

# SUPREME COURT

Chief Justice Loretta H. Rush  
Indiana Supreme Court  
311 State House  
200 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2732



# OF INDIANA

May 23, 2023

The Honorable Eric J. Holcomb  
Governor of Indiana  
c/o Ms. Sharon Jackson, Deputy General Counsel  
200 W. Washington Street, Statehouse Room 206  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Via Email and Hand Delivery

Dear Governor Holcomb:

The Marion County Judicial Selection Committee met on Thursday, May 11, and on Friday, May 12, 2023, and selected its nominees for two vacancies on the Marion Superior Court due to the retirement of the Honorable Elizabeth Ann Christ, effective April 1, 2023, and the upcoming retirement of the Honorable Marcel A. Pratt, Jr., effective May 31, 2023. On behalf of the Committee, and pursuant to Indiana Code section 33-33-49-13.4, we submit to you the candidates the Committee found to be the most highly qualified for each vacancy.

In selecting these candidates, the Committee evaluated and weighed the nonexclusive list of statutory factors, including legal education, activities in public service, efforts and achievements in improving the administration of justice, diversity, legal experience and reputation as a trial lawyer or judge, and probable judicial temperament.

For the vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable Elizabeth Ann Christ, the Committee nominates the following three candidates:

**Magistrate Pauline A. Beeson**  
**Magistrate Kelly M. Scanlan**  
**Philip C. Sheward, Esq.**

For the vacancy created by the upcoming retirement of the Honorable Marcel A. Pratt, Jr., the Committee nominates the following three candidates:

**Magistrate Stefanie R. Crawford**  
**Magistrate Melanie L. Kendrick**  
**Magistrate Tara Y. Melton**

On behalf of the Committee, we offer the following summaries of each candidate's qualifications.

## **Magistrate Pauline A. Beeson**

Born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, Magistrate Pauline “Polly” A. Beeson has spent the last eight years of her legal career with the Marion Superior Court, first in court administration, and since February 2022, as a Magistrate in the Family Division. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Management with a minor in Marketing from Purdue University in 2003. Before enrolling in law school, she worked as a probation assistant at the Tippecanoe County Probation Department and later as a paralegal at the Marion County Public Defender Agency. Magistrate Beeson then earned her Juris Doctorate from the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law in 2008. Upon graduation, she returned to the Public Defender Agency where she worked as a deputy public defender, handling a varied caseload. She was promoted to D-felony court in 2009 and practiced there until 2012 when she entered private practice.

In private practice, Magistrate Beeson first worked as an associate at a small firm in Indianapolis. Later, she formed Russell & Weitzman where she continued to practice law in criminal defense, juvenile law, and family law in courts around the state. While in private practice, Magistrate Beeson also worked part-time for the Public Defender Agency with cases involving CHINS, termination of parental rights, and juvenile delinquency.

Magistrate Beeson left private practice in 2015 when she began her career at Marion Superior Court as Director of the Arrestee Processing Center (APC), a role which required working with many criminal justice stakeholders. In 2017, she shifted into a different role as a staff attorney, where she researched and proposed changes for systemic improvements to court operations, staffed judicial committees, and served as the point person for most legal matters concerning the court and its judges, including requests for access to public records and defending claims. Then, in 2021, Magistrate Beeson became the term manager to support each of the three term judges who chaired the Civil, Criminal, and Family Divisions. In this role, she oversaw two projects with the National Center of State Courts, which resulted in a final report of recommendations for the development of the new Family Division.

In February 2022, Magistrate Beeson was appointed as Juvenile Magistrate and assigned to the then newly created Family Division. Her docket includes cases involving CHINS/TPR, juvenile delinquency, adoptions, guardianships, dissolutions, protective orders, and paternity.

Magistrate Beeson regularly presents continuing legal education seminars, training both attorneys and judges on many topics including E-Filing in Odyssey, Rules on Access to Court Records, and remote hearings. She is an active member of the Indiana Judges Association, the Indiana State Bar Association, and the Indianapolis Bar Association, where she has had many leadership roles.

## **Magistrate Kelly M. Scanlan**

A native of Beech Grove, Indiana, Magistrate Kelly M. Scanlan has served as a judicial officer for the Marion County courts since 2016. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from the Indiana University School of Nursing in 1997 and received the Minority Achievement Scholarship. Upon graduation, Magistrate Scanlan first enjoyed a career in healthcare, working as a registered nurse at Wishard Hospital in labor and delivery from 1997 until she finished law school. In 2005, Magistrate Scanlan earned her Juris Doctorate from the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, where she graduated *cum laude* and received two scholarships. During law school, Magistrate Scanlan was an editor on the Indiana Law Review and was on the Dean's List.

After law school, Magistrate Scanlan practiced for over ten years as a solo practitioner and in several law firms in Indianapolis, including Bose McKinney & Evans, Wilson Kehoe Wingham, and Baker & Gilchrist. During her private practice, she gained experience in administrative law and civil litigation in a variety of areas such as lender liability, foreclosure, transportation, medical malpractice, personal injury, and appeals. Magistrate Scanlan also represented clients in jury trials in Marion, Vanderburgh, and St. Joseph counties.

In 2016, Magistrate Scanlan was hired as a Commissioner for the Paternity Division of the Marion Circuit Court. In Paternity Court, she presided over family law matters involving paternity, child custody, parenting time, and child support, until December 2017 when she was invited to join the Probate Division of the Marion Superior Court. In Probate Court, Magistrate Scanlan continued to preside over family law matters, but she was also exposed to a wide variety of cases concerning guardianships, mental health commitments, adoptions, and estate matters.

She served in the Probate Division until April 2021 when her request was granted to join the court's newly formed Family Division. In the Family Division, Magistrate Scanlan presides over cases involving minor guardianships, adoptions, dissolutions, CHINS, paternity, and requests for protective orders. On January 1, 2022, she was converted from Commissioner to Magistrate.

Over the last fifteen years, Magistrate Scanlan has volunteered her time seeking to improve the law and community, including service as a guardian ad litem from 2007 through 2016 and appointment in 2019 to the Indiana Supreme Court's Records Access and Management Committee. Magistrate Scanlan has been a member of the Indianapolis Bar Association's Helping Enrich Attorneys' Lives (HEAL) Committee since 2014, and she is also a member of the Indiana State Bar Association.

## **Philip C. Sheward, Esq.**

Born in Lewiston, Maine, Philip C. Sheward has practiced law in Indiana for nearly nineteen years, having spent most of that time with a focus on family law litigation. Mr.

Sheward graduated from Cedarville University, Ohio in 2001, with a Major in Pre-Law and a Minor in Business Administration. During college, he received several merit-based scholarships and competed in over forty speech-and-debate tournaments. Mr. Sheward received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 2004 where he received a CALI Excellence for the Future Award for the highest scoring student in Civil Practice Clinic–Health. During law school, he clerked for a small law firm in Pittsburgh.

Mr. Sheward spent the summer after graduating law school as a certified legal intern with the Elkhart County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. That fall, he joined the Allen County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office and spent two years working as a deputy prosecuting attorney. In that role, he prosecuted misdemeanors to Class A felonies and tried more than one hundred cases, including approximately fifteen jury trials.

In 2006, Mr. Sheward was hired as an associate at Allen Wellman McNew Harvey, LLP in Greenfield, Indiana. He was promoted to partner in 2012 and continues working at the firm today. During his time there, Mr. Sheward has defended clients charged with crimes at all levels and has assisted clients with needs in family law, including dissolutions, custody and child support modifications, adoptions, CHINS/TPR cases, and guardianships. Additionally, he has taken on cases involving business matters, medical malpractice, estates and trusts, and general civil litigation, including appeals before the Court of Appeals of Indiana.

Mr. Sheward has also served as a guardian ad litem and has acted as a neutral third-party mediator in family law matters as a registered domestic relations mediator. In addition to his private practice, Mr. Sheward has served as a part-time public defender in Hancock County since 2007. He has also been asked to serve as Judge Pro Tempore in the Hancock Superior Courts and has done so approximately four to eight times per year.

Mr. Sheward is a member of the Hancock County Bar Association, the Indiana State Bar Association, and the Indianapolis Bar Association. He has also taken on leadership roles with the Greenfield Area Chamber of Commerce, including winning the annual award in 2018; the Hope House, a homeless shelter and thrift store; and a local Boy Scouts of America Troop.

### **Magistrate Stefanie R. Crawford**

Born and raised in Marion County, Magistrate Stefanie R. Crawford has served as a judicial officer in Marion Circuit Court’s Juvenile Paternity Division since 2017, first as a Commissioner and later as a Magistrate. She attended Butler University where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting in 1993. She was also a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. After college and during law school she worked as an auditor. And in 1999, she earned her Juris Doctorate from the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law. During law school, Magistrate Crawford was a legal intern at the Office of the Indiana Attorney General, a law clerk at Lewis Wagner, a member of the National Moot Court Competition, and an officer for the Student Bar Association.

After law school, Magistrate Crawford accepted a job at Miller Carson Boxberger & Murphy (n/k/a Carson LLP) in Fort Wayne, becoming the firm's first African American attorney. At the firm, she specialized in medical malpractice defense and represented clients in court for trials, oral arguments, and hearings. In January 2002, Magistrate Crawford accepted a position as an associate at Lewis Wagner in Indianapolis, working as a litigator in the insurance defense practice area. She was promoted to partner in 2007 and began supervising associates and law clerks. She also chaired the diversity and inclusion committee and was recognized for her leadership with two awards: the Champion of Diversity Award presented by Indiana Minority Magazine and the Celebration of Diversity Award for Workforce Development presented by the Mayor of Indianapolis.

In 2017, Magistrate Crawford opened a solo practice, Crawford Law LLC, specializing in personal injury. She was named as a Super Lawyer in 2020 and received an AV rating from Martindale-Hubbe. That same year, Magistrate Crawford also accepted a position as a Commissioner in IV-D Marion Circuit Court where she worked 20 hours per week hearing juvenile paternity cases. She stayed in this part-time role until December 2019 while also maintaining her solo practice.

Magistrate Crawford continued her solo practice until January 2021 when she became a full-time Magistrate in Marion Circuit Court. She presides over a high-volume docket of cases establishing and modifying paternity, contempt actions, and IV-D.

Off the bench, Magistrate Crawford serves on the Indiana Supreme Court's Community Relations Committee and, for the past ten years, she has supported the Committee's mission of speaking to children on Constitution Day. Magistrate Crawford is an active member of the Indianapolis Bar Association's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Her involvement includes reaching out to law firms, partnering with a law professor to facilitate the Second Chance Job Fair, and working with the Restart the Seat is Yours programming.

### **Magistrate Melanie L. Kendrick**

A native of Indianapolis, Magistrate Melanie "Mimi" L. Kendrick has served as a Magistrate in the Probate Division of the Marion Superior Court since 2018. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies with Minors in Education, and Schooling and Society—on a full academic scholarship from the Lilly Endowment—from the University of Notre Dame in 2008. She earned her Juris Doctorate in 2011 from Wake Forest University School of Law. During law school, she interned at the Marion County Public Defender Agency and received a CALI Excellence for the Future Award given to the highest scoring student in an externship for children's law.

Upon graduation, Magistrate Kendrick returned to the Marion County Public Defender Agency. She initially worked in the Juvenile Delinquency Division before being promoted to an Attorney II position in which she represented clients with higher level felonies and served as co-counsel on waivers to adult court. In 2014, Magistrate Kendrick requested and was granted

a transfer to the agency's Problem-Solving Division due to her interest in mental health in the criminal justice system. In that role, Magistrate Kendrick served as the agency's lead attorney in the Marion County Mental Health Court and represented clients who had severe mental health impairments.

In 2017, Magistrate Kendrick transitioned to the University of Southern Indiana where she served as the Title IX Coordinator until February 2018. In that role, she ensured the university was in compliance with the law and oversaw sexual misconduct hearings to ensure a fair and equitable process for all parties.

Magistrate Kendrick returned to Indianapolis in February 2018 after being appointed as a Magistrate in the Marion Superior Court's Probate Division. In that role, she presides over cases involving wills, estates, trusts, mental health, adult guardianships, and adoptions.

Off the bench Magistrate Kendrick is an active member of the Indianapolis Bar Association and its Visibility Committee which promotes many of the association's events. She is also a member of the Marion County Bar Association and regularly speaks at schools to discuss the law and the Constitution. In 2019, Magistrate Kendrick was appointed to, and still serves on, the Indiana Supreme Court's Commission on Race and Gender Fairness, with a focus on the education and social engagement section. She is also a member of the Indiana Judges Association and the Indiana State Bar Association, and she is a current board member of the University of Notre Dame Club of Indianapolis.

### **Magistrate Tara Y. Melton**

A native of Pensacola, Florida, Magistrate Tara Y. Melton has served as a Magistrate in the Family Division at the Marion Superior Court since 2021. She earned her Associate of Arts degree in General Studies from Pensacola Junior College in 1988, graduating *cum laude*. And she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Agri-Business with a minor in Economics from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in 1991, graduating *cum laude*. In 1994, Magistrate Melton received her Juris Doctorate from Florida State University College of Law. During law school, she served in the Student Bar Association, the Black Law Student Association, and the Juvenile Law Clinic.

Magistrate Melton has been licensed to practice law for twenty-seven years and has been admitted to the bars of several states, including Indiana (2008), Florida (1995), and Maryland (1999). Before moving to Indianapolis in 2007, Magistrate Melton worked in Florida and Maryland as a legal aid, at a law firm, and at various government agencies, including the Department of Children & Families in Panama City.

In 2007, Magistrate Melton accepted a staff attorney position at Lee Cossell & Feagley in Indianapolis and stayed in that role until 2011. From 2008 to 2016, Magistrate Melton assisted the not-for-profit Fathers and Families Center with its program, advocating for nonresident fathers in child welfare court by holding monthly legal workshops to help fathers understand

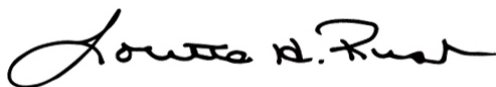
the legal process. From 2011 to 2017, Magistrate Melton worked for the Marion County Public Defender Agency, first as a contract attorney and later as a full-time attorney. At the end of 2017, Magistrate Melton shifted to a new role at Child Advocates in Indianapolis, first as a permanency facilitator and mediator and later as Director of Mediation. Prior to being appointed to the bench, Magistrate Melton also served as a Judge Pro Tempore in the small claims courts of Center Township and Lawrence Township in Marion County.

In 2021, Magistrate Melton was appointed as a Magistrate in the Family Division of the Marion Superior Court. She presides over weekly CHINS and juvenile delinquency dockets, which includes fact-finding trials, TPR trials, and motion hearings. She also presides over both final and motion hearings for cases involving dissolution, paternity, adoption, guardianship, and protective orders.

Off the bench, Magistrate Melton is a member of the Indiana Judges Association, the Marion County Bar Association, the Indianapolis Bar Association, and the National Bar Association. She is a regular speaker and panelist on legal issues, providing training at continuing legal education seminars and pursuing involvement at high-school and collegiate mock trial competitions. Additionally, since 2021, Magistrate Melton has provided a judicial perspective while serving as an appointed member of the Indiana Supreme Court's Ethics and Professionalism Committee. She also serves as a mentor to youth, is a former board member to not-for-profits that serve the community, and is a current member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

We would be pleased to discuss any of these nominees with you in greater detail. Based on their interviews and the Committee's assessment, each nominee has a personality that is well-suited for the bench as well as the legal ability and professional experience to serve with distinction. Our Committee is confident that each nominee is of high caliber and would be a lasting credit to the Marion Superior Court.

Sincerely,



Loretta H. Rush  
*Chief Justice of Indiana  
and MCJSC Chairperson*



Robert R. Altice, Jr.  
*Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Indiana  
and MCJSC Vice Chairperson*

cc: Joseph R. Heerens, General Counsel, Office of Indiana Governor Eric J. Holcomb