

LAWYERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES – MARCH 6, 2023

The Lawyers Advisory Committee (LAC) met at the Park Chateau, where the meeting was convened by Chair, Thomas R. Curtin, at 6:00 p.m., and the following occurred:

1. The Chair, Tom Curtin, welcomed all members and asked everyone to introduce themselves. He also offered condolences to Judge Brown on his wife's passing. Judge Brown thanked all committee members for their expressions of condolence.
2. The Chair invited a motion to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2022 meeting. The motion was made and seconded and the minutes were approved.
3. Judge Quraishi noted that Chief Judge Bumb had an unexpected conflict and could not attend the meeting, but he will report the business of the LAC.
4. The Chair acknowledged the March 3rd retirement of the Clerk, Bill Walsh, and the upcoming retirement of Magistrate Judge Goodman on March 31st. Various committee members made remarks on their years of service. The Chair noted the Clerk served with honor and distinction and the Bar is grateful for Judge Goodman's service. Former Chief Judge Wolfson noted that the Clerk knew how to lead during times of hardship, including sequestration, judicial vacancies and budget crises, but always figured out how to get things done. She commented he is the longest serving Clerk in the country and noted his well-deserved retirement. She acknowledged her friendship with Judge Goodman and remarked she is a smart, able lawyer, and a good person as well. Former Chief Judge Bissell commented on his fondest memory of the Clerk during the 9/11 tragedy and finally, former Chief Judge Linares remarked that Bill was able to navigate a host of personalities with grace and wished Judge Goodman good luck in her next chapter citing that she was an asset to our court who served the citizens well.
5. The Chair welcomed Brendan Day to the meeting noting he will soon be sworn-in as the newest Magistrate Judge to sit in Trenton following Judge Goodman's retirement. Judge Wolfson added he is someone well known in Trenton based on his time with the U.S. Attorney's Office who will make a great addition to the Trenton bench.
6. First Assistant Vikas Khanna, reporting for U.S. Attorney Philip Sellinger, noted the loss to the office in losing Brendan Day, and cited to his spectacular career rising all the way to Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division. David Walk will assume the position upon Brendan's departure. It was noted the office is actively hiring, especially in the criminal and civil rights areas, and member recommendations are welcome and he noted there has been an unfortunate uptick in hate crimes with several in our area recently. Finally, he made mention of Merrick Garland's recent memo regarding mandatory minimums and indicated the office is developing guidance and training. A defense attorney advisory committee has also been formed to address the Garland memo as well as other common topics.

7. Federal Public Defender, K. Anthony Thomas, announced the office is actively hiring, noting that Camden is losing a long-time employee to the Eastern District of Pennsylvania as Chief.

He acknowledged the Garland memo and indicated he welcomes the opportunity to discuss the issues with the U.S. Attorney's office.

He congratulated Susan Smalley, Chief of Probation, who will be honored by the Essex County Bar Association on May 1st. Susan likewise acknowledged that K. Anthony will be receiving an award and it was announced that member, Glenn Troublefield will be installed as the next Essex County Bar President at the Installation and Awards reception.

8. Attorney General Matthew Platkin reflected on his one-year anniversary in his new position noting that he enjoyed working with Judge Wolfson and looks forward to working with Chief Judge Bumb.

He announced his office is hiring as well and observed that while state and federal jobs make great careers, there are challenges in public service recruitment.

He noted that the rates of crimes in our communities are down, including a decrease by 25% in shootings in all major cities and a decrease in carjackings, falling below a 5-year benchmark, which nationally is an outlier.

He remarked that it is important to highlight the relationships in our state between federal agencies and the state, stating that in talking with other Attorneys General across the country, it truly is unique to New Jersey.

Judge Bissell offered assistance in the backfilling of state court judicial vacancies.

9. LAC member, Jeffrey Greenbaum, provided an update on amending the model protective order in Appendix S. The goal of the amendment is to reduce costs and speed up litigation. Any additional members interested in joining the sub-committee should contact him.
10. The Chair, reporting on behalf of U.S. Attorney Phillip Sellinger, announced that the sub-committee formed to work on implicit bias with regard to juries have met on a number of occasions and will provide an updated report at the next meeting.
11. LAC member, Beth Sher, noted that Judges O'Hearn and Wettre as Chairs of the Rules Committee are working on a L. Rule 7.1 Diversity Disclosure Form drawing from the new rule requirement combined with a diversity form currently being used by some judges.
12. LAC member, Wayne Fang, proposed amending L. Rule 104.1(a)(6) regarding the serious crime provision of the attorney discipline rules. The amendment would change the word shall to may with regard to the Chief Judge appointing investigative counsel in serious crime cases which gives the Chief Judge greater discretion and provides an opportunity to save the court funds. The sub-committee will be reconvened, and a report will be provided at the next LAC meeting, if not beforehand.

13. The Chair, reporting on behalf of Chief Judge Chagares, announced the walking tour of Newark will be held on April 4th and the 3rd Circuit Judicial Conference in Philadelphia will be held May 10 – 12, 2023.
14. LAC member, Justin Quinn, inquired whether counsel should look to the Gann book or the Court's website when seeking judges' preferences. Speaking for the court, Judge Quraishi responded that the website is likely more up to date. He also stated he will encourage judges to keep their preferences updated.
15. The next meeting date was announced as June 5, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa E. Rhoads