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December 23, 2019

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & FACSIMILE:

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:

Senator Mark D. Obenshain
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Senate of Virginia
Pocahontas Building, Room E502
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23219
district26@senate.virginia.gov

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:

Representative Robert B. Bell
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Virginia House of Delegates
Pocahontas Building, Room E311
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
DelRBell@house.virginia.gov

**Re: Vacancy in the 31st Judicial Circuit of Virginia, Prince
William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court**

Dear Governor Northam, Senator Obenshain, and Representative
Bell:

On behalf of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association
("VWAA"), a regional committee (the "Committee") was impaneled
to evaluate candidates for an anticipated vacancy in the 31st Judicial
Circuit of Virginia, Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic
Relations Court.

The VWAA requested that interested candidates complete the
VWAA Judicial Candidates Questionnaire (the "Application"),
submit a short biography, and participate in an interview with the
Committee. On November 22, 2019, the Committee interviewed six
(6) candidates.

It is worth noting that the VWAA ratings are based upon a review of each candidate's merits against published standards and guidelines, including the following: fairness, integrity, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and *pro bono* service. Ratings are not a function of a general vote by the VWAA membership, nor are they a comparison of candidates within the "pool" presented.

The following rating categories are used by the VWAA:

- (1) NOT QUALIFIED: Applied to any applicant who fails to meet the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, integrity and/or other basic criteria set forth in the ABA Guidelines.
- (2) QUALIFIED: Applied to any applicant who meets the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, integrity and/or other basic criteria set forth in the ABA Guidelines.
- (3) RECOMMENDED: Applied to any applicant whose qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, integrity and/or other basic criteria set forth in the ABA Guidelines to warrant the Committee's affirmative recommendation.
- (4) HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: Reserved for any candidate who is especially well-qualified for the position and merits special recommendation.

The VWAA's procedures provide that ratings of "Qualified" and "Recommended" require a vote in support by at least a simple majority of the Committee. A rating of "Highly Recommended" requires a vote in support by at least a two-thirds majority of those voting. In order for the Committee to find that a candidate fails to meet the minimum qualifications and is "Not Qualified," at least two-thirds of those voting must so find.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the VWAA approved, in accordance with its procedures, the following endorsements of the Committee for this judicial vacancy:

Carlos Flores Laboy was found *highly recommended*
Tracey A. Lenox was found *highly recommended*
Jacqueline W. Lucas was found *highly recommended*
Sally Hook Merchak was found *highly recommended*

Katherine Cordova McCollam was found *recommended*
Claiborne T. Richardson, II was found *recommended*

Executive summaries of the qualifications of each of the above candidates are attached to this letter.

For your further information, the Committee members participating in the interview process were as follows:

Donald E. Coulter: Mr. Coulter is a member of the law firm of Purnell, McKennett & Menke PC. He has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 1975 and focuses his practice on domestic relations, wills and estates, real estate litigation and debt collection.

Karrie Dodson: Ms. Dodson is an associate attorney at Maddox & Gerock, working extensively in family law. She was admitted to the Virginia State Bar in 2016. Prior to law school, Ms. Dodson worked for 12 years as a paralegal with a family law firm.

Andrea Morisi: Ms. Morisi is a solo practitioner who focuses her practice on wills and estates. She serves as an Adult Guardian ad Litem and as a Guardian and Conservator for incapacitated adults. She previously spent 18 years as general counsel and corporate secretary to a non-profit organization. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2000.

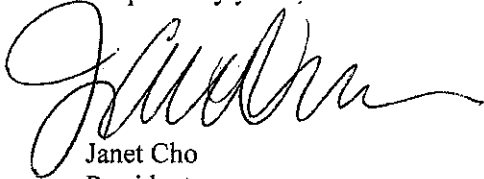
Krista L. Newton: Ms. Newton is a solo practitioner who focuses her practice on family law, wills and estates and corporate law. She serves as an Adult Guardian ad Litem in both the Circuit and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts. She previously spent 17 years working as a corporate lawyer in the telecommunications industry. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2008.

Jane Oliver Smith: Ms. Smith is of counsel to Carluzzo Rochkind & Smith, PC. Her practice involves real estate, wills and estates, and civil and criminal litigation. Ms. Smith serves as a Juvenile Guardian ad Litem. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 1992.

Amy N. Tobias: Ms. Tobias is a partner in the firm of Dougherty Tobias Iszard Northern Virginia Law, P.C. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2005. She served as a clerk for the Arlington County Circuit Court, followed by being the inaugural attorney hired by Arlington County's Office of the Public Defender. Her practice focuses on family law and personal injury litigation, as well as criminal litigation.

We hope that this information will prove helpful to you during your selection process for this very important judicial position.

Respectfully yours,



Janet Cho
President
Virginia Women Attorneys Association



Andrea Morisi
Judicial Chair, Prince William Chapter
Virginia Women Attorneys Association

Enclosures: Executive Summary of Carlos Flores Laboy
Executive Summary of Tracey A. Lenox
Executive Summary of Jacqueline W. Lucas
Executive Summary of Katherine Cordova McCollam
Executive Summary of Sally Hook Merchak
Executive Summary of Claiborne T. Richardson, II

CC (by email only): Carlos Flores Laboy, Esquire
Tracey A. Lenox, Esquire
Jacqueline W. Lucas, Esquire
Katherine Cordova McCollam, Esquire
Sally Hook Merchak, Esquire
Claiborne T. Richardson, II, Esquire

CC (by email only): Senator George L. Barker
Senator Richard H. Black
Senator Jeremy McPike
Senator Richard H. Stuart
Senator Scott Surovell
Delegate Hala S. Ayala
Delegate John J. Bell
Delegate Jennifer Carroll
Foy Delegate Lee Carter
Delegate Elizabeth R. Guzman
Delegate Timothy D. Hugo
Delegate Danica Roem
Delegate Luke Torian

CC (by email only): Senator Mark Obenshain
Senator Dick Saslaw
Senator Thomas Norment
Senator Janet Howell
Senator Louise Lucas
Senator John S. Edwards
Senator Ryan McDougle
Senator Richard Stuart
Senator William Stanley
Senator Bryce Reeves
Senator Benton “Ben” Chafin
Senator Creigh Deeds
Senator Glen Sturtevant
Senator J. Chapman Petersen
Senator Mark Peake

CC (by email only): Delegate Robert B. Bell
Delegate James A. Leftwich
Delegate Terry G. Kilgore
Delegate Todd C. Gilbert
Delegate Leslie R. Adams
Delegate Jeffrey L. Campbell
Delegate Christopher E. Collins
Delegate Jason S. Miyares
Delegate Margaret B. Ransone
Delegate Ronnie R. Campbell
Delegate Vivian E. Watts
Delegate David J. Toscano
Delegate Charniele L. Herring
Delegate Patrick A. Hope
Delegate Michael P. Mullin
Delegate Jeffrey M. Bourne
Delegate Marcus B. Simon
Delegate Jennifer D. Carroll Foy

CC (by email only): Donald E. Coulter, Esquire
Karrie Dodson, Esquire
Krista L. Newton, Esquire
Jane Oliver Smith, Esquire
Amy N. Tobias, Esquire
Donna Dougherty, Esquire, President, VWAA Prince William Virginia Chapter

CARLOS FLORES LABOY

Experience and Legal Ability: Mr. Laboy earned his B.S./B.A. from Virginia Tech and his J.D. from the George Washington University Law School. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2008.

The majority of Mr. Laboy’s practice involves matters before the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, including domestic relations and criminal matters, and serving as Guardian ad Litem. He has presented a CLE seminar for the Prince William County Bar entitled “JDR Standardized Dispositional Matrix.”

Mr. Laboy received the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Appointed Attorney of the Year Award in 2010 and the Prince William County Guardian ad Litem of the Year Award in 2017. He has served as a Substitute Judge in the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District since March 2019.

Fairness and Temperament: Throughout the submissions and interview, Mr. Laboy demonstrated that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Laboy possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Mr. Laboy’s professionalism extends to his sense of responsibility to all litigants, particularly *pro se* parties, women and those of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Laboy’s qualifications are well above the minimum requirements for the position of a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judge and merit the Committee’s special recommendation. He warrants the Committee’s rating of **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**.

TRACEY A. LENOX

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. Lenox earned her B.A. from the College of William and Mary and her J.D. from the University of Connecticut Law School. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1993. Ms. Lenox was a partner in the firm of Lenox, Biddinger & Conrad, PC from 1997 to 2001. When that firm dissolved, she formed the Law Office of Tracey Lenox. In 2006, she joined Nichols Zauzig, A Professional Corporation.

Ms. Lenox has received multiple awards and recognitions, including the Prince William County District Court Appointed Attorney of the Year Award in 2002, the Prince William County Bar's Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award in 2012, and the Arthur Sinclair Professionalism Award in 2016.

From 2008 to February 2019, Ms. Lenox served as a Substitute Judge in the General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts in Prince William, Stafford, Loudoun, Fairfax and Arlington Counties. Ms. Lenox has been a frequent presenter of CLE seminars on Trial Skills and Advocacy during the past decade.

Fairness and Temperament: Throughout the submissions and interview, Ms. Lenox demonstrated that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. Lenox possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Ms. Lenox's professionalism extends to her sense of responsibility to all litigants including those of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. Lenox's qualifications are well above the minimum requirements for the position of a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judge and merit the Committee's special recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**.

JACQUELINE W. LUCAS

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. Lucas earned her B.A. from the University of Virginia and her J.D. from the North Carolina Central University School of Law. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2002. Ms. Lucas began her career with Rappahannock Legal Services. In 2003, Ms. Lucas joined the Prince William County Attorney's Office, where her responsibilities include representing the County's Department of Social Services in child abuse/neglect, foster care, termination of parental rights, and child status offenses matters.

Ms. Lucas served on the Virginia State Bar's Client Protection Fund Board and was its Chairperson from 2015 to 2016. She is a member of the Prince William County Bar Association (and serves on its Board), the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association, the Old Dominion Bar Association, and the Local Government Attorneys of Virginia.

Fairness and Temperament: Throughout the submissions and interview, Ms. Lucas demonstrated that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. Lucas possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Ms. Lucas's professionalism extends to her sense of responsibility to all litigants including those of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. Lucas's qualifications are well above the minimum requirements for the position of a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judge and merit the Committee's special recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**.

KATHERINE CORDOVA McCOLLAM

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. McCollam earned her B.S. from James Madison University and her J.D. from the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2010. Since 2016, Ms. McCollam has been a partner at Foster McCollam, PLLC. She has dedicated her career to domestic relations matters in the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District and Circuit Courts, and criminal matters, including indigent defense, in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Ms. McCollam is active in the Prince William County Bar Association and the Bar's Foundation.

Fairness and Temperament: Throughout the submissions and interview, Ms. McCollam demonstrated that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. McCollam possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Ms. McCollam discussed her sense of responsibility to all litigants including those of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. McCollam's qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of a Juvenile and Domestic Relations Judge and merit the Committee's affirmative recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **RECOMMENDED**.

SALLY HOOK MERCHAK

Experience and Legal Ability: Ms. Merchak earned her B.A. from University of Virginia and her J.D. from the George Washington Law School. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1977. In her early years, Ms. Merchak's practice included family law, real property and criminal litigation. In recent years, she has concentrated on representing clients in all types of family law cases and real estate transactions. Ms. Merchak founded and has served as a principal at Ryland & Merchak, PC since 1992.

Ms. Merchak has served as a Substitute Judge in the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court since 2014. She also serves as an Arbitrator in the 9th and 15th Judicial Circuits' Committee on the Resolution of Fee Disputes and as a Commissioner in Chancery for the Prince William County Circuit Court.

Fairness and Temperament: Throughout the submissions and interview, Ms. Merchak demonstrated that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. Merchak possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Ms. Merchak's professionalism extends to her sense of responsibility to all litigants including those of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. Merchak's qualifications are well above the minimum requirements for the position of a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judge and merit the Committee's special recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**.

CLAIBORNE T. RICHARDSON, II

Experience and Legal Ability: Mr. Richardson earned his B.A. from West Virginia University and his J.D. from The College of William and Mary, Marshall-Wythe School of Law. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1989.

Mr. Richardson has served in the Prince William County Commonwealth Attorney's Office since 1993, during which time he has risen to the position of Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney. Although his primary focus is on criminal prosecution, Mr. Richardson discussed how mental health issues pose significant issues for women and children, a subject he has presented on as a CLE for the Prince William County Bar.

Mr. Richardson is active in the Prince William County Bar Association, the National District Attorneys Association, and the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association.

Fairness and Temperament: Throughout the submissions and interview, Mr. Richardson demonstrated that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Richardson possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Mr. Richardson's professionalism extends to his sense of responsibility to all litigants including those of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Richardson's qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judge and merit the Committee's affirmative recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **RECOMMENDED**.