

A Brief Survey of Recent Appointments to the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey

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One new district judge, Julien Xavier Neals, was recently confirmed by the United States Senate, and four new magistrate judges were recently appointed to the New Jersey federal bench: Magistrate Judges Jessica S. Allen; André M. Espinosa; Sharon A. King; and Matthew J. Skahill. A brief background of these jurists is set forth below:

Newark Vicinage

- **Julien Xavier Neals.** President Obama nominated Judge Neals to serve as a district court judge on February 26, 2015 to fill the seat vacated by Judge Faith S. Hochberg, who retired on March 6, 2015. That nomination expired on January 3, 2017. President Biden renominated Judge Neals to fill the seat of Judge William J. Martini, who took senior status on February 10, 2015. Judge Neals's nomination was confirmed by the Senate on June 8, 2021, and he is currently awaiting his judicial commission.

Judge Neals is formerly the County Counsel for Bergen County. Prior to that, he worked for the City of Newark, as Chief Judge of the Newark Municipal Court (2006-2008), Corporation Counsel (2008-2010), and as Business Administrator (2010-2014). He was also an associate, and later a partner, at Chasan, Leyner & Lamparello, P.C., where he practiced general litigation in state and federal courts.

Judge Neals was a law clerk to Judge Seymour Margulies, Superior Court of New Jersey, Hudson County, from 1991 to 1992. He graduated from Morehouse College in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, and received his J.D. in 1991 from Emory University School of Law.

- **Jessica S. Allen.** Judge Allen was sworn in as a Magistrate Judge in February 2021. She was formerly a partner at the Killian Firm, P.C., where she concentrated on employment, consumer fraud and insurance matters. She also served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the District of New Jersey, and an Assistant Attorney General in the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General.

Judge Allen clerked for United States District Judge Madeline Cox Arleo and former United States Magistrate Judge Ronald J. Hedges. She received her J.D. from Seton Hall University School of Law in 1996 and graduated from Rutgers University in 1992.

- **André M. Espinosa.** Judge Espinosa was sworn in as a Magistrate Judge in March 2021. He previously served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Eastern District of

California, in Sacramento, where he prosecuted complex fraud cases and other matters in the White Collar Crime Unit of the Criminal Division. Prior to that, Judge Espinosa served as a federal prosecutor in San Diego, and Newark, New Jersey. Judge Espinosa also practiced complex civil litigation at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, in New York from 2006 to 2008.

From 2003 to 2006, Judge Espinosa clerked for Chief United States District Judge Freda L. Wolfson; Justice Roberto A. Rivera-Soto, Supreme Court of New Jersey; and Judge Anthony J. Parrillo, Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division.

Judge Espinosa earned his J.D. from Rutgers School of Law; a Master of Public Affairs and Politics from Rutgers University; and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Kansas.

Camden Vicinage

- ***Sharon A. King***. Judge King was sworn in as a Magistrate Judge in April 2021. She was formerly a partner at the Law Firm of King & King, LLC, where she specialized in civil rights litigation, particularly police misconduct and wrongful death cases.

Judge King was a member of the Lawyers' Advisory Committee for the District of New Jersey. She served as Chair of the New Jersey State Bar Association's Federal Practice and Procedures Section from 2017 to 2018. She is the recipient of the 2019 Camden County Bar Association's Judge John F. Gerry Award for her contributions to the administration of justice in New Jersey, and was awarded the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Champion of Social Justice and Equality Award presented by Rutgers Law School's Black Law Students Association in 2018. She also received the 2014 Gloucester County NAACP's Game Changer Award for her civil rights work.

Judge King received her J.D. from Rutgers University School of Law – Camden in 1993, and a Bachelor of Science from Boston University.

- ***Matthew J. Skahill***. Judge Skahill was sworn in as a Magistrate Judge in March 2021. He is a former Deputy United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey, where he represented the government in a wide array of criminal cases, including embezzlement, tax evasion, corruption, deportation, and gun trafficking matters.

Judge Skahill received his J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 2004, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of the Holy Cross in 2001.

Judicial preferences for all District of New Jersey judges can be found here:

<https://www.njd.uscourts.gov/judicial-preferences>