



Judicial Conduct Board
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
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Press Release

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

FROM: Melissa L. Norton
Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Judicial Conduct Board Elects Executive Committee

HARRISBURG, PA – At its February 14, 2023 meeting, the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania (“Board”) voted to make the chairs of the Budget and Personnel Committees members of the Executive Committee. Thereafter the Board elected the following slate of members for its Executive Committee: Nancy L. Clemens as Chair, Magisterial District Judge William C. Wenner as Vice Chair, Scott B. Cooper, Esquire as Secretary, President Judge Emeritus (ret) Susan Peikes Gantman as Chair of the Board’s Budget Committee, and Sudhir R. Patel, Esquire as Chair of the Board’s Personnel Committee.

The twelve-member Board is an independent Board within the Judicial Branch of the Commonwealth’s government comprised of twelve Pennsylvania citizens: three judges, three lawyers and six non-lawyer electors. The Governor and the Supreme Court each appoint six of the Board’s members. The Board’s members serve four-year terms, without pay, and no more than one-half of its members may be from the same political party.

Created by constitutional amendment in 1993, the Board reviews, investigates, and, where warranted, prosecutes complaints of judicial misconduct. If the Board, by majority vote, decides that there is probable cause to believe that a judge engaged in misconduct, the Board may file a complaint in the Court of Judicial Discipline where the Board must prove the charges against the judge by clear and convincing evidence. The Court of Judicial Discipline decides if the Board has sustained its burden of proof and also decides the sanction to be imposed upon the judge for any proven misconduct.

About Nancy L. Clemens

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania appointed Ms. Clemens to serve as a non-lawyer member on the Board effective January 20, 2020. Her term of service will conclude on January 19, 2024.

Ms. Clemens is a 1987 graduate of Bloomsburg University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. She went on to earn her Masters in Criminal Court Management from Shippensburg University in 1999. In 2008, she received a fellowship at the National Center for State Courts’ Institute for Court Management.

Ms. Clemens serves as the Children and Youth Service Line Director for Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM), overseeing all of SAM's Children and Youth programming across Pennsylvania. She previously served as Administrator of the Tioga County Department of Human Services in Wellsboro; as a Probation/Parole Officer (1995-2002); and as the District Court Administrator for Tioga County (2003-2016). She is a Certified Court Executive and received a Special Commendation from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court for work on the Judicial Security Council (2016). Further, Ms. Clemens served as a commissioned officer in the United States Army, branched Military Police (1987- 1991); and served in a variety of law enforcement and combat preparatory roles while stationed at Fort Richardson, Alaska.

Ms. Clemens is an active member of Tioga County's Criminal Justice Advisory Board, Children's Roundtable and Opioid Coalition; Board Member for Tioga County Partnership for Community Health; instructor at Mansfield University Municipal Police Academy, the Pennsylvania State University Deputy Sheriffs' Academy, and the Child Welfare Resource Center. She is married with four children and seven grandchildren.

About Magisterial District Judge William C. Wenner

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania appointed Judge Wenner to serve as the magisterial district judge member on the Board effective March 14, 2020. His term of service will conclude on March 13, 2024.

Judge Wenner has served as a magisterial district judge in Dauphin County since he was appointed in 2003. He is a member of the Special Court Judges Association of Pennsylvania, Dauphin County Prison Board and other select Criminal Justice committees. He currently serves on the MDJ Court Security Task Force.

Judge Wenner is the former Chief County Detective for the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) of the Dauphin County District Attorney's Office, a position he held from 1995 until his retirement in 2003. Judge Wenner joined the CID staff as a detective in 1988 and was promoted to Detective Sergeant in 1992. Prior to joining the CID, he served as a law enforcement officer with police departments in Susquehanna Township, Penbrook and Paxtang Boroughs in Dauphin County.

Judge Wenner earned an associate degree in police science from the Harrisburg Area Community College and has completed advanced undergraduate work through the University of Virginia. In 2001 he successfully completed the PA. District Justice Training Program and was certified by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. He is a graduate of the 201st Session of the prestigious FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. He has also earned certificates for successful completion of the Law Enforcement Executive Development Program at Princeton University and of the Police Executive Development Institute at Pennsylvania State University. He graduated from the 34th Municipal Police Officers Academy of the Pennsylvania State Police in 1979.

Judge Wenner is active in both professional and community service organizations.

About Scott B. Cooper, Esquire

Governor Tom Wolf appointed Mr. Cooper to serve as a lawyer member on the Board effective July 30, 2021. His term of service will conclude on July 29, 2025.

Mr. Cooper is a partner at Schmidt Kramer P.C., a Harrisburg-based personal injury law firm where he specializes in personal injury law with an emphasis on motor vehicle accident and insurance cases. He is a member and past-president of the Pennsylvania Association for Justice (PAJ), a member of the American Association for Justice (AAJ) and the Pennsylvania Bar Association. He currently serves as President of the Dauphin County Bar Association. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Joe Allegrini Children's Hero Fund.

Mr. Cooper serves on the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania's Civil Procedure Rules Committee and previously served on the Supreme Court's Appellate Rules Committee. He served as co-chair for then Governor-Elect Tom Wolf's transition team committee for the Department of the Commonwealth/State and has been appointed as a Hearing Officer with the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Cooper is a frequent lecturer and author. He is also active in the community through his involvement with the Harrisburg Jewish Community Center and as an Adjunct Professor at Widener University Commonwealth Law School, Harrisburg.

Mr. Cooper holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University at Albany, Albany, New York. He earned his Juris Doctor from Widener University School of Law.

About President Judge Emeritus (ret) Susan Peikes Gantman

The Supreme Court appointed Judge Gantman to serve as a lawyer member of the Board effective August 16, 2022. Her term of service will conclude on August 15, 2026.

Judge Gantman was elected to a ten-year term on the Superior Court in 2003, and afterward retained for another ten-year term in 2013. She was elected by her peers as President Judge of the Superior Court for a five-year term running from January 7, 2014 to January 6, 2019. On April 1, 2020, Judge Gantman took senior status on the Superior Court. She retired in December 2021.

Before becoming a judge, Judge Gantman maintained a private law practice from 1981-1991. She also served as solicitor for the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth and the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Development. From 1991-1998, Judge Gantman was a partner at Sherr Joeffe & Zuckerman, P.C., where she served as Chair of the Domestic Relations Section. From 1998-2003, Judge Gantman served as a senior member and Co-Chair of the Family Law Section at Cozen O'Connor. Further, she served as an Assistant District Attorney in Montgomery County and as a Law Clerk to the Honorable Richard S. Lowe of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas.

Judge Gantman is a member of the American, Pennsylvania, Montgomery County, and Philadelphia County Bar Associations. She was the Chair of the Superior Court of

Pennsylvania's Records Management Committee. Judge Gantman is also a frequent lecturer and has been heavily involved in community service.

She is a 1974 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, *cum laude*, and a Masters of Arts degree. She went on to earn her Juris Doctor from Villanova University School of Law in 1977.

About Sudhir R. Patel, Esquire

Governor Tom Wolf appointed Mr. Patel to serve as a lawyer member of the Board effective February 8, 2022. His term of service will conclude on February 7, 2026.

Mr. Patel is a partner in the Pottsville, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania law firm of Fanelli, Evans & Patel, P.C. He is a trial lawyer who has handled and tried cases in various state and federal courts throughout Pennsylvania, as well as before the Court of Federal Claims, the United States Tax Court, the American Arbitration Association and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Board of Claims. His areas of practice include personal injury, medical malpractice, construction litigation and criminal defense.

Mr. Patel served as President of the Pennsylvania Association for Justice (PAJ) from July of 2019 through July of 2020. He has been a long-standing member of the PAJ's Board of Governors as well as its Executive Committee. Mr. Patel is also a member of the American Association for Justice (AAJ), and is also actively involved in the Schuylkill County Bar Association. He has chaired the Schuylkill County Bench-Bar Committee and chairs the Community Development/Public Relations Committee which he founded. In 2005, Mr. Patel organized and implemented an alternative dispute resolution program in Schuylkill County. Mr. Patel has also been a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Judicial Review/Evaluation Committee.

Mr. Patel has been a speaker at numerous continuous legal education seminars, speaking on issues ranging from social media to personal injury/medical malpractice damages and developing a profitable law practice. He also serves as a Mediator, both privately and through the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania's Mediation Program.

He has been active throughout his community in activities ranging from fundraising for community projects to various athletic leagues. He regularly speaks at school districts throughout Schuylkill County on the dangers of distracted driving, and has also lectured hundreds of teens on responsible social media use. In what he describes as the most thankless of his community service forays, he has served multiple terms as President of the Orwigsburg Little League.

Mr. Patel received his undergraduate degree from Lehigh University in 1992 and his law degree from Villanova University School of Law in 1995.

For further information about the Judicial Conduct Board, visit the Board's Website at www.jcbpa.org.###