

## News from the Bench

Submitted by Kim Buechel Mesun, Minneapolis Public Schools



Governor Dayton appointed **Carol M. Hanks** as a District Court Judge in Minnesota's Third Judicial District. This vacancy was created upon the retirement of the Honorable Larry M. Collins, and will be chambered at Waseca in Waseca County.

Ms. Hanks is a shareholder at Patton, Hoversten & Berg, P.A., where she handles cases in family and criminal law, estate planning, and probate and trust administration. Previously, she was a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Renee L. Worke, the Honorable Casey J. Christian, and the Honorable Joseph A. Buelteel in the Third Judicial District. She earned her B.S. from Minnesota State University and her J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Ms. Hanks is a member of the Fifth District Bar Association, member and past president of the Steele County Bar Association, member of the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Fifth District Ethics Committee, and a Children's Justice Initiative committee member for Steele and Waseca Counties.

Minnesota's Third Judicial District consists of Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, and Winona Counties.



Governor Dayton appointed **Mark E. Betters** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Fifth Judicial District. By order of the Minnesota Supreme Court, a vacant referee position in the Fifth

Judicial District was converted into a district court judgeship. Mr. Betters is replacing Referee Susan Chambers, and will be chambered at Mankato in Blue Earth County.

Mr. Betters is a shareholder and president at Betters Wienandt Attorneys at Law, Ltd., where his practice focuses on criminal defense and family law matters. Previously, he was a public defender for the Fifth Judicial District and an attorney at Manahan Bluth Law Office, Chtd. He earned his B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and his J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Mr. Betters is a member of the Mankato Symphony Orchestra Board, a member investigator of the Sixth District Ethics Committee, a family drug court legal clinic volunteer, and a pro bono attorney through Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services.

Minnesota's Fifth Judicial District consists of Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, and Watonwan Counties.



Governor Dayton reappointed the **Honorable Patricia J. Milun** as Chief Judge of the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals. Chief Judge Milun is appointed to a six year term, which will expire on January 2, 2023.

Chief Judge Milun was appointed to the Minnesota Worker's Compensation Court of Appeals as the Court's Chief Judge in 2011 by Governor Dayton. Prior to her appointment to the Worker's Compensation Court of Appeals, she was a Worker's Compensation and Administrative Law Judge in the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings. She spent 25 years working in the area of Worker's Compensation law, including 18 years as a Workers' Compensation Judge and as Chief Judge for the Settlement Division of the Workers' Compensation Court at the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. Chief Judge Milun began her legal career as a workers' compensation trial attorney at the law firm of Larsen, Heck, Klimek and Powell. She earned her B.A. from the College of St. Benedict's and her J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Chief Judge Milun is part of the University of St. Thomas School of Law Mentor Externship Program, a volunteer and mentor for the Everybody Wins Program, and a previous member of the Convent of the Visitation Board of Trustees.

The Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals is an independent agency of Minnesota's executive branch. It reviews workers' compensation cases decided by compensation judges at the Office of Administrative Hearings and some cases decided by the Workers' Compensation Division at the Department of Labor and Industry.



Governor Dayton appointed **Tamar N. Gronvall** as a Judge of the Minnesota Tax Court. Ms. Gronvall is appointed to a six year term, which will expire on January 2, 2023.

Ms. Gronvall is the General Counsel in the Office of Legal Services at the Minnesota Department of Commerce, where she manages and leads a team of attorneys advising the agency in the areas of consumer protection, banking, insurance, energy, insurance fraud, contracts, and employment law. Previously, she was the Manager of the Tax Litigation, Bankruptcy and Education Divisions and an Assistant Attorney General in the Health Licensing Division of the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General, an associate attorney at the law firms of Leonard, Street and Deinard and Terhaar, Archibald, Pfefferle & Griehl LLP, and a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Roberta K. Levy, Fourth Judicial District. She was also an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota Law School from 2003-2007. Ms. Gronvall earned her B.A. and J.D. from the University of Minnesota.

Ms. Gronvall is Co-Chair of the Minnesota Women Lawyers Leadership Award Committee, a volunteer attorney at the Tubman Chrysalis Center Safety Project, and previously was a volunteer refugee asylum attorney at The Advocates for Human Rights.

The Minnesota Tax Court is an executive branch court established by the Minnesota Legislature to hear and consider tax-related cases.



Governor Dayton appointed **Timothy M. Churchwell** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Seventh Judicial District. Mr. Churchwell replaces the Honorable David R. Battey, and is chambered at Alexandria in Douglas County.

Mr. Churchwell was a shareholder at Peters & Churchwell, P.A. and was also an Assistant Seventh District Judicial District Public Defender. Previously, he was an attorney at the law firms Brown & Sellnow and Currott & Jesse, and a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Lawrence T. Collins. Mr. Churchwell earned his B.A. from Northern Illinois University and his J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Mr. Churchwell serves on the Minnesota Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board. He is also a member of the Todd-Wadena Community Corrections Board and Swanville Lion's Club, and past chair of the Todd County Law Library Board of Trustees.

Minnesota's Seventh Judicial District consists of Becker, Benton, Clay, Douglas, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Stearns, Todd, and Wadena Counties.



Governor Dayton appointed **Heather M. Wynn** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Tenth Judicial District. Ms. Wynn replaces the Honorable James T. Reuter, and is chambered at Pine City in Pine County.

Ms. Wynn was an Assistant Kanabec County Attorney, where she prosecuted felony offenses and handled all child protection cases. Previously, she was a solo practitioner, and an associate attorney at Bjerke Law Offices, where she prosecuted criminal offenses for several municipalities, advised cities and townships, and handled civil matters. She earned her B.A. from Bethel College and her J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Ms. Wynn serves on the Board of Directors for Pine Habilitation and Employment, Inc., and volunteers as a judge for the Minnesota High School Mock Trial Program. She was also on the Pine City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and a volunteer attorney for the Ask an Attorney Program.

Minnesota's Tenth Judicial District consists of Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Sherburne, Washington, and Wright Counties.



Governor Dayton appointed **Michael E. Burns** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District. Mr. Burns replaces the Honorable Anne K. McKeig, who was appointed to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Mr. Burns was an Assistant Hennepin County Attorney, where he handled criminal prosecution. Previously, he was an adjunct professor at Hamline University, an associate attorney at Hallelund Lewis Nilan & Johnson, P.A., an Assistant Attorney General in the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General, and a probation officer for Hennepin County Community Corrections. He earned his B.A. from Brown University in Rhode Island, his M.A. from Hamline University, and his J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Mr. Burns is a Race Director for the Susan G. Komen of Minnesota Race for the Cure, a board member of the Mitchell Hamline School of Law Alumni Association, a participant and member of Getting Word Project, and a former board member of the Minneapolis Civilian Review Authority.

Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District consists of Hennepin County.

Governor Dayton appointed **DeAnne M. Hilgers** and **Timothy T. Mulrooney** as District Court Judges in Minnesota's Second Judicial District. Ms. Hilgers and Mr. Mulrooney replace the Honorable Diane R. Alshouse and the Honorable James H. Clark, who both retired earlier this year.



### **DeAnne M. Hilgers**

Ms. Hilgers was an equity partner at Lindquist & Vennum, LLP, where she handled cases primarily in immigration law. Previously, she was an adjunct professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Russell Anderson, Minnesota Supreme Court, and the Honorable Michael Kirk, Seventh Judicial District, and a reporter for The Forum in Fargo, ND. Ms. Hilgers earned her B.A. from the University of Minnesota and her J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Ms. Hilgers is a board member of the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota, a volunteer lawyer at The Advocates for Human Rights, and a volunteer at From Houses to Homes.



### **Timothy T. Mulrooney**

Mr. Mulrooney was a judicial referee in the Family Court Division of the Fourth Judicial District Court. Previously, he was an attorney and shareholder at Henson & Efron, P.A., an Assistant Hennepin County Attorney, an Assistant Minneapolis City Attorney, and a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Richard B. Solum, Fourth Judicial District. Mr. Mulrooney earned his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame and his J.D. from the University of Minnesota.

Mr. Mulrooney is on the Civil Committee of the Hennepin County Family Violence Coordinating Council, founder and member of the Limited Scope Pro Bono Legal Services Program, and volunteers as a mock trial coach for Capitol Hill fifth graders.



Governor Dayton appointed **Sharon G. Benson** as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Seventh Judicial District. Ms. Benson replaces the Honorable Mark F. Hansen and is chambered at Fergus Falls in Otter Tail County.

Ms. Benson was a sole practitioner with Benson Law Office, LLC. She is an MSBA Certified Criminal Law Specialist and was a part-time Seventh Judicial District public defender. Previously, she worked as a legal services attorney and as the managing attorney at Central Minnesota Legal Services. Ms. Benson earned her B.A. and her J.D. from the University of Minnesota.

Ms. Benson is a pro bono advocate for veterans in the Stearns County Veterans Protocol, and has served on the Board of Directors for the Central Minnesota Housing Partners, Great River Education Arts Theatre, and the MSBA Bar Foundation. She has also served on the Minnesota Supreme Court Juvenile Delinquency Rules Committee and the Child Protection Rules Committee.

Minnesota's Seventh Judicial District consists of Becker, Benton, Clay, Douglas, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Stearns, Todd, and Wadena Counties.