

# LAWYERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES – JUNE 5, 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. Tom announced that a GoFundMe page was created for Joseph Linares' house fire. Tom announced that Ricardo Solano's tenure as president of the Association of the Federal Bar of NJ (AFBNJ) is ending and Victor Afanador's tenure will begin. Tom reminded the Committee the William J. Brennan, Jr. award ceremony will be on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 and a Juneteenth presentation will be held on June 8, 2023. All LAC members are encouraged to attend these upcoming events.
2. The Chair invited a motion to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2023, meeting. The motion was made and seconded and the minutes were approved.
3. Chief Judge Bumb congratulated Melissa Rhoads on becoming the new Clerk of Court. Chief Judge Bumb reported the District of New Jersey has a full complement of judges until Judge Vazquez leaves the bench in September. Chief Judge Bumb reminded everyone of the expiration of the CARES Act, so certain criminal proceedings will no longer be held remotely. She informed the LAC that criminal informations are being assigned using an overflow method and there is currently a pilot in place to assign indictments throughout the entire district, regardless of where the grand jury indicted. The Board of Judges will evaluate the pilot at the next meeting. She announced the bench is actively conducting jury trials with 39 scheduled through the end of August.
4. U.S. Attorney, Philip Sellinger reported his office has been authorized to hire additional staff and he is working with a task force focused on domestic terrorism, civil rights, e-discovery, and white-collar crimes. Management changes taking place include David Walk replacing Brendan Day as Deputy Chief and Michelle Gasparian selected as Chief of Organized Crime.

Philip Sellinger reported from 2021 to 2022, shootings in NJ were down 14% statewide and down in almost every major city. He attributes this to an initiative on violent crime, spearheaded by Craig Carpenito, in which federal, state, and local entities work collaboratively.

5. Federal Public Defender, K. Anthony Thomas announced beginning October 1, 2023 the Public Defenders office will no longer be working remotely. He advised his office is still hiring with 4 staff members joining by September.

6. Judge Padin reported an Attorney Discipline Committee has been created to streamline the procedures for attorney discipline cases. The committee is reviewing L. Civ. R. 104.1 (a) regarding attorneys convicted of a crime. After discussion, it was agreed an LAC subcommittee review the rule and make recommendations regarding amendment.
7. Judge Wettre reported on behalf of the Rules Committee and presented a proposed draft diversity disclosure form based on Fed. Civ. R. 7.1(a)(2). An LAC subcommittee is reviewing the draft form and providing input prior to the next Board of Judges' meeting. Judge Wettre advised the group L. Civ. R. 12.1 is being reviewed for amendment. An LAC subcommittee was asked to provide feedback before the next Board of Judges' meeting.
8. LAC member, Jeff Greenbaum provided amendments to Appendix S of the local rules to be presented for consideration at the next Board of Judges' meeting.
9. Susan Smalley, Chief of Probation, asked that expedited pre-sentence reports not be requested, as resources have diminished, and work has increased, post-covid. A similar request was made at a prior Board of Judges' meeting. LAC members suggested ways to circulate word including informing CJA attorneys and announcing to the AFBNJ membership.
10. LAC members, Karen Confoy and Steve Richman recommended possibly amending L.Civ.R. 11.1 to require attorneys to certify they have not used artificial intelligence in brief drafting. A forms subcommittee was created to review and make a recommendation to the Board of Judges.
11. New Business
  - a. The Historical Society will host an event featuring the History of the Federal Public Defender's Office for their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The tentative date is September 14, 2023 and will most likely be in Newark.
  - b. Judge Wolfson suggested the third-party funding rule may need clarification to emphasize the reporting requirement is required at the beginning of the case as well as throughout the duration of the case.
12. The next meeting date was announced as Wednesday, September 6, 2023.