

News from the Bench



Minnesota Supreme Court **Justice Wilhelmina M. "Mimi" Wright** has been confirmed by the U.S. Senate as a Federal District Court Judge. Judge Wright, 51, nominated by President Obama fills the vacancy on Minnesota's U.S. District Court bench created when Chief Judge Michael J. Davis assumed senior status August 1.

Justice Wright was appointed to the Minnesota Supreme Court in 2012 by Governor Dayton, becoming the first female African-American justice on the high court's bench. Justice Wright, a Harvard Law School graduate, served previously on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and Ramsey County District Court. Before becoming a judge, she worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for Minnesota, focusing on economic fraud and violent crime. She also worked in private practice in Washington, D.C.



Governor Dayton appointed the **Honorable Natalie E. Hudson** as Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Judge Hudson will replace Associate Justice Alan C. Page, who retired from the Court at the end of August. Governor Dayton thanked Justice Page for his dedicated service to the State of Minnesota, especially for his service on the Supreme Court, where he served as an Associate Justice since 1993.

Judge Hudson has served as an at-large judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals since her appointment by Governor Ventura in 2002. Prior to her appointment to the Court of Appeals, Judge Hudson served as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Minnesota in the Criminal Appeals and Health Licensing Divisions. Judge Hudson earned her B.A. from Arizona State University and her J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School, where she also served as the Editor-in-Chief for the school's newspaper.

After completing law school, Judge Hudson was an attorney for Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Inc. and Robins, Zelle, Larson & Kaplan. She then spent three years as the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at Hamline University School of Law, and was later appointed

as the City Attorney for the City of St. Paul. Judge Hudson is a member of the American Bar Association's Judicial Division, a Group Leader for the Warren E. Burger Inn of Court, and a member of the Minnesota Women Lawyers Advisory Board. Judge Hudson has one son and resides in Roseville with her husband, Reverend Willie Hudson.

Governor Dayton appointed **the Honorable Margaret H. Chutich** as Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court and **the Honorable Diane B. Bratvold** as Judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Judge Chutich will replace Associate Justice Wilhelmina M. Wright, who has been confirmed as a U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Minnesota. Judge Bratvold will replace Judge Chutich as at-large judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals.



Judge Margaret Chutich has served as an at-large Judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals since her appointment in 2012 by Governor Dayton. She previously served as Assistant Dean at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs, as Deputy Attorney General of the Law Enforcement Section with the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, and as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota.

Judge Chutich earned her B.A. from the University of Minnesota and her J.D. *cum laude* from the University of Michigan Law School. After completing law school, Judge Chutich was law clerk for the Honorable Diana E. Murphy, United States District Court Judge for the District of Minnesota. She then spent five years as an attorney with the law firms of Tanick & Heins and Opperman Heins & Paquin. Judge Chutich is a member of the Minnesota Women Lawyers' Advisory Council and a former director of the YWCA of Minneapolis.



Judge Diane Bratvold has served as a District Court Judge for the Fourth Judicial District since her appointment by Governor Dayton in 2014. She is also an adjunct professor in appellate advocacy at the University of St. Thomas Law School and an officer in the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers. She previously served as a shareholder with Briggs and Morgan, P.A., where her practice focused on civil appeals and advice to clients and trial counsel.

Judge Bratvold earned her B.A. *summa cum laude* from Macalester College and her J.D. *cum laude* from the University of Minnesota School of Law. After completing law school, Judge Bratvold spent 13 years as an attorney at Fetterly & Gordon, P.A. and six years as a partner and associate at Rider Bennett, L.L.P. She was also a volunteer attorney with Advocates for Human Rights. Judge Bratvold is the Director and Treasurer of Advocates for Human Rights, is a board member for the Zion Lutheran Church Foundation in Anoka, volunteers as a mentor at the University of St. Thomas Law School, and previously served as Director of the Champlin Park Vocal Music Association.

Governor Dayton appointed **Lucinda E. Jesson** and **Tracy M. Smith** to serve on the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Commissioner Jesson and Ms. Smith will fill two at-large vacancies, replacing the Honorable Natalie E. Hudson, who was appointed earlier this year to the Minnesota Supreme Court; and the Honorable John P. Smith, upon his recent retirement from the Court of Appeals in February.



Lucinda E. Jesson served as Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services since her appointment by Governor Dayton in 2011. Prior to her appointment as Commissioner, Ms. Jesson was an Associate Professor of Law at Hamline University, and a partner at Oppenheimer, Wolff & Donnelly, LLP. Ms. Jesson also previously served as Chief Deputy County Attorney for the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, and the Deputy Attorney General in the Minnesota Attorney General's Office.

Jesson serves on the executive committee of the Olmstead Subcabinet and is the Co-Chair of the Children's Justice Initiative, the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, Task Force on Health Care Financing, and the Governor's Task Force on Child Protection. She earned her B.A. degree from the University of Arkansas and her J.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.



Tracy M. Smith currently serves as Deputy General Counsel for the University of Minnesota, where she is responsible for representing the University in general litigation in state and federal district and appellate courts. In this role, Ms. Smith has provided legal services for the University, managing a wide range of legal issues, including employment law, constitutional law, and antitrust and business tort claims. Previously, Ms. Smith served as

Associate General Counsel for the University of Minnesota. She also served as Assistant Attorney General in the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, where she represented the State of Minnesota in consumer fraud investigations and lawsuits, worked on civil antitrust investigations, and handled a number of criminal appeals. Ms. Smith also served as judicial law clerk for the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

Ms. Smith is actively engaged with the Minneapolis Public Schools, volunteering at Southwest High School and having served on the Minneapolis Public Schools Advisory Committee on Global Languages and the Minneapolis Kids Advisory Board. She has also volunteered as a teacher for English language learners at Neighborhood House in Saint Paul. She earned her B.A. degree *cum laude* from Georgetown University and her J.D. degree *magna cum laude* from the University of Minnesota Law School.



Governor Mark Dayton appointed **Michael K. Browne** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District. Mr. Browne replaces the Honorable Philip D. Bush, who retired earlier in 2015. Mr. Browne served as the Director of the Office of Police Conduct Review for the City of Minneapolis, providing direction and management to the civilian oversight agency. Previously, he was appointed to serve as the Assistant Director at the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights, the Legal Affairs Manager at the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, and the interim Director of the Department of Civil Rights. He was also a solo practitioner and started his practice as a bilingual Spanish-speaking attorney at Centro Legal, Inc. Mr. Browne earned his B.A. from the University of Minnesota – Duluth and his J.D. from Hamline University School of Law. Mr. Browne is an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas, School of Law, has held several leadership positions with Toastmasters International-District 6, and is the former Chair of the Jordan Area Community Council.

Governor Dayton appointed **Jill Eichenwald Cornwell** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Sixth Judicial District. Ms. Eichenwald replaces the Honorable John E. DeSanto, who retired earlier in 2015. Ms. Eichenwald is chambered at Duluth in St. Louis County. Ms. Eichenwald was the Managing Attorney in the Sixth Judicial District Public Defender's Office, where she supervised full-time employees, represented the office in various work-groups, assigned cases, and maintained a caseload of adult and juvenile misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, and felony cases. Previously, she was an Assistant Public Defender in the Sixth Judicial District, an adjunct instructor at the College of St. Scholastica, and a solo practitioner at the Eichenwald Law Office. She earned her B.A. from the College of St. Scholastica and her J.D. from the Hamline University School of Law. Ms. Eichenwald is a trainer for the Head of the Lakes Crisis Intervention Training Collaborative, the Secretary of the Board of Directors for Center City

Housing Corporation, a member of the South St. Louis County DUI Court team, and a Social Action Committee Member of Temple Israel.

Governor Dayton appointed **Pamela A. W. King** and **Carmaine M. Sturino** as District Court Judges in Minnesota's Third Judicial District. Ms. King replaces the Honorable Robert Birnbaum, and is chambered at Rochester in Olmsted County. Ms. Sturino replaces the Honorable James A. Fabian, and is chambered at Caledonia in Houston County.



Pamela King was an Assistant Public Defender with the Trial Team of the Minnesota State Board of Public Defense, where she represented individuals statewide charged with high profile and complex felonies. Previously, she was an Assistant Public Defender for the Third Judicial District and an associate attorney with Baker Law Offices. Ms. King earned her B.A. from Drake University and her J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law. Ms. King is a Commissioner on the National Commission on Forensic Science, a Federal Advisory Committee of the United States Department of Justice, and the Board President of the Rochester Women's Shelter.



Carmaine Sturino served as an Assistant Public Defender in the Third Judicial District, where she represented the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for Public Defense and maintained a caseload consisting primarily of juvenile and adult cases. Previously, Ms. Sturino was a solo practitioner and an Assistant Winona County Attorney. She earned her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse and her J.D. from Drake University Law School. Ms. Sturino is the Secretary of the Winona County Bar Association, a member of the Juvenile Justice Coalition, and a former adjunct professor at Winona State University, St. Mary's University, and the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse.



Governor Dayton appointed **Richard H. Kyle, Jr.** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Second Judicial District. Mr. Kyle replaces the Honorable John B. Van de

North, who retired earlier in 2015. Mr. Kyle practiced in state and federal court as a shareholder and attorney in Fredrikson & Byron's White Collar & Regulatory Defense, Health Care Fraud & Compliance, and Litigation Groups, where he handled a wide variety of white collar and other serious misdemeanor and felony cases. Previously, he was a solo practitioner and an associate attorney at Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ceresi. Mr. Kyle earned his B.A. from St. Olaf College and his J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law. Mr. Kyle is the Immediate Past President of the Minnesota State Bar Association, currently serves as a member of the Minnesota Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules of Criminal Procedure, and is a former member of the Minnesota Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board and the board for Call For Justice.



Governor Dayton appointed **Stephen L. Smith** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Second Judicial District. Mr. Smith replaces the Honorable Joanne M. Smith, who retired earlier in 2015. Mr. Smith was the principal attorney at The Law Firm of Stephen L. Smith, PLLC, where he litigated employment, criminal, and civil rights cases in state and federal court. Additionally, Mr. Smith served nearly 14 years as an Assistant State Public Defender. Previously, he was a Special Assistant Attorney General for the Minnesota Attorney General's Office and an attorney with the law firms Sprenger & Lang and Messerli & Kramer. He earned his B.A. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and his J.D. from the University of Iowa College of Law. Mr. Smith is a member of various organizations, including the Minnesota Association for Justice, the Minnesota Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers.

Governor Dayton appointed **Richelle M. Wahi** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's First Judicial District. Ms. Wahi replaces the Honorable Mary J. Theisen, who retired earlier in 2015. Ms. Wahi is chambered at Hastings in Dakota County. Ms. Wahi was a partner at Lindquist & Vennum LLP, where she handled cases primarily in family law and general litigation, and chaired the firm's Diversity Committee. She also served as a Conciliation Court Referee in Dakota County and previously was an attorney at the law firms Moss & Barnett and Henson & Efron. Ms. Wahi earned her B.A. from the College of St. Catherine and her J.D. with honors from William Mitchell College of Law. Ms. Wahi volunteers with the Tubman Safety Project, coaches volleyball for the Eagan Athletic Association and softball for the Mendota Heights Athletic Association, and mentors law students from the University of St. Thomas Law School, Twin Cities Diversity in Practice, and Mitchell Hamline School of Law.



Governor Dayton reappointed the Honorable Gary M. Hall as Judge of the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals. Judge Hall is appointed to a six year term, which will expire on January 3, 2022. Judge Hall is a current judge of the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals, where he has served since his appointment by Governor Dayton in 2012. Prior to his appointment, he was the Assistant Commissioner for Safety and Workers' Compensation at the Department of Labor and Industry and Workers' Compensation Judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings. Judge Hall earned his B.A. *summa cum laude* from the University of Minnesota and his J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School. Judge Hall is a former member of the American Bar Association's Labor and Employment Law Section National Conference of Specialized Court Judges and the National Association of Hearing Officials. He also volunteers with Moot Court and the Rosetown Playhouse Community Theater.

Public Attorneys on the Move



Governor Dayton today appointed **Emily Johnson Piper** to serve as Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). Piper succeeds Commissioner Lucinda Jesson, who was appointed by Governor Dayton to serve on the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Piper served as General Counsel and Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of Governor Dayton and Lt. Governor Smith. In this role, Piper has represented and advised the Governor, Lt. Governor, Cabinet, and state agencies on legal matters involving the State of Minnesota. As General Counsel to the Governor and Lt. Governor, Piper worked closely with the Department of Human Services on many of the agency's most high-profile legal matters and policy initiatives. As the Governor's General Counsel, Piper served as chair of the State Board of Investment Proxy Committee and the State Board of Investment Administrative Committee. The State Board of Investment manages approximately \$76 billion of state pension and other assets. Prior to joining the Office of the Governor and Lt. Governor, Emily Johnson Piper served as Deputy Commissioner and Chief of Staff for the Minnesota Department of Commerce. In this role, Piper oversaw the Department's staff, its divisions, and its biennial budget. While at the Commerce Department, Piper worked with agency leadership in regulating, among others, Minnesota's insurance, real estate, banking, and energy industries. In addition to this work, during her tenure as Chief of Staff, Piper was charged with leading several strategic reform and legislative initiatives for the Department, including implementation of health reform,

organizational realignment to better serve consumer needs, and Minnesota's response to the state's 2014 propane shortage. Prior to serving as Deputy Commissioner and Chief of Staff, Piper served as General Counsel for the Department. Piper began her career as an attorney with McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb Chartered in Minneapolis, working on civil litigation including healthcare and insurance law. Piper earned a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from the University of St. Thomas and her J.D. degree from University of St. Thomas School of Law. Piper lives in Golden Valley with her husband and four children. In her spare time, Piper has served on several community boards and commissions. She is also a Girl Scout Troop leader and a second grade girls basketball coach.

The Minnesota Supreme Court chose Susan M. Humiston to serve as the new director of the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility (OLPR). Her appointment is effective March 7. Humiston is an attorney with more than 20 years of experience in the Twin Cities business community. She most recently served as vice president and assistant general counsel at a Fortune 500 manufacturing company in Anoka. Prior to that, she spent 13 years in private practice at Leonard, Street and Deinard (now Stinson Leonard Street) representing a wide range of product manufacturing companies. While in private practice, Humiston served as an investigator for the Fourth District Ethics Committee, and as a member of the Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board. Before entering private practice, she served as a judicial law clerk for United States District Court Judge David S. Doty. Humiston received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Nebraska and her Juris Doctor from the University of Iowa College of Law. In addition to her professional background, Humiston currently serves as a board member for Doing Good Together and the Minnesota Boychoir. She is a member of the Minnesota Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, the Minnesota State Bar Association, and the Hennepin County Bar Association. Humiston succeeds Martin Cole, who retired on December 31, 2015, after nearly 10 years as director of the OLPR.