



Indiana Supreme Court

Justice Geoffrey G. Slaughter • courts.in.gov

September 1, 2021

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

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Dear Governor Holcomb:

As chairman of the St. Joseph County Judicial Nominating Commission, I am pleased to transmit the names of the five most highly qualified candidates from among those who applied for the vacancy in the St. Joseph Superior Court 6. This vacancy arose when Judge David C. Chapleau retired as of July 15, 2021. On August 24, the Commission met in person, interviewed all applicants, and selected these five nominees:

Magistrate Keith C. Doi
Lyle Hardman, Esq.
Andrew Jones, Esq.
Magistrate Graham C. Polando
Jamie Woods, Esq.

In selecting these nominees, the Commission considered the eligibility requirements and nonexclusive statutory factors in Indiana Code section 33-33-71-37, including each applicant's legal education, writings, public-service activities (including efforts to improve the administration of justice), legal experience, and probable judicial temperament. The Commission also considered the applicants' experience given the likely civil docket of the incoming judge in Superior Court 6. As required by statute and on the Commission's behalf, I provide evaluations of each candidate's qualifications.

Magistrate Keith C. Doi

Magistrate Keith C. Doi, a native of St. Joseph County, has served as a Magistrate in the St. Joseph Superior Court since 2016. He graduated from Indiana University Bloomington in 1985, earning a Bachelor of Arts in political science. And he graduated from IU's Maurer School of Law in 1988.

After law school, Magistrate Doi began his legal career as a deputy prosecutor with the St. Joseph County Prosecutor's Office. His primary responsibility was with the office's Title IV-D child-support division. His duties included establishing and enforcing child-support orders. He also worked in the office's misdemeanor division, writing criminal charges, presenting arguments for bond, and trying misdemeanor bench trials.

In 1993, Magistrate Doi joined the Elkhart County Prosecutor's Office, where he became the first full-time director of its Title IV-D child-support division. He transformed the division from a part-time operation, previously located at a private law firm, into a full-time functioning office and part of Elkhart County government. He was able to significantly increase collections of child support and helped bring awareness of child-support issues to the community through many speaking functions.

In 1997, Magistrate Doi went into private law practice in South Bend, joining Kalamaros & Associates, LLP, as an associate and became an equity partner, practicing complex civil litigation. The firm later merged into the firm of Hunt Suedhoff Kalamaros LLP (n/k/a Hunt Suedhoff Kearney LLP). He became well versed in motion practice and trial rules through his nearly twenty years of work at the firm in a wide range of areas including product liability, personal injury, legal malpractice, breach of contract, construction accidents and defects, and environmental pollution.

In September 2016, Magistrate Doi was appointed to his current position as one of four magistrates of the St. Joseph Superior Court who oversee high-volume courts in the small-claims and traffic-and-misdemeanor divisions. He has close interaction with the public, often with self-represented litigants. His cases in the small-claims division include disputes between landlords and tenants, collections, property damage, and contracts. His cases in the misdemeanor division include battery, domestic violence, carrying a gun without a license, DUI, driving with a suspended license, theft, and conversion. He has resolved more than 25 cases through a bench trial. He has also presided over felony jury trials and has filled in for superior-court judges during daily court proceedings.

Magistrate Doi is a member of the Indiana State Bar Association, St. Joseph County Bar Association, and Judicial Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee. He is married with two children and enjoys participating and watching sporting activities with his family.

Lyle Hardman, Esq.

Lyle Hardman was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and moved with his family to Indianapolis when he was ten years old. Mr. Hardman earned his Bachelor of Arts in history, *cum laude*, from DePauw University in 1988. And he graduated from the Indiana University Maurer School of Law in 1991. He has practiced law in South Bend for more than twenty years.

After law school, Mr. Hardman began his legal career as an associate with Eichhorn & Eichhorn, a litigation firm located in northwest Indiana, and became a partner in 1997. In 2001, he joined the South Bend office of Hunt Suedhoff Kalamaros LLP (n/k/a Hunt Suedhoff Kearney LLP) as an associate and became a partner in 2005. His law practice is concentrated in civil litigation, and he represents clients in a wide range of legal matters, including complex litigation, mass torts, products liability, medical and professional malpractice, construction claims, school law, labor and employment law, employment discrimination, civil rights, commercial law, negligence and tort law, contract actions, personal injury, municipal law, First Amendment, federal civil rights, Magnuson Moss Warranty Act, Indiana Deceptive Sales Consumer Act, toxic torts, intellectual property, utility law, and environmental law.

Mr. Hardman has extensive experience in all aspects of civil litigation including written discovery, depositions, motion practice, briefings, oral arguments, and conducting direct and cross examinations of witnesses. He has presented oral arguments before trial courts, both federal and state, and before our state appellate court and the federal appeals court in Chicago. He has trial experience, including trying cases to a jury. Since 2013, his peers have selected him as an Indiana Super Lawyer. And since 2015, he has been recognized as one of the Best Lawyers in America.

For more than twenty years, Mr. Hardman has served as a volunteer mock trial judge for both high-school and college-level competitions and has been an author for high-school competitions. He has volunteered his time with the Indiana State Bar Association District 2 Pro Bono program and has presented at risk-management seminars for both St. Joseph Regional Medical Center and Beacon Health. He is a member of the Indiana State Bar Association, an active participant in its legal-ethics committee, and a member of the Robert A. Grant Inn of Court.

Mr. Hardman has served on the board of the South Bend Youth Symphony Orchestra for ten years and currently serves as its president. He is married to his wife of more than thirty years and has two adult children.

Andrew Jones, Esq.

Andrew Jones, a native of St. Joseph County, graduated from Butler University in 2008, earning a Bachelor of Arts with honors in political science and philosophy. He graduated from Boston College Law School in 2010 after completing his law degree in five academic semesters. During law school, he worked as a judicial law clerk in the St. Joseph Circuit Court and as a certified legal intern for the St. Joseph County Public Defenders' Office. In May 2019, Mr. Jones completed the full-time, two-year Master of Business Administration program from the Mendoza College of Business School at the University of Notre Dame, while simultaneously managing his law firm, the Jones Law Office LLC in South Bend.

After finishing law school, Mr. Jones worked as an associate (and later a senior associate) at Sweeney Julian, P.C., in South Bend until 2015. While there, he litigated many cases involving general tort, government entity liability, wrongful death, catastrophic brain injury, dram shop, and felony criminal defense. Later in 2015, he opened the Jones Law Office LLC in South Bend, which represents clients in matters involving domestic relations, personal injury, complex civil litigation, and criminal defense. He serves as outside counsel to many local businesses and has appeared in St. Joseph, Allen, LaPorte, Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marion, Noble, and Starke Superior and Circuit Courts, as well as the United States District Courts for the Northern District of Indiana, Western District of Michigan, and the District of Nebraska.

Mr. Jones has extensive trial experience having tried felony criminal jury trials, in cases involving charges of fraud, rape, battery, and strangulation. He has tried several civil jury trials involving civil torts including wrongful death. And he has also tried many civil bench trials in cases including divorce, child custody, and other allegations.

Since 2019, Mr. Jones has been an adjunct professor of marketing to undergraduate business students at the Mendoza College of Business School at the University of Notre Dame. From 2015 – 2019, he was an adjunct professor, teaching two, two-credit hour classes each semester on trial advocacy and courtroom evidence at Notre Dame Law School, and he also served as coach of the University of Notre Dame Mock Trial Team.

Mr. Jones has received numerous awards including being named among the Top Forty Under 40 in 2014 by the National Trial Lawyers; among the Top Forty Under 40 in

2016, 2017, and 2018 by the American Society of Legal Advocates; the Top 10 Under 40 in 2014 by the National Academy of Personal Injury Attorneys; and among the Forty Under 40 given by the St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce. He is the recipient of both the Key to St. Joseph County and the Key to the City of South Bend. He is a member of the Indiana Trial Lawyers Association, Indiana State Bar Association, St. Joseph County Bar Association, Robert A. Grant Inn of Court, and the American Association for Justice. He is also a member of the Washington Circle Member of AIPAC (American-Israel Public Action Committee). He has served as president of the Sinai Synagogue since 2019. He enjoys reading, traveling, and completing home renovations.

Magistrate Graham C. Polando

Magistrate Graham C. Polando, born in Pontiac, Michigan, has served as a Magistrate in the St. Joseph Probate Court since 2013. He earned Bachelor of Art degrees in history, political science, and philosophy upon his graduation from Hillsdale College in 2004. In 2007, he graduated *cum laude* from Case Western Reserve University School of Law. While in law school, he received the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Education (CALI) Excellence for the Future Award, given to the highest scoring student in each law school course, in both advanced criminal law and worker's compensation.

Magistrate Polando began his legal career as a deputy prosecuting attorney with the Elkhart County Prosecutor's Office. He served in that role until September 2012 and represented the State of Indiana in all proceedings involving the criminal process. During his tenure, he prosecuted misdemeanors and low-level felonies. Later, he handled felonies involving domestic violence and cases of juvenile delinquency. In September 2012, Magistrate Polando moved to the Marshall County Prosecutor's Office as a deputy prosecuting attorney and served in that role until his appointment as a magistrate in St. Joseph County. During his five-plus years as a prosecutor, he tried 32 jury cases to verdict.

In September 2013, Magistrate Polando was appointed to his current role as magistrate of the St. Joseph Probate Court. From 2013 until the end of 2018, his primary responsibility was to hear cases in which children were alleged to need services (CHINS). Since 2019, Magistrate Polando has primarily heard cases of juvenile delinquency. He also hears a lesser number of cases involving child custody, parenting time, and support matters, as well as the occasional guardianship, adoption, and CHINS case. Magistrate Polando has presided over 28 bench trials including ten cases in which the Department of Child Services sought to terminate the parent-child relationship and nine cases were trials on child custody matters.

Off the bench, Magistrate Polando has contributed to the legal system through his significant writings and multiple presentations in continuing-legal-education seminars. In 2015, as a member of the Indiana State Bar Association's Legal Ethics Committee, he drafted (with the assistance of a sub-committee) a formal opinion addressing whether a lawyer could be held criminally liable for failing to report child abuse. Also, in 2015, he assumed responsibility for maintaining three volumes from *Indiana Practice*, a 22-volume treatise covering all areas of Indiana law. His three volumes concern family law and focus on proceedings involving children in need of services and the termination of the parent-child relationship. He has written several articles, both as a prosecutor and a magistrate, which have been published in legal journals. Additionally, he has presented several CLE seminars on such topics as constitutional rights in the family court and mandatory reporting.

From 2012 to 2015, Magistrate Polando served as an adjunct professor at Manchester University, teaching two undergraduate courses focusing on the legal system. In 2015, he was named Manchester's adjunct instructor of the year. He is a member of the Indiana State Bar Association and the ISBA's legal-ethics committee, having served as the committee's chair and vice chair. He is also a member of the Robert A. Grant Inn of Court, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and Indiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Additionally, he serves on two committees related to juvenile justice under the Indiana Office of Court Services. He is married and an avid cyclist and triathlete.

Jamie Woods, Esq.

Jamie Woods, a native of St. Joseph County, earned a Bachelor of Science in political science from Manchester College (n/k/a Manchester University) in 1996. As an undergraduate, he was on the National Dean's List and an All-American Academic Scholar. He received his law degree from the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law in 1999.

During law school, Mr. Woods worked as summer associate at Stuart & Branigin in Lafayette and joined the firm after graduation. In April 2001, he returned to St. Joseph County and practiced law at Thorne Grodrik, LLP in his hometown of Mishawaka. He became a partner of the firm in 2009 and has practiced law there for over twenty years. As an associate, he was responsible for civil litigation matters and litigated more than 100 small-claims trials, bench trials, and consumer collections. Additionally, he has represented creditors in bankruptcy matters.

Mr. Woods's law practice today consists primarily of providing legal services to governmental entities in St. Joseph County. He has served as the county's attorney since

2013. In that capacity, he defends the county in all litigation matters, reviews and drafts contracts, and represents the county on all strategic projects. In addition, he represents other governmental entities, including South Bend Public Transportation Corporation, the Michigan Area Council of Governments, the Solid Waste Management District of St. Joseph County, the St. Joseph County Redevelopment Commission, and the Town of Osceola.

Mr. Woods has been an elected, non-partisan member of the Penn Harris Madison board of school trustees since 2005, and he served as the board's president in 2011 and 2012. During his board tenure, he has provided governance on several significant matters involving students and families, including COVID-19 and teen drug use. He is an active member of the St. Joseph County Bar Association and was president during 2018 and 2019. During the past three years, he has represented the local bar by facilitating and overseeing the evaluation of St. Joseph County judges. He has also been a member of the Indiana State Bar Association since 2001. He is married with five children. He enjoys attending sporting events in which his children participate. And he personally is a weightlifter and participates in Brazilian jiu jitsu.

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All five nominees report themselves to be in good health. Based upon their interviews and the Commission's assessment, each has a personality well-suited for the bench, along with the legal ability and professional experience to serve with distinction. I am confident you will find each nominee to be of high caliber, and that any of the five nominees would be a credit to the Indiana judiciary.

Sincerely yours,



Geoffrey G. Slaughter, Chairman
St. Joseph County Judicial Nominating Commission