

New Appointments to Judicial Selection Advisory Committee

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced the membership of the Governor's Judicial Selection Advisory Committee for his second term. The committee is responsible for interviewing and recommending candidates to the governor for consideration when he fills judicial vacancies. During his first term, Gov. Evers appointed 43 judges to vacancies on circuit courts and appellate courts across the state. More than half of Gov. Evers' appointees have been women, and more than one-third have been people of color.

"I'm proud of the work the Judicial Selection Advisory Committee has done over the past four years," said Gov. Evers. "This committee brings together attorneys from across the state and the profession, which ensures that we appoint judges who, in addition to being knowledgeable, thoughtful, and fair, bring a diversity of experiences to the bench."



"I would also like to personally thank Christine Bremer Muggli for her work as co-chair, and Truscenialyn Brooks, Dana Wachs, and MaiVue Xiong for their service on this important committee during my first term. These members were instrumental in ensuring that our judiciary reflects the experiences and diversity of our state. With their help, Wisconsin's judiciary is better empowered to administer justice for all Wisconsinites."

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The committee includes the following members:

- **Mel Barnes** (co-chair) is Gov. Evers' Chief Legal Counsel. Prior to her role in the Governor's Office, she served as Staff Counsel at Law Forward, a nonpartisan litigation firm committed to advancing and protecting democracy in Wisconsin. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison and UW Law School, Barnes was also previously the Legal and Policy Director of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin.
- **Benjamin Wagner** (co-chair) is a civil trial lawyer and a shareholder at Habush Habush & Rottier S.C. He graduated magna cum laude from the UW Law School and received the Phillips Owens Memorial Scholarship for outstanding academic achievement and community service. Wagner is an active community advocate in Milwaukee, a past president of the Wisconsin Association for Justice, 2021 recipient of the Robert L. Habush Trial Lawyer of the Year award, and a board certified trial specialist.
- **Jeanne M. Armstrong** is a litigation attorney at Fuhrman & Dodge S.C., where she is a shareholder. Her practice focuses on business litigation, probate and trust disputes, and insurance coverage. Armstrong serves on the executive committee of the James E. Doyle Chapter of the American Inns of Court and has served as a visiting faculty member for the Lawyering Skills Course at UW Law School.
- **Christine Bremer Muggli** is the chief shareholder of Bremer & Trollop Law Offices S.C. in Wausau, the past president of the Wisconsin Association for Justice, and a current member of the American Board of Trial Advocates. Bremer Muggli, a recipient of the Robert L. Habush Trial Lawyer of the Year award, has been repeatedly named as a Wisconsin Super Lawyer and one of the Top Ten Attorneys in Wisconsin. From 2019 to 2022, Bremer Muggli served as co-chair of the Governor's Judicial Selection Advisory Committee.
- **Michael J. Brose** practices civil litigation with an emphasis on plaintiff's personal injury at Doar, Drill & Skow S.C. in New Richmond. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Ripon College in 1987 and his Juris Doctor (J.D.) from William Mitchell College of Law. Brose is a contributing author to *The Wisconsin Rules of Evidence: A Courtroom Handbook*.
- **Thomas J. Flugaur** served as a Portage County Circuit Court Judge for 26 years until his retirement in 2020. His efforts were instrumental in creating Portage County's Adult Drug Treatment Court. Prior to his election to the circuit court, Flugaur was a trial attorney for the State Public Defender's Office.
- **Kristen D. Hardy** is assistant general counsel and assistant secretary at Northwestern Mutual. Hardy is also the chairperson of the State Bar of Wisconsin's Board of Governors. In 2021, she was recognized by the Wisconsin Association of African-American Lawyers as the Attorney of the Year. Hardy is active in many additional community and professional organizations, including as a member of LOTUS Legal Clinic board.
- **Rebeca M. López** is an employment attorney with Godfrey & Kahn S.C. López also serves as vice president of the Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyers Association, is a member of the

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Marquette University Law School Dean's Advisory Committee, and serves on the board of Centro Legal. She was the 2022 recipient of the Howard B. Eisenberg Service Award from Marquette University, recognizing her service to the community.

- **Craig Mastantuono** of Mastantuono Coffee & Thomas S.C. specializes in defending people accused of crimes in state and federal court. He is an adjunct faculty member at Marquette University Law School and a Milwaukee County Supplemental Court Commissioner for Branch 18. Mastantuono is also a former president of the Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyer's Association and a member of the Port Milwaukee Board of Harbor Commissioners.

- **Odalo J. Ohiku** is currently a deputy city attorney in Milwaukee's Office of the City Attorney. A trained mediator and arbitrator, he founded the Law Office of Odalo J. Ohiku, which specializes in family law and criminal defense. In 2019, he was recognized by the Wisconsin Association of African-American Lawyers as the Attorney of the Year.

- **Jon Padgham**, now in private practice, recently retired from his position as the deputy state public defender. A public defender since 1996, he previously served as the Manager of the State Public Defender's (SPD) Appleton/Green Bay region and as a staff attorney working in the SPD's Lancaster and Milwaukee Juvenile offices.

- **John Raihala** of Clifford & Raihala S.C., practices personal injury law and complex commercial litigation. He has lectured at UW-Madison and partnered with a circuit court judge to teach litigation team management. Raihala has also served as director of the Wisconsin Civil Justice Education Foundation.

- **Katelyn P. Sandfort** is a shareholder at Herrling Clark Law Firm Ltd. in Appleton, where the majority of her practice is dedicated to representing individuals in personal injury litigation. She previously practiced as an insurance defense attorney. Sandfort obtained her Bachelor of Science in Business from the University of Minnesota and her J.D. from UW Law School.

- **John Sacia**, of Galesville, is the Trempealeau County District Attorney. He has served his home county as a prosecutor since 2015. Sacia graduated from UW-Madison, where he was selected for membership in the Phi Beta Kappa honors society, and from UW Law School.

- **Miriam Seifter** is an associate professor of law and faculty co-director of the State Democracy Research Initiative at the UW Law School. Prior to joining the UW Law faculty, Seifter, a graduate of Yale College, Oxford University, and Harvard Law School, was a litigator in private practice and a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Chief Judge Merrick Garland of the D.C. Circuit.