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November 30, 2021

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL
The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:
Senator John S. Edwards
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Senate of Virginia
Pocahontas Building, Room E506
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
district21@senate.virginia.gov

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:
Representative Charniele Herring
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Virginia House of Delegates
Pocahontas Building, Room E606
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
DelCHerring@house.virginia.gov

**Re: Vacancy in the 19th Judicial Circuit of Virginia, Fairfax
General District Court**

Dear Governor Northam, Senator Edwards, and Representative Herring:

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 19th Judicial Circuit of Virginia, Fairfax County General District 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 17, 2021, the Committee conducted virtual interviews of five (5) candidates.

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 the Committee. 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 the Committee 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:

Michael J. Holleran was found *highly recommended*.
Vanessa R. Jordan was found *highly recommended*.

Tamika Dawn Jones was found *recommended*.
Dipti Pidikiti-Smith was found *recommended*.
Todd Zinicola 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:

Michelle Kaminsky: Ms. Kaminsky is the managing partner at the law firm of Hite Kaminsky Family Law & Mediation, PLLC. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. Before entering private practice, Ms. Kaminsky served as a law clerk for the Honorable David S. Schell at the Fairfax County Circuit Court. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2009.

Pia Miller: Ms. Miller is a Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney in the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for Fairfax County. Prior to becoming a prosecutor, Ms. Miller was in private practice handling family law matters along with indigent criminal defense and she also served as a public defender. Before entering private practice, she served as a law clerk for the Honorable Richard B. Potter at the Prince William County Circuit Court. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2008, and the Maryland State Bar since 2007.

Cynthia Kaplan Revesman: Ms. Revesman is the managing member of the Law Offices of Cynthia Kaplan Revesman, P.L.C. in Fairfax, Virginia. Ms. Revesman is admitted to practice law in all the federal and state courts in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia. Her practice areas include commercial and retail collection law, creditor's rights, civil and commercial litigation, insurance subrogation and defense, and commercial and consumer landlord/tenant law.

Elizabeth M. Soc: Ms. Soc is the principal of The Law Office of Elizabeth M. Soc, PLLC, where she practices general civil litigation and transactional law as a solo practitioner and freelance attorney. She handles matters such as estate planning, personal injury, contract review and drafting, and domestic relations. Ms. Soc has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2011.

Respectfully yours,



Rachel Robinson
President
Virginia Women Attorneys Association



Michelle Kaminsky
Chair of Judicial Screening Committee
Virginia Women Attorneys Association

Enclosures: Executive Summary of Tamika Dawn Jones, Esquire
Executive Summary of Michael J. Holleran, Esquire
Executive Summary of Vanessa R. Jordan, Esquire
Executive Summary of Dipti Pidikiti-Smith, Esquire
Executive Summary of Todd Zinicola, Esquire

CC (by email only): Tamika Dawn Jones, Esquire
Michael J. Holleran, Esquire
Vanessa R. Jordan, Esquire
Dipti Pidikiti-Smith, Esquire
Todd Zinicola, Esquire

CC (by email only): Senator Adam Ebbin
Senator Barbara Favola
Senator David Marsden
Senator George L. Barker
Senator J. Chapman Petersen
Senator Janet D. Howell
Senator Jennifer B. Boysko
Senator Richard L. Saslaw
Senator Scott Surovell
Delegate Alfonso Lopez
Delegate Kathy KL Tran
Delegate David Bulova
Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn
Delegate Karrie K. Delaney
Delegate Mark H. Levine
Delegate Charniele L. Herring
Delegate Kathleen J. Murphy
Delegate Kenneth R. Plum
Delegate Patrick A. Hope
Delegate Kaye Kory
Delegate Mark D. Sickles
Delegate Mark. L. Keam
Delegate Marcus B. Simon
Delegate Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.
Delegate Daniel I. Helner
Delegate Vivian E. Watts
Delegate Paul E. Krizek
Delegate Ibraheem S. Samirah

CC (by email only): Tiffany Burton, Esquire, VWAA, Northern Virginia Chapter, President
Michelle Kaminsky, Esquire
Pia Miller, Esquire
Cynthia Kaplan Revesman, Esquire
Elizabeth Soc, Esquire

MICHAEL J. HOLLERAN

Experience and Legal Ability: Michael J. Holleran earned his Juris Doctor from the Marshall -Wythe School of Law in 1986 and was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1986.

Mr. Holleran is the managing partner and president of the law firm of Walton & Adams, P.C. Mr. Holleran has been with Walton & Adams, P.C. since his graduation from law school in 1986. He is engaged in the general practice of law with an emphasis on civil matters for businesses and individuals, including contracts, real estate, employment, and related litigation.

In March of 2010, Mr. Holleran was appointed as a substitute judge for the Fairfax County General District Court and the Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. In 2016, he was re-appointed as a substitute judge. In this capacity, Mr. Holleran has presided over hundreds of cases.

Within the legal community, Mr. Holleran has served for many years as pro bono counsel to Volunteer Fairfax. He has also provided pro bono service to the Asian American Chamber of Commerce. Through the Fairfax Bar Association, Mr. Holleran has participated in the Devonshire Program as well as engaged in public speaking to high school students. In addition, he has participated in the Sponsor of Law Day and the First Hour Campaign. In continuing dedication to the local legal community, Mr. Holleran has volunteered for the Fairfax County Model Judiciary Program for 20 years, and he has served as a conciliator for the Fairfax County motions day conciliation program.

The panel was impressed by Mr. Holleran's lengthy tenure as a substitute judge in Fairfax County General District and Juvenile & Domestic Relations Courts and his continuous efforts outside his experience on the bench to broaden his knowledge of traffic and criminal law.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions, interview and professional references, Mr. Holleran demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the General District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Holleran possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the General District Court bench.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Holleran is especially well-qualified for the position of a General District Court judge and merits the Committee's special recommendation. Accordingly, the Committee rates him as **Highly Recommended**.

TAMIKA DAWN JONES

Experience and Legal Ability: Tamika Dawn Jones earned her Juris Doctor from the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America in 2008. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2009.

Prior to becoming an attorney, Ms. Jones worked as a litigation clerk in Washington, DC, as a probation officer in Lynchburg, as a special investigator for United States Investigations Services in Annandale, as a special assistant and intern for the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, DC, and as a law clerk in Arlington. After graduating from law school, Ms. Jones worked briefly at The Law Offices of Fluet, Huber and Hoang, PLLC in Lake Ridge, before founding her own firm in 2009. Currently, Ms. Jones practices primarily criminal and domestic relations law at The Jones Practice, PLLC. Her practice consists of court-appointed criminal and abuse and neglect cases, as well as domestic relations and criminal cases for private clients.

Ms. Jones previously served as the President of the Alexandria Bar Association. She is also a member of the Fairfax Bar Association and past-member of the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association and the Old Dominion Bar Association. In 2018, Ms. Jones was awarded the Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) Lawyer of the Year Award by the Alexandria Bar Association. In July of 2021, Ms. Jones was appointed as a substitute judge for the Fairfax County General District Court and the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Ms. Jones has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the General District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. Jones possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the General District Court bench.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. Jones' qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of a General District Court judge and that she merits the Committee's recommendation. Accordingly, the Committee rates her as **Recommended**.

VANESSA R. JORDAN

Experience and Legal Ability: Vanessa R. Jordan earned her Juris Doctor degree from Howard University School of Law in 2006. While there, she was a recipient of the HUSL Merit Scholarship. Ms. Jordan was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2006.

Ms. Jordan has been a solo practitioner with The Law Office of Vanessa R. Jordan, PLLC in Springfield, Virginia since October 2016. Her practice focuses primarily on criminal and family law. Prior to opening her own law firm, Ms. Jordan was employed by The Law Office of James A. Rivera, PLLC in Herndon, Virginia, where she practiced criminal and family law. Ms. Jordan also worked for Woehrle Dahlberg Jones Yao, PLLC and Janet E. Boyd and Associates, PLLC as a family law and criminal law associate. Prior to private practice, Ms. Jordan was an attorney at the Office of the Public Defender in Fredericksburg, Virginia from 2006 to 2014. In April of 2021, she was appointed to serve as a substitute judge in the Fairfax County General District Court and Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court.

Ms. Jordan's practice primarily consists of representing adults and juveniles in criminal and traffic matters. She is also a certified Guardian *Ad Litem*.

Ms. Jordan was the Program Chair for the Color of Justice in 2015 and has volunteered with the program for multiple years. She was a moderator for the Fairfax County Commonwealth Attorney Forum in March 2019 and an attorney court tour guide with Fairfax County in January 2020. Ms. Jordan has been a member of the Fairfax County NAACP since 2018. Additionally, in August 2020, she began serving a two-year term as a citizen representative for the Fairfax County Civil Service Commission.

Ms. Jordan is a member of the Criminal Law and Diversity Conference Sections of the Virginia State Bar and the Criminal Law Section of the Fairfax Bar Association. She is also the Immediate Past President of the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions, interview and professional references, Ms. Jordan demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the General District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. Jordan possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the General District Court bench.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. Jordan is especially well-qualified for the position of a General District Court judge and merits the Committee's special recommendation. Accordingly, the Committee rates her as **Highly Recommended**.

DIPTI PIDIKITI-SMITH

Experience and Legal Ability: Dipti Pidikiti-Smith earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Temple University College of Science and Technology in 2002 and her Juris Doctor degree from the University of the District of Columbia, David A. Clarke School of Law, in 2006. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2006.

Ms. Pidikiti-Smith has worked for Legal Services of Northern Virginia since 2008, serving as the Deputy Director of Advocacy since November 2016. In her capacity as the Deputy Director, Ms. Pidikiti-Smith assists in the development and implementation of advocacy efforts to address the causes and eliminate the effects of poverty and racism through individual representation and systemic change. She also oversees the substantive law training and advocacy training related to family law, housing law, consumer law, elder law, child advocacy law, and public benefits law for a staff of approximately 76 employees.

In May 2021, Ms. Pidikiti-Smith was appointed to serve as a substitute judge for the Fairfax County General District Court and the Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court.

Ms. Pidikiti-Smith is the Past President of the Alexandria Bar Association, Co-Chair of the Fairfax Bar Association Circuit Court Committee, and Vice Chair for the Fairfax County Fair Housing Tasking Force. In addition, she served as a Beat the Odds Mentor from 2012 to 2018.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Ms. Pidikiti-Smith has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the General District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. Pidikiti-Smith possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the General District Court bench.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. Pidikiti-Smith's qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of a General District Court judge and that she merits the Committee's recommendation. Accordingly, the Committee rates her as **Recommended**.

TODD ZINICOLA

Experience and Legal Ability: Todd Zinicola earned his Juris Doctor from the University of the District of Columbia in 2004 and was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2004.

Mr. Zinicola served as Public Defender for Fairfax County from June 2005 to September 2008. Thereafter, Mr. Zinicola entered private practice as a Principal for the law firm now known as Zinicola, Blanch, Overand & Hart, PLLC. Mr. Zinicola's practice focuses exclusively on criminal and traffic defense, and he has spent the majority of his 16 years of practice in the Fairfax County General District Court.

Mr. Zinicola has been on the court-appointed attorney list in Fairfax County for the last six years. In addition, he has represented individuals on a pro bono basis. In May 2021, Mr. Zinicola was appointed as a substitute judge for the Fairfax County General District Court and Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court.

Within the legal community, Mr. Zinicola is the current Chair of the Criminal Section of the Fairfax Bar Association and has served a speaker for this section on the topic of appropriate fees in criminal cases. At last year's virtual Fairfax Bar Association Convention, Mr. Zinicola was a speaker on Hot Topics in Criminal Law.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions, references, and interview, Mr. Zinicola has demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament to serve on the General District Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Zinicola possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the General District Court bench.

Overall Evaluation: While this particular panel does not find, through Mr. Zinicola's submissions and interview, that he warrants his previous recommendation of Highly Recommended, the Committee does find that Mr. Zinicola's qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of a General District Court judge and that he merits the Committee's recommendation. Accordingly, the Committee rates him as **Recommended**.