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The views expressed in the *Roanoke Bar Review* do not represent the policy or carry the endorsement of the Association unless specifically noted.

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## MEET THE JUDICIAL CANDIDATES

As the Roanoke Bar Association prepares for the judicial endorsement meeting on October 13, 2026, the seven judicial candidates have submitted answers to a variety of questions. Below are selected responses.

### What professional or personal experiences inspired you to pursue this judicial position at this point in your career?

#### Camille Turner Harvey

For the past 21 years I have served the people of Virginia as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, first in Fairfax County and thereafter in Roanoke County. In that time, I have prosecuted crimes ranging from public intoxication to first-degree murder. I have advocated for just outcomes for victims of crime and on behalf of survivors whose loved ones were murdered or slain by a defendant's criminal negligence. Above all, I have sought to keep our community safe from future harm.

Over the course of my career, I have been mindful that a prosecutor has the duty of a minister of justice and not simply that of an advocate. Every four years I have sworn an oath to "support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia" to the best of my ability, and I have taken that pledge seriously. Members of the criminal defense bar are familiar with my work, and I believe they would describe me as prepared and reasonable. In my opinion, a reasonable prosecutor is one who knows the value of a case and who weighs the factors of a just outcome appropriately.

I believe that my experience seeking justice for over twenty years qualifies me for this position, and I wish to continue my service to the public in this new judicial role.

#### Patrick J. Kenney

Representing individuals and their families for 20 years has allowed me to appreciate the importance of having judges in a locality who have brought to the bench a broad range of prior professional experiences, viewpoints and perspectives. During my extensive career as a criminal defense attorney, I have seen first-hand the importance of having judges who are well-versed in actual trial litigation. It is these judges who are in the best position to ensure that clients who have had to accept adverse rulings, nonetheless, feel they have been fully heard by the court system. The duration and breadth of my litigation career coupled with my desire to serve my community in a different capacity have all factored into my decision to seek judicial office.



#### Macel H. Janoschka

Several experiences have inspired me to pursue this position. After grad-

(Continued on page 2)

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY DINNY SKAFF, ESQ., PRESIDENT



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2026-27 Bar year! It is a true honor and privilege to serve as this year's President. The Board has been working hard throughout the Summer to make this a fulfilling, interesting, productive and fun year.

Our monthly meetings are off to a great start with scheduled speakers such as Eric Monday (September), Heywood Fralin (October) and Susan Tarley, VSB President (November). In addition to

the monthly meeting(s), October is a very busy month with Monica Monday leading a free CLE titled "Navigating Virginia's Appellate Process: Trends, Tactics & Takeaways" on October 14, 2026 and Judge Carson conducting the Courthouse Welcome program on October 21, 2026. Jason Morgan's investiture is set for October 23, 2026. Finally, it's hard to believe, but the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Santa at the Station has been scheduled for December 7, 2026. Please check the website for more details on these upcoming events.

In addition to those already scheduled, we are working on additional CLEs, programs, memorials, events and, after a many-year hiatus, are intending to bring back the golf/picnic outing in the Spring. We also plan to unveil a year-long community assistance project in the very near future.

As you know, this is a very important Bar year due to the fact that, for the first time in years, the Bar will be holding a Judicial Endorsement Meeting on October 13, 2026, to address the upcoming retirement of Judge Swanson. We urge all members to attend and take part in this process so that our legislators hear who we as a Bar Association believe to be the best candidate(s) for the position.

With regard to the process, in early September 2026, we were informed that the Salem/Roanoke County Bar Association had decided to withdraw from the Memorandum of Understanding between the two Bar Associations governing the interviewing of judicial candidates and generating a joint-rating based report. The primary reason for such withdrawal was the legislators' stated preference for receiving a short list of the most highly qualified candidates, rather than a numerical or categorical ranking. In response, given the short notice, the RBA Board met and unanimously voted to suspend the interview process for this particular judicial vacancy and to further evaluate our bylaws addressing judicial vacancies going forward. Instead, we decided to request for each candidate to complete a short questionnaire and submit a resume and writing sample to be posted publicly for our members to review. That information has now been received and is being displayed on the website and we encourage you to evaluate the submissions prior to the endorsement meeting.

Finally, this is an important year as we begin to attempt to replace our long-term Executive Director Diane Higgs, who plans to retire prior to the end of the year. We are currently seeking qualified candidates and initial interviews are on-going.

As you can see, we have a lot happening as the Bar year gets underway. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the Board members at any time with questions, concerns or ideas for consideration. Thank you!

*Dinny Skaff is a partner at Glenn Robinson Cathey Skaff & White, PLC.*

## MEET THE JUDICIAL CANDIDATES:

**WHAT PROFESSIONAL OR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE THIS JUDICIAL POSITION AT THIS POINT IN YOUR CAREER?**

*(Continued from page 3)*

uating from law school, I was fortunate enough to clerk for the Circuit Court judges of our 23rd Judicial Circuit. This was an incredible opportunity and was the first time I contemplated becoming a judge.

Volunteering with the RBA's Rule of Law Program many years ago also strengthened my desire to serve as a judge. Explaining the Rule of Law to seventh graders gave me a deeper appreciation for our judiciary and the decisions that are made every day. This appreciation has only deepened over the years as I've argued motions or participated in trials.

As I noted in my letter that was sent to all active members of the Roanoke Bar Association, the decision to eventually seek a judicial position was cemented in my mind while I was a partner at Frith Anderson+ Peake. However, my practice at that point was solely civil defense, and I knew that my background could be stronger. While I recognize that judges cannot possibly know all areas of the law, I believe it is important for our judiciary to have a well-rounded background. I wanted to strengthen my legal skills and experience and I began representing plaintiffs. After two years as a plaintiffs' attorney, I joined the Salem Commonwealth's Attorney's Office where I have gained an incredible amount of experience over the past eighteen months.

### Lalita Brim-Poindexter

As a practicing attorney in the Roanoke Valley for nearly two decades, I have dedicated my career to navigating complex legal issues across criminal prosecution, child welfare, personal injury, family law, and guardianship matters.

Over the years, I have seen firsthand how procedural delays, and systemic inconsistency alienate individuals and fuel community distrust in the very system designed to protect them.

My diverse background gives me a unique perspective on where our system succeeds and where it falters. As a former prosecutor, I believe in holding individuals accountable while ensuring due process-yet I recognize that court-appointed counsel remain drastically undercompensated. As a former solo practitioner, I believe that every litigant deserves equal treatment regardless of race or economic status, yet I have witnessed the persistent reality of systemic bias.

In sum, I am inspired by my personal experiences. To me, being a judge means serving as a model for what our judiciary should be-exhibiting unwavering fairness, strict impartiality, and a steadfast faithfulness to the law every single day.



## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*IS THERE A PARTICULAR CASE, ISSUE, OR GAP IN THE COURT SYSTEM THAT MOTIVATED YOUR DECISION TO APPLY?*

### Hon. Rachel L.D. Thompson

There is no particular case, issue, or gap in the court system that motivated me to apply. Sitting in a big black chair every day and making heavy decision after decision reminds me so often to walk with grace and humility. It is essential for the judge and the community at large to have someone in the seat who is aware of the power of the position and who intentionally surrounds themselves with people who keep them grounded.



When I considered the Circuit Court position, I thought of who I would want in that seat and who can carry that weight. I put myself in the shoes of the litigants before me and began to imagine what I would want as a citizen of the 23rd judicial circuit. This position should be filled by someone marked by humility in their temperament, by someone who is willing to listen to understand, and by someone who fairly applied the law across the board, no matter what.

The motivation to apply for this position landed when I reflected on what I could bring to this seat. First, many attorneys have seen my temperament and demeanor on the bench. I am steady and patient when needed; I am firm and decisive when needed. Second, I genuinely love to listen to understand the other side. I enjoy figuring out what makes other people tick and how to inspire others with my words. Too often, many of us are guilty of listening only to respond rather than listening with genuine curiosity. The latter always leads to a better result. Lastly, applying the rule of law to all parties while maintaining a consistent demeanor is a refined muscle I have enjoyed exercising and hope to apply it in Circuit Court.

### Courthouse Introduction with the Hon. David Carson October 21st, 4:00-5:00pm

The program will include introductions to our chief judges, clerks of court and the Sheriff. This event is for all those who passed the Bar between 2021 – 2025 or attorneys who are waiting for results. It will be held at the Roanoke City Courthouse, Courtroom 4 and there will be a reception to follow at Parkway Brewing,

## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*CAN YOU SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF A PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT DEMONSTRATES YOUR TEMPERAMENT FOR HANDLING DIFFICULT OR HIGH-STAKES CASES?*

### Camille T. Harvey

In 2020, a defendant named Heather Jones drove a vehicle while under the influence of narcotics, crossed the center line of Catawba Valley Drive, and struck an oncoming vehicle head on. She caused the death of Jerry Broughman and seriously injured his two daughters, ages 5 and 8, in the crash. I prosecuted this defendant on charges of aggravated involuntary manslaughter and two counts of maiming as a result of driving while intoxicated.

A critical piece of the Commonwealth's evidence was an analysis by the Department of Forensic Sciences showing that at the time of the crash, the specific drug that was in the defendant's system was heroin. Early in the prosecution, the trial court sustained the defendant's motion to suppress the results of that analysis. As I believed that decision to be in error, I perfected an interlocutory appeal of the ruling to the Court of Appeals of Virginia. Unfortunately, due to procedural oversight by the Office of the Attorney General, the appeal was dismissed.

I thereafter continued preparing the case for trial and planned to offer the lab results showing observable levels of morphine in the defendant's blood into evidence. Motions in limine seeking to exclude that evidence on the grounds of non-compliance with required statutory procedures were briefed and argued before trial. Finally, in 2023, I tried the case to a jury. At trial, further objections were made concerning the admissibility of opinions by the Commonwealth's expert toxicologist on statutory grounds. At the conclusion of the trial, the defendant was found guilty and thereafter received an active sentence of fifteen years on the three charges.

I believe my efforts in the prosecution of this serious case demonstrate that in a high-stakes situation I will be prepared and that I will maintain focus upon and commitment to my work despite setbacks and challenges that may occur.

### Patrick J. Kenney

As a criminal defense attorney, I have handled countless cases involving extremely violent crimes which, tragically, impact vulnerable victims. Several of my clients have faced either the death penalty or a life sentence. Handling these and other serious cases in the context of a jury trial, and often an emotional sentencing hearing, has fostered my ability to work under highly stressful conditions while simultaneously maintaining cordial and professional relationships with counsel representing the interests of the government. Murder cases, death penalty or otherwise, rape and malicious wounding cases all require a defense lawyer to vigorously fight for his/her client's rights under the Sixth Amendment while maintaining and building good working relationships with prosecutors that are based on mutual respect, trust, and a commitment to seeking justice.



## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ENSURE IMPARTIALITY AND MANAGE ANY POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST?*

### Macel H. Janoschka

I began my legal career as a law clerk. That was my first exposure to impartiality and, to a lesser extent, conflicts of interest. I was tasked with researching to find the correct application of the law and not researching to find the application of the law that best suited a side or party.



One of the benefits of my background is that I have been on both sides of a civil lawsuit. I've argued motions and presented evidence for both defendants and plaintiffs. I firmly believe this will be a real advantage in civil matters that I may preside over. As a prosecutor I am not motivated by convictions, but by seeking justice. I try to ensure that the right outcome is reached based on the law, the facts, and the best interests of our community. As a judge I will continue to try to ensure that my decisions are motivated by the law, the facts, and the best interests of the Roanoke Valley.

As to conflicts of interest, I have no doubt that I can manage them fairly and pursuant to the Canons of Judicial Conduct.

### Hon. Scott R. Geddes

We are reminded frequently in judicial training that every judge and every person has an implicit bias. The failure is not in having the bias - it is in pretending it does not exist and ignoring it. Personally, if I suspect that I am particularly influenced, I make my ruling and then examine it through the opposite lens to make sure that my decision is based on the facts and not emotion. Regarding conflicts, during my tenure on the bench, I have not and will not hear any cases involving any attorneys employed by OPN Law, PLC; given that my wife is a partner in that firm. I also recuse myself if a friend, neighbor or other individual I know appear before me and send their cases to the other presiding judge.



## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*WHAT DOES JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE MEAN TO YOU, AND HOW WILL YOU PROTECT IT IF APPOINTED?*

### Hon. Rachel L.D. Thompson

Judicial independence means being free from undue influence or pressure. In other words, when it comes down to it, will the court make the right decision without fear of outside factors? If there are pressures on all sides, do you still have the heart to make the right decision?



This issue is not and should not be unique to the judicial sphere; it is and should be a way of life. On average, every human makes thousands of decisions a day. Some decisions are minimally important. Other decisions are incredibly important. All decisions matter.

Everyone has heard the parable of the boiling frog: a frog jumps out of the boiling water immediately but stays in a pot of water heated slowly until it dies.

This parable translates perfectly to judicial independence. One cannot expect to make sound decisions in big moments that matter if they are not making sound decisions in the moments that don't matter as much. In other words, if we compromise in the "small" decisions in life, we're sitting in a pot of water heated slowly. Eventually, we will fold because we can't take the heat of the big moment. We have become accustomed to compromising.

How one will carry out judicial independence and make decisions that matter is measured by how one acts when no one is watching. How we act in private, how we treat our friends, how we treat strangers, how we act on good days, and how we respond on bad days, it all matters.

Making the right decision when it matters cannot be activated on command. It also cannot only be invoked in one's vocation. It applies across the board, in every moment and sphere of life.

For me, what you see is what you get. There is little difference between how I live my life at the playground with my kids and when I am making a major decision regarding a child at work.

Self-control matters. Listening matters. Good decision making. It all matters. The good thing is, when your mind, body and soul have been trained to make sound, calculated decisions in the little things, it naturally translates that you are liable to make sound, calculated decisions in the big things. However, if we wait for the big moment, like in a Circuit Court seat, to finally exercise the muscle of fairness and impartiality, we will fall flat on our face.

Instead of asking the candidates if they would be good for this position or whether they can make sound decisions when it matters most, look outside the bar and ask their friends who might not know exactly what they do, ask their community acquaintances, ask the Kroger attendant they see every Thursday, ask their kids' coaches, ask the elderly they pass at church, ask anyone who has nothing to give them in return. Their answers will tell you what you really want to know, and not only when it "matters".

Save the Date

***Santa at the Station***

**December 7, 2026**

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# The McCammon Group

is pleased to announce our newest Neutral



**Kathleen M. McCauley, Esq.**  
*Medical Malpractice & Employment Matters*

Kate McCauley has joined The McCammon Group as a mediator while continuing her law practice with Moran Reeves & Conn, P.C. With more than 30 years of experience, she has handled complex disputes involving medical malpractice, sexual misconduct, professional liability, employment, product liability, and toxic tort matters. Known for her thoughtful, practical approach, Kate brings deep insight into the legal and operational challenges that shape high-stakes disputes and regularly provides health care and human resource risk management counsel. She is a frequent speaker on workplace and health care-related risk, including the use of social media, hostile work environments, sexual misconduct, and HR compliance. Kate is widely respected for her professionalism and integrity and was the 2020 recipient of the VTLA-VADA Civility and Professionalism Award. She is a Fellow of the America College of Trial Lawyers and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. Kate now brings her extensive experience and commitment to civility to The McCammon Group to serve the alternative dispute resolution needs of lawyers and litigants throughout the Commonwealth and beyond.

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## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*HOW WOULD YOU APPROACH CASES INVOLVING SELF-REPRESENTED/UNDERSERVED LITIGANTS?*

**Camille T. Harvey**

All persons who appear before the court deserve attention and respect. In my work as a prosecutor, I have had countless conversations with victims of crime about the process by which a criminal case proceeds from arrest to trial, the potential outcomes of the prosecution, and my assessment of the case. These conversations require patience, active listening, and the use of language non-lawyers understand. In dealing with pro se litigants I will draw upon these skills I have developed interacting with members of the public. I will be patient, but at the same time I will maintain order and ensure that the rules of court are followed.

**Hon. Scott R. Geddes**

It is important to me that each participant has an opportunity to be heard and that each litigant feels they have had a fair opportunity to be heard and present their case. Courts are tasked with making fair and just decisions and this is particularly difficult with self-represented litigants. Courts have to continue to balance allowing each party a fair opportunity to present their case while enforcing the rules of evidence and maintaining impartiality. Trials among lawyers and self-represented litigants involve a certain necessary flexibility with respect to the examination of witnesses and the presentation of evidence.



**Join us for the November 10th luncheon.  
The speaker will be  
Susan B. Tarley, Esq.,  
President, Virginia State Bar**



## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE OR PROBLEM IN THE LEGAL FIELD TODAY? EXPLAIN YOUR OPINION.*

**Hon. Rachel L.D. Thompson**

One important issue in the legal field today is the dwindling court appointed list. As a judge, I appoint many court appointed attorneys to various cases: child support, criminal, child protective orders, etc. These individuals need sound representation. If you look at the national and state statistics, the number of court appointed attorneys have reduced by more than half in the last ten years; it is not unique to Virginia. However, it is noted that rural areas suffer at a higher rate than urban areas.



No one benefits from a skeletal court appointed list:

The court appointed attorney does not benefit because they are stretched so thin that it could lead to rushed or unprepared cases due to the heavy case load. The stress of the caseload could lead to poor physical and mental stamina and wellness.

The respondents and defendants do not benefit because they are entitled to a good defense and the caseload of court appointed attorneys could make it impracticable to prepare well for every case.

Attorneys who are not on the court appointed list do not benefit because they inherit the chaos of cases that go longer than needed due to limited time for preparation beforehand.

Society doesn't benefit for obvious reasons, including a healthy and robust judicial system with fair rulings.

I have always heard that you should never present a problem if you're not willing to also provide a solution. The solution is likely multifaceted and touches on a lot of different areas like the following:

- What is the incentive and is it worth it?
- Can the discovery process be improved to maximize attorneys' limited time?
- Should there be a revamped mentorship program required?
- Are younger attorneys aware of these positions and are they willing to contribute to the need?
- Should the recruitment begin earlier-while in law school?
- What push can seasoned attorneys provide that could make this field more attractive?
- Could there be better advertising to the next generation?
- Is the solution something in left field that has not even been considered yet?

Whatever the solution, we are approaching a crisis if the solution is not bumped to the top of the priority list. I believe it is going to take everyone in the legal field and beyond to come up with creative solutions. It is imperative that we are all part of the solution. The solution should not be left to one branch, one area of law, or one association to figure it out. I knew the problem existed before becoming a judge. Now as a judge, I have a front

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## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*STATE ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE THE RBA'S MEMBERSHIP TO KNOW ABOUT YOU AS PART OF THIS JUDICIAL ENDORSEMENT PROCESS.*

### Patrick J. Kenney

I have committed my professional life to seeking justice – both as a prosecutor and as a criminal defense attorney. Having represented the citizens of the Commonwealth as a prosecutor taught me that restraint is often more important than exercising power. Likewise, having also represented the citizens of the Commonwealth (one at a time) as a criminal defense attorney has taught me that the human condition is very complex and that each litigant who stand before the court is a unique person with a mixture of both tragic flaws and wonderful gifts. Anyone seeking to become a judge must have as a foundational personal commitment to consistently recognizing and respecting the humanity of every litigant before the Court.



### Hon. Rachel L.D. Thompson

My background in immigration law inspired me to pursue this judicial position. Immigration law can be so mysterious; in reality, it overlaps and intersects with many different areas of law. In fact, I have worked with many attorneys in this bar and professionals in the community for over a dozen years. In an effort to make immigration law less mysterious, I have highlighted several areas of law that immigration law touches:



**Business law:** I frequently represented foreign businesses and clients pursuing an LI-A Visa. An LI-A visa is a non-immigrant work permit that allows multinational companies to transfer an executive or manager from a foreign office to a US location. The foreign company is required to have a qualifying relationship with the US company: parent company, branch, subsidiary, or affiliate. Therefore, I worked with many business lawyers in the Roanoke valley to set up Limited Liability Companies on behalf of my clients. The immigration legal analysis was critical to explain to the business attorney, who guided my clients through the process and gave me a better understanding of business formation, which I had to turn around and explain to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service in order to secure a visa for my client.

**Criminal law:** It is not uncommon for criminal attorneys in the area to represent an immigrant facing minor or major crimes. In order to comply with *Padilla v. Kentucky*, a U.S. Supreme Court case that required criminal defense attorneys have a constitutional obligation under the Sixth Amendment to advise noncitizen clients about the risk of deportation arising from a guilty plea, I would frequently help explain the immigration consequences of pleas. It required me to have more than a mere understanding of Virginia crimes, and I often spoke on panels at immigration law conferences on "criminalization" - the intersection of criminal law and immigration law.

**Family law:** A large part of my twelve years as an immigra-

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## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*CAN YOU SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF A PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT DEMONSTRATES YOUR TEMPERAMENT FOR HANDLING DIFFICULT OR HIGH-STAKES CASES?*

(Continued from page 3)

### Macel H. Janoschka

Whether it is an adoption, a petty larceny charge, or a million-dollar lawsuit, every case is a high-stakes case to the parties involved. I've always known that every case matters deeply to the individuals involved. I also believe it can be easy, as attorneys, to become numb to these cases that may be routine for us. I've also tried to be mindful in recognizing that even the smallest cases matter to the litigants.



I've been on the defendant and plaintiffs' side of multi-million-dollar lawsuits, and I've been on the prosecution's side for a murder case. These cases obviously involve much more time, energy, and money than smaller cases. I don't believe that the full weight of how much a case could matter to an individual sank in until I assisted on a murder prosecution. We would meet regularly with the victim's family.

Getting to know the family members and talking about the person they had lost made the stakes of the case go well beyond the legal issues. It was a stark reminder that behind every attorney's file is a person, a family, and a life that could be profoundly affected by what happens in court.

### Shelia Moheb

One of my first jury trials was in a jurisdiction over an hour away from Roanoke, and it was my first appearance in their local circuit court. A minor, my client was charged with raping a 24-year-old female who was a co-worker of his at a local grocery store. At the time of his arrest, he was 17 years old and utterly confused, mainly because he claimed their romantic and sexual relationship was always consensual and never forced upon the alleged victim. I believed he was sincere, and it was clear he had a very tough childhood. It was his first experience with the criminal justice system, and I empathized with his fear and confusion. Consequently, I agreed to represent him.



A couple of days later, I went to the Commonwealth Attorney's office to review discovery. Uncertain of what to expect, I introduced myself to the office manager, who was kind but dismissive, and she handed me the file. Moments later, I realized the element of force was not the issue. The alleged victim had been declared incompetent several years prior after suffering from a traumatic brain injury. In fact, by some accounts, she had the mental capacity of a seven-year-old. Needless to say, I was not expecting this.

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## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*WHAT DOES JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE MEAN TO YOU, AND HOW WILL YOU PROTECT IT IF APPOINTED?*

*(Continued from page 4)*

### Hon. Scott R. Geddes

In Virginia, given that our judiciary continues to be appointed by that locality's elected delegation, judges often say we serve at the pleasure of the General Assembly (and by extension the citizens of the community). The delegation places a tremendous amount of trust in the judges they appoint to be fair and impartial, to understand the application of the law, and to exercise mercy when justice demands it. As a result, my job as a judge is to do the best I can to deserve the faith that the General Assembly has placed in me to be fair and impartial.



### Lalita Brim-Poindexter

To me, judicial independence means the ability to decide cases based on the law and the evidence, free from outside influence. During my time as a prosecutor, the choice to file or drop charges rested solely on the facts and the law. While the public and the media sometimes misunderstood these choices, I learned early on that popular opinion cannot drive the justice system. Straying from the law breeds inconsistency. True judicial independence recognizes that while every case is unique, the law remains the same and should be applied equally.



## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*CAN YOU SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF A PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT DEMONSTRATES YOUR TEMPERAMENT FOR HANDLING DIFFICULT OR HIGH-STAKES CASES?*

*(Continued from page 7)*

No matter how I explained the legal basis for his offense, my client relentlessly pushed back - she never presented as disabled or incapacitated; she worked at a grocery store where she was tasked with adult responsibilities; seven-year-olds do not have paying jobs; no one told him she was unable to legally consent; what about the fact that she was the one who came onto him?...

I posed some of his more valid arguments to the prosecutor during plea negotiations, but it became readily apparent we would never reach an agreement, so I prepared for trial. I filed several pretrial motions over the next few weeks, including motions in limine, motions to suppress, supplemental Brady motions, motion to unseal documents pertaining to the alleged victim's guardianship, and so forth. However, the tenor of these proceedings shifted dramatically when I filed a motion to recuse the prosecutor. It was then that I learned how personal some of these cases can become and how important it is to be aware of opposing counsel's sensitivities to certain filings.

At one point, the Commonwealth was yelling so loudly that the circuit court judge kicked both of us out of his chambers. As we stood out in the hallway, the prosecutor continued on about my inexperience as an attorney, my lack of familiarity with the locality, my failure to exercise client control, my ignorant filings, and so forth. During this one-sided rant, I could see he was losing all composure, and that realization gave me the confidence to stand my ground and stay the course.

On the day of trial, immediately following opening arguments, the alleged victim was called to the witness stand. Upon entering the courtroom, she locked eyes with my client, burst into tears and cried out, "I don't want to do this this! I can't do this!" She turned on her heels and walked out. No amount of cajoling convinced her to return, and my client was released from incarceration the same day.

My preparation and professionalism throughout this case served not only my client's best interests but also my own. It was valuable experience to appreciate the ways in which as attorneys, we can be adversarial in our advocacy without losing perspective, especially in high-stakes cases.

### In Memoriam of

**James Hooks Fulghum Jr., Esq.**

**1933-2026**

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

His complete obituary can be found at this link - <https://www.oakeys.com/obituaries/James-Hooks-Fulghum-Jr?obId=49392646>

The position of Executive Director for the Roanoke Bar Association remains open. If you have a recommendation or a potential candidate, please email the information to [rba@roanokebar.com](mailto:rba@roanokebar.com).

## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

*WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE OR PROBLEM IN THE LEGAL FIELD TODAY? EXPLAIN YOUR OPINION.*

*(Continued from page 6)*

row seat to the natural effects of a limited court appointed list. The attorneys on the list remain faithful and available; understandably, though, they can only take so much.

I remain optimistic about the national issue of the dwindling court appointed list. But I remain genuinely hopeful that our great state of Virginia, and particularly, this great bar, can commit to joining the efforts to revamp, restore and renew our court appointed list.

### Shelia Moheb

Sentencing disparities. The U.S. Sentencing Commission, ACLU, and countless other non-governmental organizations have repeatedly published annual reports supported by empirical data indicating that Black male offenders receive sentences that are nearly 20 percent longer than similarly situated White offenders. Systematic racial bias exists and fighting racial disparities in sentencing practices will require objective consciousness and simultaneous action from all branches of government.



As attorneys, we have a unique role in the administration of justice. Unfortunately, defense attorneys are placed in a difficult position when tasked with the responsibility, if not duty, to inform a sentencing judge when he or she has imposed shorter terms of incarceration for similarly situated White defendants. Consequently, defense attorneys feel uncomfortable raising the issue for fear they may offend the judge.

However, the importance of raising this issue locally, statewide, and nationally cannot be understated. Race matters in our legal system. It affects the likelihood of being pulled over or arrested; it affects prosecutorial charging decisions; it affects bond determinations for pretrial release; it affects the rate of conviction; and it ultimately affects the length of sentences imposed. Without an open and honest dialogue about racial disparities in the criminal justice system, we are allowing institutionalized discrimination to continue.

### Lalita Brim-Poindexter

Our legal system's greatest shortcoming is its inability to effectively support litigants with mental health and substance abuse issues. By focusing purely on legal outcomes, we ignore the underlying conditions that led this person into the system in the first place. We need a collaborative approach that unites mental health professionals, police, social services, and others. Every community partner provides a vital piece to the puzzle, and by working together, we can build a more effective system.



## MEET THE CANDIDATES:

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tion attorney was spent all over Virginia (over 50 different juvenile and domestic relations courts), petitioning for custody/visitation and special immigrant juvenile status for abused, neglected, and abandoned children. I wrote many practice advisories on the issue and was part of the movement to amend Virginia Code 16.1-241 to add section A1, to permit judges to enter orders affecting federal benefits.

Sports and Entertainment law: My former firm represented minor league teams and individuals as well as ballet companies, where their foreign athletes or dancers needed a visa. It was imperative to skillfully craft the immigration requirements along with the sports and entertainment law requirements.

While I never practiced the areas of law listed above, I was well versed in many areas of law because of the nature of immigration law: it touches everything. The variety of cases and the skill it took to absorb different areas of law quickly became enjoyable and is what, in part, inspired me to pursue this judgeship. I welcome the variety, the challenge and the heavy but beautiful impact this position holds.

Additionally, one area that has helped me in my judgeship already and that I know will be useful if I am appointed to Circuit Court is the insane demand that running a business has cost me. I employed 20 full-time employees, including five attorneys, and managed the legal side as well as the human resources side for two and a half years on my own. I know the definition of a hard day. I am grateful for that opportunity because it set me up for success and I know I will continue to lean into that skillset if appointed.

### Shelia Moheb

I moved to Roanoke with no family ties or professional connections. I never had the benefit of a mentor or a managing partner to review and critique my work. No one taught me how to draft a bond motion, a separation agreement, or an opening brief for the Supreme Court of Virginia; but when I decided to practice law here, I listened and learned from the best.



I outlined my first voir dire of a 9-year-old with Judge Weckstein (admittedly while catching John McNeil out of the corner of my eye looking baffled at my audacity for wearing jeans and rainboots in chambers - but again, I did not have a mentor). Judge Weckstein told me that my age or cultural background will make no difference as a trial attorney if I am always the most prepared person in the courtroom.

I learned from Judge Carson that we protect each other, and you always return another attorney's phone call within 24 hours. Judge Swanson showed me how exercising patience can affect the DNA of a case and the importance of taking contemporaneous notes during litigation. Judge Appar taught me to take pride in my creative pursuits and to spend time on those personal

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interests, in addition to practicing law. Judge Broadhurst revealed the ways in which wealthy, quarreling spouses sometimes need tough love from the bench to recognize how frivolous litigation hurts their children. And Judge Dorsey taught me that respect is earned.

These lessons are timeless, and they form the character of our bar. We all want to continue practicing in a jurisdiction dedicated to maintaining unyielding integrity and fidelity to the law. Our merit-based selection process for judicial appointments preserves institutional independence and our commitment to the rule of law. Consequently, I hope to reinforce those principles as core pillars of a lasting judiciary with your support.



On September 25, 2026, a large group of judges, local dignitaries, members of the Roanoke Bar Association, friends, and family members gathered at the Roanoke City Courthouse for the unveiling and hanging of Judge William Broadhurst's portrait between Courtrooms 2 and 3. Judge Broadhurst retired in 2020 after more than 25 years of distinguished service to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Judicial Circuit as both a General District Court and Circuit Court judge. As part of the ceremony, Judge Broadhurst praised members of the Bar for their high ethical conduct and thanked his colleagues for their wisdom, assistance and comradery during his time on the Bench.

## CLE Seminars October 2026

### ***Navigating Virginia's Appellate Process: Trends, Tactics & Takeaways***

To be held on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, from 3:00 - 5:00 pm., in-person at Gentry Locke with a reception immediately following the program. Presenters will be Monica Monday, Scott Stephenson, Dave Berry, and Jessi-ah Hulle. The deadline to register is Friday, October 9th. Register on the RBA website under the Events tab. Approved for 2.0 CLE credits.

### ***The State of Record Clearance in the Commonwealth of Virginia***

To be held on Friday, October 30, 2026, from 2:00 – 4:00 pm at Gentry Locke. The program will be presented by Robert Poggenklass, Esq. The topics will include expungement and record sealing. Approved for 2.0 CLE credits. Register on the RBA website under the Events tab.

### **Trying Section 1983 Cases**

The US District Court for the Western District of Virginia, in connection with the WDVA Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, invites you to attend its free **Trying Section 1983 Cases CLE** October 22, 2026 from 8:45-1:00 In the Ceremonial Courtroom of the Reuben E. Lawson Federal Building in Roanoke. 4 hours of CLE credit (including 1 hour of ethics) pending. Free networking lunch provided following the CLE program. The link to register is:

**<https://www.fbawdva.org/event-details-registration/trying-section-1983-cases-cle>**.

## RBA SEPTEMBER 8, 2026 LUNCHEON

The first luncheon of the 2026-2027 year was held on September 8, 2026, at the Shenandoah Club. The meeting was called to order by president, Dinny Skaff. Following the welcome and announcements, Mr. Skaff introduced Amy Geddes who shared a memorial resolution in honor of member Holly Farris. Following the resolution, Mr. Skaff turned the floor over to Sarah Jessee to introduce the guest speaker, Eric Monday.



## CELEBRATING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY

In celebration of the 250th anniversary, the RBA donated 850 pocket-size Constitutions to the Roanoke City School Seniors. In addition to the donation, following a free public screening of the new feature film, *The American Constitution*, a panel discussion on the Constitution was held.

Thank you to Vicki Francois, John Fishwick and Judge Elizabeth Dillon for agreeing to participate in the panel.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## NEW MEMBERS

The Roanoke Bar Association welcomes the following new members:

### Active Members:

Lauren E. Webb, Slovensky Law

Macel Janoschka, Salem Commonwealth  
Atty Office

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Roanoke Bar Association Meetings 2026 - 2027

September 8, 2026

October 13, 2026

November 10, 2026

December 8, 2026

January 12, 2027

February 9, 2027

March 9, 2027

April 13, 2027

Tuesday, May 4, 2027 (Law Day)

June 8, 2027

Go to [www.roanokebar.com](http://www.roanokebar.com) for more information on all upcoming events.

## OFFICERS

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Secretary-Treasurer

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**DON'T FORGET TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete and Forward to:** Roanoke Bar Association, P.O. Box 18183, Roanoke, VA 24014

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