

District of New Jersey Welcomes Two New Magistrate Judges

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***Source:** Saiber's New Jersey Federal Practice Alert*

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey recently welcomed two new magistrate judges to the federal bench: Ethan A. Hougah and Alex D. Silagi. Judge Hougah assumed his duties in Camden in July 2026, while Judge Silagi joined the Newark vicinage in September 2026.

Both judges bring substantial litigation experience, as well as prior service as federal judicial law clerks, to their new roles. A brief overview of their professional backgrounds is set forth below.

Ethan A. Hougah. Judge Hougah was selected by the District Judges of the District of New Jersey to serve as a United States Magistrate Judge. He fills the full-time magistrate judgeship position vacated upon the retirement of Magistrate Judge Ann Marie Donio. After an informal swearing in, Judge Hougah assumed his duties in the Mitchell H. Cohen Building and U.S. Courthouse in Camden effective July 23, 2026.

From 2019 to 2026, Judge Hougah was a partner at Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads LLP, where he practiced in the firm's Litigation Department. He previously served as an associate at the firm from 2014 to 2019, and was an associate at Bressler, Amery & Ross, P.C. from 2013 to 2014. His private practice included complex commercial litigation, products liability, maritime matters, commercial disputes, white-collar and government investigations, and fiduciary litigation.

Judge Hougah previously served as a law clerk to the Honorable Steven C. Mannion, United States Magistrate Judge for the District of New Jersey, from 2012 to 2013; the Honorable Karen M. Williams, then a United States Magistrate Judge for the District of New Jersey and now a United States District Judge, from 2011 to 2012; and the Honorable David W. Morgan, Judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey, Civil Division, from 2010 to 2011. From 2008 to 2010, he was a Student Attorney at the Boston College Legal Assistance Bureau.

Judge Hougah received his undergraduate degree from Rutgers University at Camden in 2005, with honors, and his J.D. from Boston College Law School in 2010.

Alex D. Silagi. Judge Silagi was also selected by the District Judges of the District of New Jersey to serve as a United States Magistrate Judge. He fills the full-time magistrate judgeship position vacated upon the retirement of Magistrate Judge Michael A. Hammer. Following an informal swearing in on September 1, 2026, Judge Silagi assumed his duties in the Frank R. Lautenberg U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Newark. His formal investiture ceremony will be scheduled at a later date.

From 2020 to 2026, Judge Silagi served as Deputy Chief of the Civil Division and an Assistant United States Attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey in Newark. From 2018 to 2020, he was an associate at Proskauer Rose LLP.

Judge Silagi served as a law clerk to the Honorable Morton I. Greenberg, United States Circuit Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, from 2017 to 2018, and to the Honorable Madeline Cox Arleo, United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, from 2015 to 2017. From 2014 to 2015, he was an associate at Carter Ledyard & Milburn LLP in New York City.

Judge Silagi earned his undergraduate degree from Rutgers University in 2010 and his J.D., magna cum laude, from Seton Hall University School of Law in 2014. At Seton Hall, he served as a comments editor of the Seton Hall Law Review and was a member of the Moot Court Board; he also has taught appellate advocacy as an adjunct professor.

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

If you have any questions about the District of New Jersey, please contact Jakob Halpern or Katherine Escanlar of our New Jersey Local Counsel practice group.