



Indiana Supreme Court

Chambers of Justice Christopher M. Goff • 317-232-2546 • courts.in.gov

July 24, 2025

The Honorable Mike Braun
Governor of Indiana
c/o Patrick Price, General Counsel
200 W. Washington Street, Statehouse Room 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Braun:

As chair of the Allen County Judicial Nominating Commission, I am pleased to offer the names of the three candidates the commission found to be the most qualified among those who applied for the vacancy on the Allen Superior Court due to the impending retirement of the Honorable Andrea Trevino, effective September 23, 2025. The commission met in person on July 23, 2025, to interview the four applicants and unanimously selected the following three nominees (listed alphabetically):

Magistrate Brent Ecenbarger
Magistrate Carolyn Foley
Magistrate Sherry Hartzler

In selecting these candidates, the commission considered the nonexclusive list of statutory factors in Indiana Code section 33-33-2-40, including legal education, activities in public service, efforts and achievements in improving the administration of justice, legal experience and reputation as a trial lawyer or judge, and probable judicial temperament.

On behalf of the commission, I offer summaries of each candidate's qualifications in the order listed above.

Magistrate Brent Ecenbarger

Born in Allen County, Magistrate Brent Ecenbarger has served in the Allen Circuit Court under Judge Ashley Hand since 2023, presiding over family law matters, felony OWI arraignments, protective orders, and civil forfeitures. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology from Indiana University in Bloomington, majoring in Sports Communication-Broadcast with a minor in

Telecommunications. He then graduated with a Master of Science in Sports Administration from Valparaiso University, where he also earned his Juris Doctorate.

After graduating law school, he served at the Noble County Prosecutor's Office from 2010 to 2014. While there, he was responsible for battery cases and all juvenile cases in the county. During that time, he co-founded the Teen Court program as an alternative for low-level juvenile offenders instead of formal court proceedings. He was also co-founder and a former member of the Noble County Domestic Violence Task Force—raising awareness for victim's rights.

Subsequently, he worked at the Allen County Prosecutor's Office from November 2014 to March 2020. He began in the misdemeanor division, rising to the felony division, and then managing all non-sexual offenses against children matters.

From 2020 to 2023, he was an assistant United States attorney for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Fort Wayne. While there, he prosecuted drug trafficking, unlawful possession of firearms and explosives, and fraud cases. He was responsible for charging, indicting, and prosecuting matters, and he assisted on appeals and post-conviction relief matters. He has tried over 40 cases to a jury.

In 2023, Magistrate Ecenbarger was appointed as a Magistrate in the Allen Circuit Court. In addition to his bench duties, he assists with overseeing the circuit court's budget and managing the probation department. He serves on the Indiana Judicial Conference Domestic Relations Committee. An Allen County judge describes him as "calm under pressure, thoughtful in response, and willing to shoulder additional responsibility without hesitation."

Magistrate Ecenbarger is a board member of the Allen Circuit Problem Solving Courts, Inc., an organization working with the local problem-solving courts to provide financial assistance for programming and participants. In his free time, he is an avid reader, movie buff, and former book reviewer, while he also enjoys watching his children participate in youth sports.

Magistrate Carolyn Foley

Born in Fort Wayne, Magistrate Carolyn Foley received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Criminal Justice from Indiana University – Bloomington. She later earned her Juris Doctorate from the Indiana University School of Law – Indianapolis.

She served for 14 years as a deputy prosecuting attorney for the Allen County Prosecutor's Office, holding positions of section chief of child support division, section chief of D felony division, section chief of sex crimes division, and chief counsel of the civil division. While there, she prosecuted matters ranging from IV-D child support matters to homicide cases, including numerous jury trials. As chief counsel, she trained and mentored young deputy prosecutors.

She has served in Allen Superior Court 7 for 19 years, as the chief juvenile probation officer, juvenile referee, and magistrate. In her role as chief juvenile probation officer, she assisted with the design and approval for the Allen County Juvenile Center. She was also responsible for improving the training given annually to juvenile probation officers. As a magistrate, she

presides over juvenile delinquency, juvenile status, paternity, and protective order proceedings, regularly overseeing bench trial matters.

Magistrate Foley has been selected by Chief Justice Rush to sit on the statewide Youth Justice Oversight Committee. She assisted in drafting the committee's report to the General Assembly in June 2023. She also chaired the Probation Standards Workgroup and co-chairs the Transitional Services Workgroup.

Magistrate Foley also served on the Indiana Judicial Conference Probation Committee from 2018 to 2024, helping to create the system for revocation of certificates for probation officers found to have violated Indiana's Probation Standards. She currently serves on the Indiana Judicial Conference Education Committee. A fellow magistrate describes her as expecting "high performance from the employees of the juvenile center because she holds herself to high standards of performance."

In addition, Magistrate Foley serves on the Continuing Legal Education Committee of the Allen County Bar Association, currently as the vice-chair. She has twice been elected to represent magistrates in northern Indiana on the Indiana Judges Association's Board of Managers.

Off the bench, she serves on the Eckhart Public Library Board of Trustees and the Dayspring Community Church's Leadership Advisory Board. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, gardening, and reading.

Magistrate Sherry Hartzler

Born in Fort Wayne, Magistrate Sherry Hartzler received her Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from Indiana University – Fort Wayne. She then earned her Juris Doctorate from the Valparaiso University School of Law.

She began her legal career as a judicial assistant for the Allen Circuit Court. She later worked as an associate attorney at Vin Gilder Trzynka, P.C., focusing on family law and civil litigation, while also serving as a domestic relations mediator and as contract counsel for the Allen County Department of Child Services.

From 2006 to 2010, she was chief legal counsel for the Allen County Department of Child Services, one of three chief legal counsels in the State of Indiana. She established the litigation department and was responsible for hiring and supervising attorneys and staff, along with other administrative duties. She represented DCS in all stages of litigation, including CHINS matters, TPR matters, and appellate proceedings.

She became a magistrate in the Allen Superior Court, family relations division, in 2015, presiding over matters ranging from dissolution of marriage, paternity, adoption, child support, CHINS, and TPRs. Magistrate Hartzler started the Allen Superior Court Family Recovery Court and, as part of her FRC responsibilities, manages the grants, budget, and staff training. Additionally, she frequently makes speeches in the community and assists other judicial officers implementing

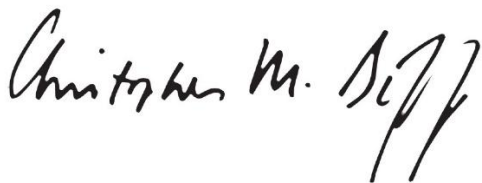
their own treatment courts. An Allen Superior Court judge describes her as possessing “the intellect, commitment, personal and philosophical values that are required of a Judge.”

Magistrate Hartzler serves on the Indiana Judicial Conference Problem Solving Court Committee as well as the sub-committee for Safe Baby Problem Solving Courts. She is a member of the National and Indiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and All Rise (formerly the National Association of Drug Court Professionals).

Off the bench, she volunteers with the Literary Alliance, tutoring adults in reading. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Healthier Moms and Babies, working to reduce infant mortality in Indiana. She is a member of the Benjamin Harrison Inn of the American Inns of the Court, an association of lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals meeting to address concerns and pressing legal issues. She enjoys gardening, cooking, and spending time with her husband and daughter.

I would be pleased to discuss any of these nominees with you in greater detail. Based on their interviews, the commission’s assessment, and history of service as judicial officers, each nominee is well-suited for the open judicial position and has the legal ability and professional experience to serve with distinction. Our commission members are confident that each nominee is of high caliber and would be an outstanding addition to the Allen Superior Court.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christopher M. Goff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christopher" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Goff".

Christopher M. Goff
*Justice, Indiana Supreme Court
and ACJNC Chairperson*