

Update: A Brief Survey of Recent Appointments & Nominations to the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey

November 11, 2021

Source: New Jersey Federal Practice Alert

Since our [June 2021 alert](#), three additional jurists have been confirmed to the District of New Jersey. A brief background of each is set forth below:

Trenton Vicinage

- **Zahid N. Quraishi:** Judge Quraishi made history as the first Muslim American appointed as an Article III judge. He was confirmed by the United States Senate on June 10, 2021 by a vote of 81-16.

Judge Quraishi served as a magistrate judge from 2019 to 2021. Prior to that, he was a partner at Riker Danzig Scherer Hyland & Perretti LLP, where he led white-collar criminal investigations. He is also a former Assistant U.S. Attorney for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey and Assistant chief counsel, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Judge Quraishi joined the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corps in 2003 and attained the rank of captain. During his service, Judge Quraishi was deployed twice to Iraq, in 2004 and again in 2006, and was awarded the Bronze Star and Combat Action Badge.

Judge Quraishi clerked for Judge Edwin Stern of the New Jersey Superior Court from 2000 to 2001. He subsequently worked as a litigation associate at LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae in Newark, New Jersey from 2001 to 2003. Judge Quraishi earned his bachelor's degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 1997. He received his Juris Doctor from Rutgers Law School, Newark in 2000.

Camden Vicinage

- **Karen M. Williams:** Judge Williams is the first Black Article III judge to sit in the federal district courthouse in Camden. She was confirmed by the United States Senate on October 26, 2021 by a vote of 56-38.

Judge Williams served as a magistrate judge from 2009 to 2021. Before that, she was in private practice for 17 years at Jasinski & Williams, P.C, where she focused her practice on employment law. She started as a summer associate and ascended to become the

managing partner of the firm's Atlantic City office. She also teaches as an adjunct professor at Rowan University.

Judge Williams graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 1985 with a Bachelor of Science degree, and she received her Juris Doctor from Temple University Beasley School of Law in 1992.

- **Christine O'Hearn:** Judge O'Hearn was confirmed by the United States Senate on October 19, 2021 by a vote of 53-44. Before her appointment, Judge O'Hearn was a partner at Brown & Connery LLP in Westmont, New Jersey from 1993 to 2021, where she practiced as a trial lawyer specializing in labor, employment and complex civil litigation. She was also an adjunct professor at Rutgers University School of Law from 2006 to 2007. Judge O'Hearn is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

Judge O'Hearn graduated from the University of Delaware in 1990 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, and she received her Juris Doctor from Temple University Beasley School of Law in 1993.

In addition to the above appointments, President Biden recently named two additional nominees who, if confirmed by the Senate, will fill the last vacancies on the District of New Jersey's federal bench:

- **Georgette Fries Castner:** Castner is currently a partner with the law firm of Montgomery McCracken. She is a member of the firm's Litigation Department, Co-Chair of the Cannabis Law Practice Group, and a member of the firm's Diversity Committee. She focuses her practice on complex commercial litigation and white collar and government investigations.

Prior to joining Montgomery McCracken, Ms. Castner served as a law clerk for the Honorable Joseph F. Lisa of the New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division (Ret.). Before law school, Ms. Castner served as Chief of Staff and Director of Constituent Affairs for a member of the New Jersey General Assembly.

Ms. Castner obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from The College of New Jersey, and received her Juris Doctor from Rutgers University School of Law-Camden.

- **Evelyn Padin:** Padin was the first Puerto Rican and Latina to serve as President of the New Jersey State Bar Association. She is the Senior Managing Partner of the Law Offices of Evelyn Padin, located in Jersey City, New Jersey, where she practices in the areas of family law and civil personal injury litigation. Ms. Padin is a founding member of the Justice Virginia Long Family Law Inn of Court and is a Master of the Inn, and she previously served as a law clerk to the Honorable Lorraine Parker of the New Jersey Superior Court, Family Part, Sussex County.

Ms. Padin received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Rutgers College, a Masters in Social Work from Fordham University, and her Juris Doctor from Seton Hall University School of Law.

Judicial preferences for all District of New Jersey judges can be found at the below link:
<https://www.njd.uscourts.gov/judicial-preferences>