States Naval Academy and was commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy.



## **Judge Shawn Ellen LaGrua**

### **PROFESSIONALISM PRESENTER**

Judge Shawn Ellen LaGrua was appointed to the Superior Court of the Atlanta Judicial Circuit in December 2009, sworn in on June 29, 2010, and reelected in 2012 and 2016. On December 1, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp announced his intention to appoint Fulton County Superior Court Judge Shawn Ellen LaGrua to serve on the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Prior to her appointment to the bench, she served as Inspector General for the Georgia Secretary of State, overseeing investigations in the Elections, Securities, Charities and Licensing Divisions. In 2004, she served as the Solicitor General for DeKalb County where she expanded the Domestic Violence Unit. While serving as DeKalb's Solicitor, she also founded the "Rise Up and Attend" truancy initiative. Judge LaGrua has over 20 years of trial experience, including her work as Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney in DeKalb and Fulton Counties and as Chief Assistant District Attorney in the Tallapoosa Circuit. Judge LaGrua serves on the Fulton County Superior Court's Executive Committee and Co-chairs its Magistrate Committee. She presides over "My Journey Matters," a pilot probation program designed to divert young offenders from a lifetime of incarceration, as well as the Court's first Re-Entry Court, which works to integrate prior offenders back into the community using close supervision, substance abuse counseling, job-training, and advancing education.

Judge LaGrua was appointed by Governor Deal to the Georgia Child Support Commission in 2016. Judge LaGrua also serves as (1) Chair of the Judicial Council's Process Servers Committee; (2) Secretary-elect for the Council of Superior Court Judges, where she also serves on the Legislative Support Team; (3) Vice-chair for the Access to Fairness and Justice Committee; and (4) a Member of the Accountability Court and Bench and Bar Committees.

Judge LaGrua is a Master of the Logan E. Bleckley Inn of Court and Lamar Inn of Court. She is also a founding member and past Chair of the Georgia Association of Women Lawyers, Judicial Application Review Committee. She currently serves as the Chair of the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Georgia and is a member at large of the Atlanta Bar's CLE committee and Celebrating Service Committee. She is an alumna member of Leadership Atlanta, Class of 2012, and served as the Vice Chair of the Criminal Justice Day for 2014-2015.

Judge LaGrua received her undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and received her Juris Doctorate from Georgia State University College of Law, where she later taught Advanced Evidence and Litigation. Judge LaGrua is married to Chris Beanland. She has two step-sons, Daniel and Ben, and two fur-children, Grizzly and Riley.



## **LaToya Simone Bell**

LaToya Simone Bell began her quest for excellence at an early age. She graduated as Valedictorian of the 2005 senior class of George Washington Carver High School in Columbus, GA. LaToya then continued her tedious journey through education at Albany State University, where she graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in English. She then went on to matriculate at Mercer University's Walter F. George School of Law where she obtained her Juris Doctor and then an LL.M. (Master of Laws) in Federal Criminal Practice and Procedure. LaToya is a servant leader who believes in providing her clients with zealous advocacy and compassionate service. LaToya is currently a Senior Assistant

Public Defender in the Houston Judicial Circuit Public Defender's Office in Warner Robins, GA. She is also an adjunct professor of paralegal studies and business technologies at Central Georgia Technical College and adjunct professor of criminal justice and business law Miller-Motte Technical College. She is a member of Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers where she has served as a faculty member of the Bill Daniel trial advocacy program, President of the Houston County Bar Association, Past president of the Houston County Young Lawyers Division, member of the Macon Reentry Coalition, member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and many more civic and social organizations. She is the owner of Vision Venture Consulting, LLC, a business consulting firm that specializes in personnel development and commodity building and branding. She is also the owner of The Dream Team Events and Planning, an event coordinating and design business. LaToya is the wife of Eric L. Bell and Bonus mom to three wonderful children, Breanna, Tamarius and Zackary. LaToya believes that a curve in the road doesn't mean the end of the road unless you fail to make the turn.



### **Presiding Judge Stephen Louis A. Dillard**

Presiding Judge Stephen Louis A. Dillard was appointed as the 73rd judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia on November 1, 2010 by Governor Sonny Perdue. Prior to his appointment, Judge Dillard was in private practice with James, Bates, Pope & Spivey in Macon, serving as chairman of the firm's appellate practice group. Judge Dillard was elected and reelected by his fellow Georgians in 2012 and 2018. On July 1, 2017, Judge Dillard was sworn in as the 30th Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia for a two-year term that ended on June 30, 2019.

Judge Dillard attended and graduated from Samford University (B.A. 1992); and the Mississippi College School of Law (J.D., cum laude, 1996). During law school, Judge Dillard was a member of the Moot Court Board and received the Judge Robert G. Gillespie Outstanding Achievement in Appellate Advocacy Award, as well as the American Jurisprudence Award in Appellate Advocacy.

He also reactivated the Mississippi College Chapter of the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies, serving as its president for three years.

After graduating from law school, Judge Dillard joined the Macon law firm of Stone & Baxter, where he practiced from 1996 until 2001. In September 2001, he left private practice for a two-year period to serve as a law clerk at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit for Judge Daniel A. Manion (who was appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1986). In September 2003, Judge Dillard joined James Bates as of counsel, specializing in appellate practice and complex litigation. While in practice, he received an AV® Preeminent™ Peer-Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell and was named by Super Lawyers as one of Georgia's "rising stars."

Since joining the Court of Appeals, Judge Dillard has spoken to numerous organizations and participated in countless seminars on a wide variety of legal topics. In 2020, Judge Dillard began serving his second two-year term as the president of the Samford University Alumni Association, a three-year term on Samford University's Board of Overseers, as an advisor to the Pi Chapter of the Sigma Chi Fraternity at Samford University, and as member of the Samford University Presidential Search Committee and the Samford University Task Force on Racial Justice. He was also awarded the Distinguished Judicial Service Award by the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia for the second time in his career. In 2019, Judge Dillard began co-teaching Georgia Appellate Practice at Mercer University's law school and joined the National Advisory Board for The Constitutional Sources Project ("ConSource"), an organization dedicated to increasing access to and understanding of the United States Constitution and its history and creation. He was also named that year as the "Twitter Laureate" of Georgia by the Georgia House of Representatives, as one of Atlanta's 500 most powerful leaders by *Atlanta Magazine*, and as "Best Social Mediator" by the *Fulton County Daily Report*. In 2018, Judge Dillard began serving a two-year term as the president of the Samford University Alumni Association. He also began his service that year as a member of the Supreme Court of Georgia's Justice for Children Committee. In 2017, Judge Dillard was named Samford University's "Alumnus of the Year," which is the highest honor the university bestows on its graduates. In 2016, Judge Dillard was appointed as the Co-Chairperson of the Georgia Judicial Council's Strategic Plan Standing Committee, and as a member of the Council's Standing Committee on Technology. That same year, he was named Samford University's "Featured Alumnus" for the Howard College of Arts and Sciences. In 2015, Judge Dillard was appointed by Governor Nathan Deal to the Georgia Appellate Jurisdiction Review Commission. He was also appointed that year to serve on the Georgia Judicial Council, and as the Chairperson of the Council's Court Reporting Matters Committee. In 2014, Judge Dillard was named the "State Judge of the Year" by his alma mater, the Mississippi College School of Law, for outstanding judicial service and also received the "Fastcase 50" award, which honors leaders in the world of law, scholarship, and legal technology. In 2013, Judge Dillard was awarded the Distinguished Judicial Service Award by the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia, recognizing his outstanding service on the bench and commitment to improving the practice of law. In 2012, Judge Dillard was appointed to the Code of Judicial Conduct Review Committee, and he also began serving as the Special Consultant to the Georgia High School Mock Trial Committee.

Judge Dillard is married to the former Krista McDaniel, and they have three children. He is an active parishioner of Saint Joseph Catholic Church and the former president of the School Board for Saint Joseph's Catholic School.



### **Elizabeth L. Fite**

Elizabeth L. Fite of Rogers & Fite, LLC is a trial lawyer whose law practice is focused on civil litigation related to wrongful death and catastrophic injuries, tractor-trailer collisions, automobile collisions, negligent security claims, hazing claims and sexual assault. She previously served as a senior assistant county attorney for DeKalb County and, prior to that, practiced complex products liability litigation at a large law firm in Atlanta.

Fite currently serves as the President-elect of the State Bar of Georgia and will be sworn in as the 59th president of the State Bar of Georgia in June 2021.

Fite graduated from Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, with a degree in mathematics and earned her law degree from Emory University School of Law.



## **Francys Johnson**

Francys Johnson is a Founding Partner of Davis Bozeman Johnson Law. Born and raised on his grandparent's farm in Sylvania, Georgia, Francys Johnson learned the value of hard work, responsibility, and service to others. Francys Johnson has a strong record of advocacy aimed at expanding opportunities for all people. He is a practicing lawyer, public theologian, and educator.

Francys Johnson has served in ordained ministry for more than 20 years. He is Senior Minister at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Pembroke and the Magnolia Baptist Church in Statesboro. He has been making a positive difference for a long time through public service to several community-based organizations focused on helping people help themselves.

Johnson was recently named to succeed Stacey Abrams and Raphael Warnock as head of the New Georgia Project, a transformational civic engagement organization responsible for defeating voter suppression and advancing progressive values in public policy. Previously, Johnson was President of the Georgia NAACP, this state's oldest and largest civil rights organization, following more than two decades of service in a variety of capacities including Southeast Regional Director. As Southeast Regional Director, Johnson was the chief manager of the NAACP's public policy agenda and administrative activities in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. He was the 2018 Democratic Nominee for Georgia's 12th District seat in the United States Congress.

As a zealous trial lawyer; Francys Johnson practices criminal and civil law in the state and federal courts in Georgia from his office on Main Street in downtown Statesboro. He has secured justice on behalf of the wrongfully accused and seriously injured. He is a Member at Large of the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia and the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism.

A graduate of Georgia Southern University and The University of Georgia School of Law, Johnson previously served on the Political Science and Criminal Justice faculties at Georgia Southern University and Savannah State University teaching courses on Criminal Law; Constitutional Law; Race and the law; and the Civil Rights Movement. Today, he is a recognized thought-leader on voting rights having testified before Congress; lecturing across the country and writing on other subjects including race, measuring equity, and understandings of power in public policy.

Francys Johnson is married to Dr. Meca Williams-Johnson, an educational psychologist, and professor at Georgia Southern University. They have three sons, Thurgood Marshall Joshua, Langston Hughes Elijah, and the late Frederick Douglass Caleb. Francys lives by the command of Micah 6:8 to love mercy, do justice and walk humbly.



### **Tracy Johnson**

Tracy Johnson Tracy Johnson is the Executive Director for the Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution. Tracy has been a registered mediator since 1996 and previously served for 17 years as the Director for the 6th District ADR Program. From December 2013 until June 2016, Tracy served as Director of the Fulton County Superior Court Family Division. She has a Master of Science in Judicial Administration from Michigan State University and has attained her Master Certificate in Court Administration from GCCA. Tracy is a past-president of GCCA.



### **Shiriki Cavitt Jones**

Shiriki Cavitt Jones currently serves as a Commercial Transactions Attorney for Coyote Logistics, LLC, a UPS Company, where she is responsible for working with Coyote's business stakeholders to review commercial agreements, including identifying and analyzing potential business risks and recommending risk mitigation strategies. Shiriki also serves as an Adjunct Professor at Emory University School of Law, teaching a Corporate Externship Class to over 200 second-year and third-year law students since 2013. Prior to her current role at Coyote, Shiriki was Corporate Counsel for Equifax Inc., focusing on negotiating and closing complex multi-party commercial and

third-party agreements, executing innovative company-wide legal solutions, and advising internal business stakeholders on legal strategy including third-party vendor issues, contracts, data privacy, and security escalations. Shiriki has also served as a Term Law Clerk for the Honorable Linda T. Walker, federal magistrate judge for the Northern District of Georgia, Atlanta Division and as Counsel at Oldcastle, Inc., where her primary focus was on commercial contractual deals and labor and employment issues. Her extended practice covered all of the areas that the business encountered, such as negotiating and drafting commercial deals, litigation management, MSHA and OSHA matters, compliance, training and antitrust issues. Prior to working in-house at Oldcastle, Shiriki began her practice as an Associate at Troutman Sanders LLP in the Complex Litigation Practice Group where her focus was on business litigation and product liability matters.

Shiriki is very active in her Church, serving as a Small Group Leader and Sunday School teacher and she is also highly involved in many professional and community organizations. She currently serves as the Vice President for the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA) and since 2004, Shiriki has served in many roles within the State Bar of Georgia, including her current position on the Board of Governors (Post 30) and Chair of the COVID-19 Virtual Planning Special Committee and her past roles with the State Bar of Georgia's Young Lawyers Division (Community Service Projects Committee Co-Chair (2006-2009); Board of Directors (2007-2014); Public Internship Program Co-Chair (2009-2011); YLD Newsletter Co-Editor (2011-2013); and YLD Signature Fundraiser Co-Chair (2011)). Shiriki has also served on the ServiceJuris Steering Committee since 2009, organizing an annual community service day in which more than 300 members of Atlanta's legal community participate. Shiriki was awarded the Community Champion award as part of the 2017 Corporate Counsel Awards sponsored by the Atlanta Business Chronicle and the Association of Corporate Counsel Georgia Chapter for her GABWA and State Bar of Georgia volunteer service.

Shiriki obtained her Bachelor of Arts in English (cum laude) in 2001 from Dartmouth College and her Doctor of Jurisprudence from Vanderbilt University School of Law in 2004.



## **The Honorable Robert D. Leonard II**

Judge Robert “Rob” D. Leonard II, a Kentucky native, has impressed many of his colleagues, both as an attorney and as a judge. Prior to beginning his law career, Leonard earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science in 1997 and his Juris Doctor degree in 2000, both from the University of Kentucky. Leonard then relocated to Georgia and established a general civil and criminal litigation practice, Leonard & Rickman, LLC. The firm expanded to Leonard, Rickman & Holloway, P.C. in 2007, and Leonard remained a Partner with the firm until Governor Sonny Perdue appointed him to the State Court of Cobb County in 2010, for a term that began in January 2011. Governor Deal appointed Leonard to his current position on the Superior Court of Cobb County in 2012, and Leonard won re-election to the seat in 2014 and 2018.

Leonard has devoted a significant amount of his time and talents to community service throughout much of his professional career. One of his primary volunteer commitments has been to serve as a passionate advocate for people with disabilities through his service on the Tommy Nobis Center Board of Directors. The Center’s vision is to allow each person with a disability to reach his or her full potential. Since 1977, the Center has served over 25,000 people and changed lives by championing workplace success for people with disabilities. Leonard has been an instrumental part of the Center’s success since joining the Board in 2006. Leonard’s Board service and roles with the Center include the Governance Committee (2006-Present and Chair from 2015-2018), Executive Committee Member (2011-2019), Finance Committee Member (2017-2019), Board Vice Chair (2016-2018), and Board Chair (2018-2019). Dave Ward, President and CEO of the Center said of Leonard: “I appreciate his continued sense of dedication and calling to promote our mission. He has a heart for serving individuals who have disabilities.”

“Judge Leonard is always willing to go above and beyond to help,” wrote an endorser and colleague, Judge Kimberly A. Childs. She continued, “It is not unusual for me to swing by Judge Leonard’s chambers and discover that he is in the courtroom with local students or scouts teaching about our justice system and how the courts work.” Leonard’s staff attorney, Melissa C. Brickey, agreed. Brickey shared that Leonard enjoys talking to younger children and high school students about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and social media. He has also volunteered as a mentor for the Marietta Mentoring for Leadership program, which pairs a student from Marietta City Schools with a mentor to help them graduate and reach their goals. Leonard has also frequently participated in the Cobb County Superior Court’s “Court 2 You” program, which allows elementary school students to learn about the justice system, the branches of government, and social media responsibility.

Leonard’s other community service activities include volunteering as an Assistant Coach in the Cobb Youth Football League (2013-2015) and as a Head Coach in the Allatoona Youth Basketball League (2013 – 2014). He also served on the Board of Directors for the Oregon Park Baseball Association (2012-2013). Moreover, Leonard was a member of the Kiwanis Club of Marietta from 2012-2016 and a member of the Cobb Alcohol Task Force Member from 2010-2011.

Childs summarized Leonard’s community service example and impact in this way: “Many judges struggle with how to be engaged in and of service to the community while maintaining judicial independence. Judge Leonard is the exception — he does not struggle, he excels, and our world is a better place for it.”

Leonard is married to Katie Leonard and is the father of three children and three black labs.



**Lisa K. Liang**

Lisa Liang is the Staff Attorney to the Honorable Judge Susan E. Edlein of the State Court of Fulton County. Lisa began working for Judge Edlein in November 2015. She primarily assists Judge Edlein with her civil case load, consisting largely of torts, business disputes, consumer debt cases, and appeals from Magistrate Court.

Upon graduating from Georgia State University, College of Law, Lisa worked for Atlanta Legal Aid in the DeKalb County Office concentrating on consumer and housing law issues. She transitioned to the Health Law Unit in 2009 which provides free civil legal services to low-income cancer and HIV/AIDS patients and survivors in metro-Atlanta. Lisa continued her consumer and housing law work, adding in significant family law, administrative law, and estate planning practice. Prior to law school, Lisa wore many hats – she taught elementary school in Los Angeles and Chicago for many years and she has her Masters in Social Work and worked as a pediatric hematology and oncology social worker.

Lisa is active in the legal community. She serves as a Board of Governors Member for the State Bar of Georgia. Lisa is active in the Atlanta Bar Association – on the Board of Directors; as Co-Editor of the *Atlanta Lawyer*; with the CLE Board of Trustees; and recipient of a Distinguished Service Award and Rita A. Sheffey Public Interest Award. She is an immediate past co-chair of GAPABA’s Women’s Leadership Network. Lisa is active with the Lawyers Club of Atlanta. Lisa is a graduate of the ADL’s Glass Leadership Institute; GAWL’s Leadership Academy; and the State Bar YLD’s Leadership Academy.

In the Atlanta community, Lisa is the Chairwoman of the Ethics Commission of the Atlanta Board of Education. She is a member of the City of Atlanta Board of Ethics and Independent Compliance. Lisa is a board member of Forever Family. Lisa coached the Varsity Girls’ Lacrosse team at Marist School and now coaches at Grady High School. Lisa lives in Midtown with her spouse and their dachshunds.



### **Maria F. Mackay**

Maria F. Mackay is a Certified Legal Interpreter for the Spanish language in the State of Georgia. She frequently volunteers her time to interpret for participants in legal clinics in the Athens area. Mackay was appointed by the Supreme Court of Georgia as a member of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism in 2017. She is a graduate of Auburn University and a proud wife and mother of two children.



### **Adam Malone**

Adam Malone is based in Atlanta, Georgia and dedicates his entire practice to helping families in cases involving brain injury, spinal cord injury, burns, amputation, and wrongful death. Throughout his career, Adam has litigated and tried these cases all over the state of Georgia.

Adam has obtained numerous seven and eight figure verdicts including the record jury verdict of \$24.5 million in Albany, Georgia. Adam has also earned a reputation for excellence in the appellate courts.

Due to Adam's work, the Georgia Supreme Court struck down the state's cap of \$350,000 on non-economic damages in medical negligence cases as violating the constitutionally guaranteed right to trial by jury. This decision ensured that all patients harmed by preventable medical errors have the right to trial by jury and the right to be completely compensated based on the actual evidence in the case in an amount determined by jurors, not by politicians.

Adam has received numerous honors including the Mel Award from the Melvin M. Belli Society for his creative advocacy, innovation and paradigm-shifting trial techniques. Best Lawyers has honored Adam by naming him Lawyer of the Year in medical negligence. The Southern Trial Lawyers Association also honored Adam for his teaching and writings in the field of trial and appellate advocacy with the Professor W. McKinley Smiley, Jr. Lighthouse Award.

Adam is also recognized annually in the peer-reviewed editions of Best Lawyers in America and as one of the Top 10 Lawyers in Georgia by Super Lawyers. Adam is rated AV Preeminent, the highest rating available for ethics and legal ability by Martindale-Hubbell. He is board certified by the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (ABPLA) and serves on the Board of Governors for the ABPLA, the only board certifying body in professional negligence recognized by the American bar Association. Adam is frequently invited to write, publish, and teach continuing legal education to lawyers and professional groups all over the country.

Adam is a current officer in the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association. He is a Past President of the Southern Trial Lawyers Association, Past President of the Melvin M. Belli Society, Past Chairperson of the General Practice and Trial Section of the State Bar of Georgia, past member of the Board of Governors for the American Association for Justice, past Chair of the AAJ Professional Negligence Section, and a Board Member for the AAJ Traumatic Brain Injury Litigation Group. He currently serves on the Board of Governors for his *alma mater*, Atlanta's John Marshall Law School and on the Board for the Shepherd Brain & Spinal Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Adam is a member of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and the International Society of Barristers, both invitation only organizations limited to the 500 top plaintiff and defense trial lawyers in the world.



### **Judge Shondeana Morris**

Judge Shondeana Morris was recently appointed to the DeKalb County Superior Court – by Governor Brian Kemp on June 17, 2019. Prior to Judge Morris’ appointment, she served as a DeKalb County State Court Judge - Traffic Division.

A graduate of Lakeside High School in DeKalb County, Judge Morris earned a Bachelor’s degree in Journalism from The University of Georgia and a Master’s degree in Criminal Justice from Albany State University. She graduated from Mercer University’s Walter F. George School of Law in 1997 and was admitted to the Georgia Bar that same year.

After graduating law school, Judge Morris served as an Assistant Solicitor in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1999, she joined the Fulton County Office of the District Attorney and was promoted to Deputy District Attorney. As Deputy District Attorney, Judge Morris provided leadership to the Public Integrity Unit, where she worked to ensure public trust in local government and law enforcement; the Crimes Against Women and Children Unit, where she worked to protect families and children; and the Community Prosecution Unit, where she worked with communities and criminal justice partners to provide safe neighborhoods. In recognition of her outstanding trial expertise, Judge Morris received the Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation Trial Advocacy Award in 2009.

Judge Morris is involved with many professional, civic, and religious organizations. She is a member of the State Bar of Georgia, the American Bar Association, the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, the DeKalb Bar Association, the Atlanta Bar Association, the Gate City Bar Association, and the Lawyers Club of Georgia. She serves on the Board of Governors for the State Bar of Georgia, the Judicial Review Committee for the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, and the Chair of the Gate City Bar Association Judicial Section. Judge Morris serves as a proud member of the University of Georgia Alumni Board of Directors and Mercer University Law School Alumni BALSAs Council Vice President.

An alumnus of Leadership DeKalb, Judge Morris is an Executive Board Member of the Day League (formerly DeKalb Rape Crisis Center), International Women’s House, a non-profit domestic violence shelter, and a member of Atlanta Lions Club. Committed to the development of young people, she is a member of the Criminal Justice Advisory Board for Atlanta Technical College and frequently serves as a mentor and speaker on topics ranging from law and ethics to mental and physical wellness. Judge Morris is the State Bar of Georgia Suicide Awareness and Prevention committee chairperson. Judge Morris also serves as the chairperson of DeKalb County CASA.

In 2016, the Georgia House of Representatives passed House Resolution 1271, recognizing Judge Morris “for her tireless contributions to the State of Georgia,” and August 28, 2015 was designated “Shondeana Crews Morris Appreciation Day” by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. Judge Morris also received the South Fulton Outstanding Citizenship Award (2014) and was acknowledged by Women Looking Ahead News Magazine as one of “Georgia’s Most Powerful and Influential Attorneys” (2011) and by the Daily Report legal news publication as “On the Rise – A Dozen Rising Stars” (2009).

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated honored Judge Morris in 2016 with both the Pota E. Coston Trailblazer Award and the Pinnacle Leadership Award for her dedication to public service given to the community.

Judge Morris is married to attorney Joe Morris, III. They are the proud parents of two young children and are foster parents under Georgia Division of Family and Children Services.



**David N. Nelson**

David N. Nelson graduated from Emory University in 1990. He went on to receive his law degree at Mercer University’s Walter F. George School of Law in 1995 and was admitted to the State Bar of Georgia.

Mr. Nelson primarily defends individuals, businesses, and professionals in lawsuits involving medical malpractice, legal malpractice, premises claims, commercial vehicle claims, and automobile accidents. He has served as lead counsel in over 75 jury trials with outstanding results and has argued cases in both the Supreme Court of Georgia and the Georgia Court of Appeals.

He is admitted to practice in the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, the United States District Courts for the Southern, Middle and Northern Districts of Georgia, the Georgia Supreme Court, the Georgia Court of Appeals, and State and Superior Courts of Georgia.

Mr. Nelson served as President of the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association for the 2019-2020 term and continues to serve as a member of its Executive Committee. He was selected to attend the DRI Leadership Conference in 2019. In 2020 he was invited to join the Judicial Covid-19 Task Force, which is an ad hoc committee of the Judicial Council of Georgia that includes members of the civil bar, public defenders, judiciary, and court clerks, to provide recommendations for restoring in court proceedings during the COVID-19 pandemic. He has spoken on various topics, including professionalism. He is a member of the Macon Bar Association, Georgia Defense Lawyers Association, American Bar Association, and DRI.



**Tina Shadix Roddenbery**

Tina Shadix Roddenbery is a shareholder in Boyd Collar Nolen Tuggle & Roddenbery. She is currently the President of the Georgia Chapter of American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers . She is a National Board of Trial Advocate certified family law attorney, International Academy of Family Lawyers fellow, State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors’ member, past chair of the Family Law Section of State Bar of Georgia, past President of the Younger Lawyers Division of State Bar of Georgia, 2015 recipient of the Joseph T. Tuggle Professionalism Award from the Family Law Section of the State Bar of Georgia and twice the past recipient of the YLD Ross Adams Award. She loves college football, Go Dawgs, and her Atlanta United soccer team, Vamos ATLUTD.



### **Jimmonique R.S. Rodgers**

Jimmonique Rodgers is former Interim Executive and Deputy Director of the Georgia Public Defender Council (GPDC). GPDC is the state agency responsible for providing indigent defense representation, consistent with the guarantees of the Constitution of the State of Georgia, the Constitution of the United States and the mandates of the Georgia Director of the Georgia Public Defender Counsel. The agency has over 400 state employed public defenders and a number of county employed public defenders who represent clients in 43 of the 49 judicial circuits.

Prior to serving on the agency’s Executive team, Jimmonique was Director of the GPDC central Appellate Division. In that position, she supervised a staff of 10 attorneys and provided administrative oversight for a cadre of over 40 private attorneys providing appellate representation to indigent defendants through contracts with the agency. While personally representing clients, she also operated as a central resource for public defenders and private attorneys across the state on trial and appellate issues,. Jimmonique was appointed to the position of division director after working as juvenile appeals attorney with the division. Before working at GPDC, Jimmonique served as an Assistant General Counsel for the national NAACP in Baltimore, Maryland. In this capacity, she handled criminal justice, military justice and juvenile justice issues from across the nation. Those issues ranged from initiating litigation, assisting in appealing lower court decisions and investigating non-judicial matters.

Jimmonique served ten years combined active and reserve duty time in the Army Judge Advocate General’s Corp focusing the bulk of her time on criminal defense appeals, where she obtained the rank of major. While on active duty, she was a JAGC recruiter.

She has a Bachelor of Arts with honors in Political Science with a concentration in Public Administration. She received her Juris Doctorate degree with honors from North Carolina Central University School of Law and her Master of Science in Criminal Justice—specialization in juvenile justice—with honors from the University of Baltimore.



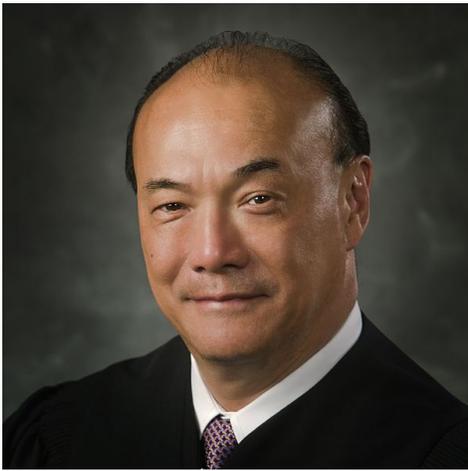
### **Cathy Vandenberg**

Cathy Vandenberg is Deputy Director of Atlanta Legal Aid. She began working for Legal Aid as a staff attorney with the Cobb Office in 1989, and in 2000, became Managing Attorney. Her practice focused on family law, housing, and special education. She regularly served as a child attorney and guardian ad litem representing children with special needs in Juvenile Court dependency cases. Cathy has hired, trained and mentored scores of new and experienced attorneys and has a special interest in maintaining Legal Aid's relationships with its community partners, including state and local bar associations, the courts, state and local governments and the non-profit community.

She serves on the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children, and is an advisory member of the Judicial COVID-19 Task Force. She is a board member of the Justice Center of Atlanta, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, and the Public Interest Executive Roundtable. She is a member of the Lawyers Club and is active with the Atlanta Bar Association. Her community involvement includes her past service as president of her neighborhood civic association, as well as the Cobb Collaborative, a membership organization which empowers nonprofit organizations to successfully meet the needs of Cobb County residents.

In her current role, she works directly with Legal Aid's Executive Director to ensure its mission to improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable in our society by providing them high quality legal services. Core responsibilities include attracting and retaining highly qualified staff, maximizing leadership and professional development opportunities, mentoring managing attorneys, and ensuring that all staff are evaluated and provided feedback.

Awards include the Dan Bradley award which honors the commitment to the delivery of quality legal services of a legal aid lawyer; the Bobby Cleveland award for Professionalism; and Tribute to Women of Achievement honoree. Legal Aid's Cobb Pro Bono Advocate Award for Victims of Domestic Violence was named in her honor for her role in creating the Cobb Temporary Protective Order project.



### **Judge Alvin T. Wong**

Alvin T. Wong was elected Judge of the State Court of DeKalb County, then Georgia's second largest county, in 1998. He was the first Asian Pacific American (APA) to run for public office in metro Atlanta and the first to be elected judge in the Southeast. He was elected in a county where Asians made up less than two percent of registered voters and has served continuously unopposed for 21 years.

A former partner at Gambrell and Stolz (now Baker Donelson), Judge Wong had 21 years of experience as a corporate and trial attorney before running for office. He chaired the Georgia Bar's Investigative Panel for disciplinary action against unethical practices by Georgia attorneys. In 2004, he co-founded – and continues to preside over – a DUI Court to treat chronic alcohol addiction, that was recently designated a model court for the state.

His heart is in the community. He currently serves on the boards of LifeLine Animal Project, Council of State Court Judges, and the ABA Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility - Judges Advisory Committee. Before that, he was a Fernbank Museum of Natural History trustee and NAPABA Law Foundation board member, mentoring future leaders as co-director of its Thomas Tang National Moot Court Competition.

Over the years, he has received many awards for citizenship, leadership, and trailblazing, including the State Bar's Tradition of Excellence Award and its Thomas O. Marshall Professionalism Award, plus the Daily Report's Professional Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2014, GAPABA – the Georgia Asian Bar which he co-founded – established its highest award, the Judge Alvin T. Wong Pioneer Award, in his honor.

Al Wong immigrated to the U.S. from Hong Kong at age 14. He lives in Brookhaven with wife Jeannie Lin, a strategic communications professional, their three cats, and Coco, a special-needs dachshund mix.