

Governor Mark Dayton appointed me to the bench in 2012 after recommendation by the judicial selection commission. Since then, I have heard thousands of cases. In each case, I treat all involved with patience and respect. I have spent my entire career working to address the racial injustice that plagues our community and our justice system. Much remains to be done and I am completely committed to this work. I am honored to serve our community and believe I have the experience, background, skills, temperament, and commitment to do so.

I am currently the lead judge in Ramsey County's Mental Health, Veterans, DWI, and Substance Abuse Courts. I requested this assignment because I helped establish the first Veterans Treatment Court in Minnesota over a decade ago. I have seen, first-hand, the healing power of treatment courts. I have witnessed dramatic changes in people's lives through collaboration with the community to provide stable housing, mental health and addiction treatment, and other services. Treatment courts are a caring and successful alternative to incarceration.

I have also led our court's focus on the well-being of children and families. Working with the community, we reduced the number of children sentenced to out-of-home custody by 85%, ultimately leading to closure of Boys Totem Town – an outdated and unnecessary facility where for more than 100 years children, disproportionately children of color, were locked-up. We also obtained significant funding for new community-based responses that will better serve our children, families, and public safety.

Before becoming a judge, I was in public service, private practice, and teaching. As the Chief Deputy at the Hennepin County Attorney's office, I was involved in many justice innovations and initiatives including a first-of-its-kind one-stop center for victims of domestic violence, community-based restorative justice programs for juveniles, the first Veterans Treatment Court in Minnesota, and a collaboration with the Innocence Project of Minnesota to systematically review past felony convictions throughout Minnesota. I also worked with community members to reduce racial disparities and to find alternatives to having children in custody. I advocated for restoring voting rights to all felons who had served their sentence and fought against unnecessary voter identification requirements and other methods used to suppress voting. I also had the honor of arguing a case before the United States Supreme Court. Before that, I was in private practice at a large Twin Cities law firm and held a teaching fellowship at the University of Chicago Law School. I clerked for the Honorable Gerald W. Heaney, a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit after graduating from the University of Minnesota Law School.

I am a lifelong Ramsey County resident who grew up on St. Paul's Eastside. I enjoy being in court with people from all walks of life. I am completely committed to protecting the rights of all people, to making the courts welcoming, accessible, and—above all—absolutely fair.