

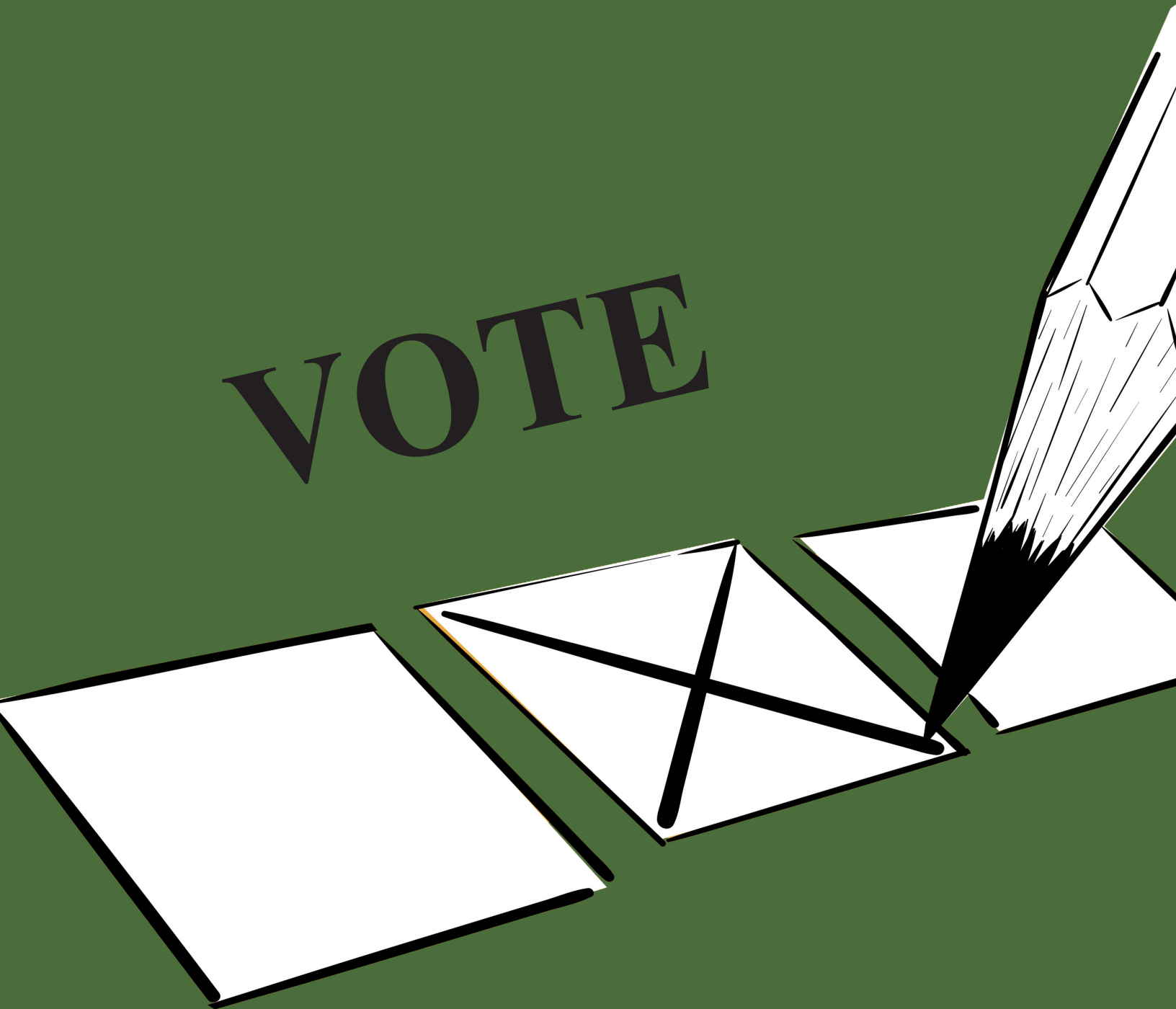
IOWA VOTER'S JUDICIAL DIRECTORY

*Answers to Questions about
Judicial Retention Elections*

Voter Information

*Biographies of Judges
on the 2022 Iowa Ballot*

VOTE



Prepared as a public service by the Iowa Judicial Branch, October 2022.

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What are judicial retention elections?

Retention elections are intended to focus on the professional competency of Iowa's judges rather than the popularity of individual rulings. In a retention election, voters decide whether a judge should be retained or removed from office. If a judge receives a majority of "yes" votes, the judge serves another full term. If a judge receives a majority of "no" votes, the judge is removed from office at the end of the year.

Why does Iowa have retention elections?

In 1962, Iowa voters approved a constitutional amendment that replaced elections of judges with merit selection and retention elections. A process using merit selection and retention elections:

- Curbs the influence of political parties and special interest groups in the selection of Iowa's judges.
- Emphasizes the selection of judges based upon their professional qualifications.
- Gives voters the final say about who serves as a judge.
- Is the most effective way to ensure fair and impartial courts.

Where can I find an attorney performance evaluation about judges on the ballot?

The Iowa State Bar Association surveys its members about judges standing for retention. The results of this performance evaluation are available prior to the general election at: www.iowabar.org.

What about a judge's personal views on certain issues?

It is inappropriate for a judge to consider his or her personal views, political pressure, or public opinion when deciding cases. Judges must be neutral and follow the rule of the law.

If a judge announces a position on an issue, the judge's impartiality may be called into question. The judge may need to decline presiding over any case that involves that issue.

Judicial ethics prohibit judges from commenting about cases pending in court to ensure that litigants receive a fair trial.



What makes a good judge?

- **Integrity**—honest, upright, and committed to the rule of law
- **Professional Competence**—keen intellect, extensive legal knowledge, and strong writing ability
- **Judicial Temperament**—neutral, decisive, respectful, and composed
- **Experience**—strong record of professional excellence in the law
- **Service**—committed to public service and the administration of justice

How are courts held accountable?

Our system of government is carefully designed to foster fair and impartial courts while maintaining judicial accountability through a series of checks on judicial power.

- If a party in a case believes a judge made an error, the party may appeal to a higher court.
- If citizens disagree with a court's interpretation of a law, they may petition the legislature to amend the law and change the law's effect in the future.
- If citizens disagree with a court's interpretation of the constitution, they have the ultimate power to amend the constitution to change its effect in the future.
- If a person thinks a judge has behaved unethically, the person may ask the Judicial Qualifications Commission to investigate.

In these ways, courts are accountable to the laws, to the constitution, and to the people.

What about an unpopular court decision?

There are many reasons why a voter may want to consider more than just the outcome of one case when assessing a judge's performance:

- Over the course of a career, a judge will dispose of thousands of cases. One case alone is not necessarily an accurate barometer of a judicial career. The Iowa Voter's Judicial Directory gives a more complete measure of a judge's professional history.
- Judges must follow the law, which sometimes leads to unpopular results. If citizens disagree with a law, they may petition the legislature to change it.
- High-profile cases that catch the media's attention often bear little resemblance to the bulk of a judge's work. Most court cases do not involve hot-button issues.

What about decisions a higher court reverses?

Sometimes a higher court reverses the decision of a lower court. Reversal does not in itself indicate the quality of a judge's work. For instance, the higher court could be ruling on an issue for the first time or clarifying one of its earlier opinions that served as precedent for the lower court.

Iowa Supreme Court Justices



Justice
Dana
Oxley

Justice Oxley, Swisher, was appointed to the supreme court in January 2020.

Justice Oxley was born in Neosho, Missouri, and grew up in Greenfield, Iowa. She received her undergraduate degree in accounting from the University of Northern Iowa in 1990 and received her law degree from the University of Iowa in 1998, graduating Order of the Coif. Following law school, Justice Oxley served as a one-year term clerk for the Honorable David R. Hansen on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals and later returned to serve as a career law clerk for Judge Hansen until 2011. Prior to being appointed to the Supreme Court, Justice Oxley practiced with Shuttleworth & Ingersoll PLC in Cedar Rapids.

Justice Oxley teaches as an adjunct professor at the University of Iowa College of Law. She is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association and the Linn County Bar Association.

Justice Oxley is married and has two children. Her current term expires December 31, 2022.



Justice
Matthew
McDermott

Justice McDermott, West Des Moines, was appointed to the supreme court in April 2020.

Justice McDermott was born and raised in Carroll, Iowa. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa in 2000 and his law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2003, where he served as an editor of the California Law Review. Justice McDermott worked as an attorney in private practice until his appointment. He is a former member of The Iowa State Bar Association's Board of Governors and chair of its Judicial Administration Committee. He is past-president of The Iowa State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division and received its highest honor, the Award of Merit, in 2013. Justice McDermott previously served on the United Way of Central Iowa's Chair's Cabinet and co-chaired its Tocqueville Society campaign. He received the United Way of Central Iowa's "Volunteer of the Year" award in 2017. Justice McDermott also previously served on the board of directors and as board president for Iowa Legal Aid, the Iowa Lottery Authority, Polk County Homeless Continuum of Care Board, and Central Iowa Shelter & Services. He currently serves as chair of the Iowa Access to Justice Commission.

Justice McDermott is married and has three children. His current term expires December 31, 2022.

Iowa Court of Appeals Judges



Judge
Paul B.
Ahlers

Judge Ahlers, Fort Dodge, was appointed to the Iowa Court of Appeals in 2019. He was appointed to the district associate bench in 2011. He graduated from Iowa State University with a finance degree in 1991 and from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1994. From 1994 to 2008, Judge Ahlers practiced in a private law firm. From 2008 to 2011, he served as claim counsel in the bond and financial products claim group for the Travelers Companies. Judge Ahlers is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association.



Judge
Gina
Badding

Judge Badding, Carroll, was appointed to the Iowa Court of Appeals in July 2021. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Religion with Honors from the University of Iowa in 2001, and her Law degree with Distinction from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2004. Her past work experience includes being an associate attorney and partner in private law, as well as a staff attorney for the Iowa Court of Appeals. She was appointed a district court judge in April 2019. She is a member of the Iowa State and Carroll County Bar Associations.

District 1A Judges



District Court
Judge Laura J.
Parrish

Judge Parrish was appointed to the bench in 2019. She received her undergraduate degree from Cornell College in 2001 and her law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2004. Before being appointed to the bench, she worked in private practice for 15 years at the law firm of Miller, Pearson, Gloe, Burns, Beatty & Parrish, P.L.C. in Decorah. She is a member of the Winneshiek County Bar Association, The Iowa State Bar Association and the Iowa Judges Association.



District Court
Judge Michael J.
Shubatt

Judge Shubatt, Dubuque, was appointed to the bench in 2008. He attended the University of Iowa where he received his undergraduate degree in 1987 and his law degree in 1990. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was a shareholder in the Dubuque law firm of Fuerste, Carew, Coyle, Juergens & Sudmeier, P.C., and served clients for 18 years as a general practitioner with an emphasis in civil litigation and trial work. Judge Shubatt also practiced in the state and federal courts of Iowa and Illinois, as well as the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. He is a member of the Dubuque County, Iowa State and American Bar Associations, and currently serves as the Administrative Judge for Dubuque and Delaware Counties.

District 1B Judges



District Court
Judge Melissa A.
Anderson-Seeber

Judge Anderson-Seeber was appointed to the bench in 2020. She received her undergraduate degree in English with a minor in Business Administration from Viterbo University in 1988 and her law degree from Drake University Law School in 1991. Prior to her appointment, Judge Anderson-Seeber served as Chief Local Public Defender in the Waterloo Juvenile Public Defender's Office from 2006 until her appointment. Previously she was the Chief Local Public Defender in the Marshalltown Public Defender's Office, and an assistant public defender in the Civil Commitment Unit, Des Moines Adult, and Fort Dodge Offices for the State Public Defender. She is a member of the Black Hawk County Bar Association, The Iowa State Bar Association, and is a member of the Iowa Judges Association.



District Court
Judge Linda Myers
Fangman

Linda M. Fangman was appointed District Court Judge for District 1B in October 2015. Prior to that appointment, Judge Fangman was the Black Hawk County Attorney, an Assistant Black Hawk County Attorney, and an Assistant Marshall County Attorney, prosecuting for over 20 years. Judge Fangman earned her law degree from Drake University Law School in 1995 and her bachelor of arts from St. Ambrose University in 1992. Judge Fangman was originally appointed to the Advisory Committee on Rules of Criminal Procedure in September 2014 and was reappointed to the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules of Criminal Procedure in September 2017. In April 2018 Judge Fangman was then appointed to the newly established Iowa Rules of Criminal Procedure Review Task Force. Judge Fangman was appointed to the Iowa Rules of Evidence Substantive Review Task Force in August 2021. Judge Fangman has served as the 1B Judicial Representative for the Iowa Judges Association since 2020.



District Court
Judge David P.
Odekirk

Judge Odekirk was appointed to the bench in 2015. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa in 1989 and his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1993. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Odekirk was in private practice from 1995 until 2015. He is a member of the Black Hawk County Bar Association, The Iowa State Bar Association, and the American Bar Association.

District 1B Judges



District Court
Judge Richard D.
Stochl

Judge Richard D. Stochl, New Hampton, was appointed to the bench in 2007. He graduated summa cum laude from Western Illinois University in 1986. He obtained his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1989. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was a partner in a northeast Iowa firm for over 18 years. Judge Stochl is a member of the Iowa and Minnesota State Bar Associations, the Iowa Judges Association, and the Chickasaw County Bar association. He and his wife Kathy have three sons.



District Associate
Judge Michelle M.
Wagner

Judge Wagner, Waterloo, was appointed to the bench in August 2021. She received her undergraduate degree from Wartburg College in 2001 and her law degree from Drake University Law School in 2004. Prior to her appointment, she worked as an assistant county attorney for Black Hawk county.



Associate Juvenile
Judge Daniel L.
Block

Judge Block, Cedar Falls, was appointed to the bench in 1997. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa in 1985. In 1989 he graduated from Creighton University School of Law and began his law career serving as assistant Black Hawk county attorney from 1990-1996. He was in private practice from 1996 until his appointment to the bench. Judge Block is a member of the Black Hawk County Bar Association and the Iowa Judges Association. Judge Block also is an adjunct professor at the University of Northern Iowa. He is married and has three children.

District 2A Judges



District Associate
Judge Peter B.
Newell

Judge Newell, Waverly, was appointed to the bench in 1995. Born in Yale, Michigan, he received his bachelor's degree from Western Illinois University in 1984. He attended Drake University Law School and graduated in 1987. Judge Newell is a member of the 2A and Iowa State Bar Associations.

District 2B Judges



District Court
Judge John R.
Flynn

Judge Flynn, Boone, was appointed to the district court bench in July 2020. He received his undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Iowa in 2004 and his law degree from Drake University Law School in 2007. Prior to his appointment, Judge Flynn practiced law as a shareholder with the Jordan & Mahoney Law Firm, P.C., in Boone, where he maintained a general county seat practice with a focus on civil and criminal trial work. He is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association, Boone County Bar Association, and the Iowa Judges Association. Judge Flynn is married with a daughter and stepson.

District 2B Judges



District Court
Judge John J.
Haney

Judge Haney, Marshalltown, was appointed to the district court bench in May of 2014. He was born in Pittsburgh, PA, and raised in Marshalltown. He received an associate of arts degree with honors Marshalltown Community College in 1991; bachelor of arts degree with honors from Grinnell College in 1993; and his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1996. Prior to his appointment, Judge Haney was in private practice and also served as a Marshall County magistrate from 2007. He is a member of the Marshall County Bar Association, the Iowa Judge's Association, and The Iowa State Bar Association. Judge Haney was awarded Outstanding Public Official of the Year by the Iowa Corrections Association in 2022 for his work with specialty courts in Marshall County. Judge Haney and his wife Carol have been married for 39 years. They have four children and ten grandchildren.



District Court
Judge Jennifer A.
Miller

Judge Miller was appointed to the bench in March 2021. She received her undergraduate degree from Augustana College in 1993 and her law degree from Drake University Law School in 1996. Prior to her appointment, she worked as an assistant public defender from 1996 to 2002 and as the Marshall County Attorney from 2002 to 2021. She is a member of the Iowa Judges Association, Iowa Supreme Court Grievance Commission, State Medical Examiner Advisory Council, Office of Drug Control Policy Advisory Board, and Iowa Child Death Review Team, and she is a past President of the Iowa County Attorney Association and the Marshall County Bar Association.



District Associate
Judge Steven Van
Marel

Judge Van Marel, Ames, was appointed to the bench in 1987. Born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, he attended Iowa State University. After earning his degree in community and regional planning in 1980, Judge Van Marel went to the University of Iowa College of Law and received his law degree in 1983. He has worked as the assistant Wapello County attorney and the assistant Story County attorney. Judge Van Marel is a member of the Iowa Judges Association. He is married with two children.

District 3A Judges



District Court
Judge Shayne L.
Mayer

Judge Mayer, Rock Rapids, was appointed to the bench in August 2020. She received her undergraduate degree from Briar Cliff University in 2006 and her law degree from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 2009. Prior to her appointment, Judge Mayer worked in private practice from 2009 to 2012, was the Lyon County Attorney from 2012 until her appointment. She is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association, and is Vice President of the Iowa Judges Association, and she is a member of the South Dakota State Bar Association.



District Court
Judge John M.
Sandy

Judge Sandy, Spirit Lake, was appointed to the bench in March of 2021. He earned his undergraduate degree with honors from the University of St. Thomas in 2007. He attended the University of St. Thomas School of Law, where he served as editor-in-chief of the Journal of Law & Public Policy, and graduated with Dean's honors in 2010. After law school, Judge Sandy served as a 1st Assistant Public Defender for the State of Minnesota and was a shareholder and managing partner at Sandy Law Firm, P.C.

Judge Sandy is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association, the Minnesota Bar Association, the Dickinson County Bar Association, and the Iowa Judges Association. He is married and has four children.



District Associate
Judge Shawna
Ditsworth

Judge Ditsworth was appointed to the bench in November 2021. She received her undergraduate degree from Buena Vista University in 1999 and completed her Juris Doctorate from William Mitchell College of Law in 2003. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Ditsworth worked in private practice. She is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association.

District 3A Judges



District Associate
Judge Ann M.
Gales

Judge Gales was appointed to the bench February 2014. She works primarily in the three-county area including Emmet, Kossuth, and Palo Alto counties. Her previous legal experience included working in the U.S. Department of Justice-Antitrust Division in Chicago, Illinois, serving as an Assistant Kossuth County Attorney, and as a sole practitioner in Algona, Iowa. Judge Gales received her undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame and her law degree from Duke University School of Law. She is a member of the Iowa State and Kossuth County Bar Associations. She is married with three children.

District 3B Judges



District Court
Judge Steven
Andreasen

Judge Andreasen was appointed as a district judge in January 2008. He had served as a magistrate in Woodbury County in 2006 and 2007 before his appointment to the bench. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa in 1989 and his law degree from the same institution in 1992. Judge Andreasen had been in private practice in Sioux City since 1992. He is a member of the Iowa State and Woodbury County Bar Associations and the Iowa Judges Association. He is married with one child.

District 3B Judges



District Court
Judge James N.
Daane

Judge Daane was appointed to the bench in July 2021. A native of Sturgis, South Dakota, he received his undergraduate degree in 1982 and his law degree in 1985, both from the University of South Dakota. After law school, Judge Daane served three years on active-duty in the Army as a Judge Advocate officer with the 7th Infantry Division (Light). He was then in private practice in Sioux City from 1988 until his appointment to the bench, most recently with the firm of Mayne, Hindman, Daane, Parry & Wingert. Judge Daane is a member of the Iowa Judges Association, and the Iowa State and Woodbury County Bar Associations, and was formerly a member of the State Bar of South Dakota, and the Nebraska State Bar Association. He is married with three adult children.



District Court
Judge Jeffrey A.
Neary

Judge Neary was appointed to the bench in 2002. He received his bachelor's degree in German from Westmar College, Le Mars, in 1981 and his law degree from the University of South Dakota in 1987. Judge Neary served as a part-time magistrate for Plymouth County in the mid 1990s and was an assistant federal public defender in the Northern District of Iowa until his appointment to the bench. He also served as an Assistant Woodbury County Attorney, was in private practice with a Sioux City and a Le Mars law firm and served with the U.S. Army Reserves as a Captain in the Judge Advocate Corps until his honorable discharge in 1999. Judge Neary is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association and a past member of the South Dakota Bar Association. He is currently an adjunct professor at Western Iowa Tech Community College teaching reserve deputies through the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. Judge Neary also heads up the Plymouth County Drug Court and works with the members of his local Boy Scout Troop.



District Court
Judge Roger L.
Sailer

Judge Sailer was appointed to the district court bench in December 2019. He received his Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Nebraska in 1987 and his Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Colorado in 1994, and received his law degree from Creighton Law School in 2007. Prior to his appointment, Judge Sailer worked as the Crawford County Attorney, Assistant Crawford County Attorney, and Associate Attorney at Mundt, Franck, and Schumacher Law Firm.

District 3B Judges



Judge Tott was appointed to the bench in September, 2014. He graduated Cum Laude from Creighton University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration in 1989 and Magna Cum Laude from Creighton Law School in 1991. Judge Tott served as a part-time Associate Juvenile Judge from 1994 to 2001 and as a part-time magistrate for Woodbury County from 1999 until his appointment to the district court in September, 2014. Immediately prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Tott was a member of the firm of Buckmeier & Daane Lawyers P.C. in Sioux City. He is married with seven children.

Chief District Court
Judge Patrick H.
Tott



Judge Phillips was appointed to the bench in October 2021. She was born and raised in Holstein, Iowa. Judge Phillips graduated Cum Laude from the University of South Dakota with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice in 1996. She received her law degree from the University of South Dakota Law School in 1999 before returning to northwest Iowa to begin her practice of law. Prior to her appointment, she was an assistant county attorney in Cherokee and Ida counties and maintained a small private practice.

Judge Phillips is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association, the Cherokee Bar Association, the Ida County Bar Association, and the Iowa Judges Association. She is married and has three children.

District Associate
Judge Kristal L.
Phillips

District 4 Judges



District Court Judge
Richard H.
Davidson

Judge Davidson, Clarinda, was appointed to the bench in 2009. He attended Drake University where he earned a Bachelors of Arts Degree in 1981 and a Juris Doctorate in 1984. He then moved to Washington D.C., where he served as a Trial Attorney for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission until May 1986. In June 1986, he joined the law firm Wright and Talisman. In 1991, he returned to Clarinda and practiced law with Bailey and Davidson, later known as Davidson Law Firm. In addition to his private practice Judge Davidson served as Page County Attorney from 2001 until his appointment to the bench. He is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association and the Iowa Judges Association. He is married and has three children.



District Court
Judge Kathleen A.
Kilnoski

Judge Kilnoski, Council Bluffs, was appointed as District Court Judge January 9, 2009, and had served as District Associate Judge since 1996. She was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and attended Grinnell College. After graduating with her bachelor's degree in 1981, she earned her law degree from University of Iowa College of Law in 1985. She worked as assistant city attorney for Council Bluffs until her appointment to the bench. She is a member of the Iowa Judges Association and member and past officer of the Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys.



Chief District
Court Judge Jeffrey
L. Larson

Chief Judge Larson, Harlan, was appointed to the bench in 2003 and became Chief Judge due to the retirement of Judge Charles L. Smith III. He earned his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1985. He has been in private practice as well as serving as Shelby County attorney.

District 4 Judges



Judge Fagan, Council Bluffs, was appointed to the bench January 30, 2009. He graduated from the University of Iowa in 1988 and received his law degree from Creighton University Law School in 1995. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Fagan worked at the State of Iowa Public Defender's Office. He is Chairman of the Iowa Judges Association Criminal Law and Rules committee and is a member of the Iowa Judges Association Judicial Administration and Technology Committee. Judge Fagan is a past president of the Iowa Judges Association. He is a member of the Pottawattamie County Bar Association, The Iowa State Bar Association, and the Iowa Judges Association. He is married and has three children.

District Associate
Judge Charles D.
Fagan

District 5A Judges



Judge Ritchie, Adel, was appointed to the bench in 2021. She received her undergraduate degree from Bethel College in 1992 and her law degree from Drake University Law School in 1999. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Ritchie served as Assistant Dallas County Attorney and specialized in prosecutions involving child victims. Prior to her service as an Assistant Dallas County Attorney, she clerked for the court of appeals. Judge Ritchie is a member of the Dallas County Bar Association.

District Court
Judge Stacy
Ritchie

District 5A Judges



District Associate
Judge Erica Crisp

Judge Crisp was appointed to the bench in August 2021. She received her undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University in 2005 and her law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2008. Prior to her appointment, Judge Crisp worked as the Assistant Cerro Gordo County Attorney from 2008-2012, and Assistant Dallas County Attorney from 2012-2021.

District 5B Judges



District Court
Judge Dustria
Relph

Judge Relph, Corydon, was appointed to the bench in 2014. She graduated from Iowa Methodist School of Nursing in 1988, Mercy College of Health Sciences in 2003, and Drake University Law School in 2006. Before her appointment, Judge Relph was in private practice with the Chambers & Relph Law Firm, P.C. She is a member of the American Bar Association, The Iowa State Bar Association, the Judicial District 5B Bar Association, the Iowa Judges Association, and the National Association of Women Judges. Judge Relph is married and has four children.

District 5C Judges



District Court
Judge Jeffrey D.
Farrell

Judge Farrell, Urbandale, was appointed to the bench in 2013. He was born in Fort Dodge and also lived in Lytton before moving to Carroll and graduating from Carroll High School. He received his bachelor of arts degree in 1986 and law degree in 1989, both from the University of Iowa. He was a law clerk for the Fifth Judicial District from 1989–1991. Judge Farrell served for 12 years as an assistant attorney general and ten years as an administrative law judge before being appointed to the bench. He is married with two children.



District Court
Judge Robert B.
Hanson

Judge Hanson, West Des Moines, was appointed to the bench in 2003. He was born and raised in Jefferson, Iowa. He received his bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 1978 and his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1981. He was a law clerk for the late Justice K. David Harris of the Iowa Supreme Court for one year following his graduation from law school, after which he spent 21 years in private practice in Des Moines, Iowa, before his appointment to the bench. Judge Hanson is a member of the American, Iowa State, and Polk County Bar Associations as well as the Iowa Judges Association. He is also a member and past president of the C. Edwin Moore Inn of Court. Judge Hanson is married with two children.



District Court
Judge William P.
Kelly

Judge Kelly, was appointed to the bench in October of 2015. He received his undergraduate degree from Brown University in 1986 and his law degree from Drake University Law School in 1999. Judge Kelly spent 16 years in private practice. He is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association, the Polk County Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. He also spent five years as adjunct professor of law at Drake University.

District 5C Judges



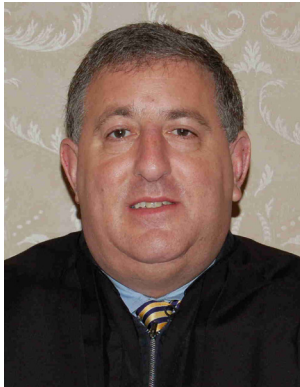
District Court
Judge David Porter

Judge Porter was appointed to the bench in October 2015. He received dual bachelor of arts degrees from the University of Maryland at College Park, one in English/Communications, and the second in Criminology/Criminal Justice.

Judge Porter earned his law degree from Drake University Law School in 2004, with a certification in litigation and dispute resolution. While at Drake, he was awarded the C. Edwin Moore Award for Appellate Advocacy, and upon graduation, he earned the Distinguished Advocate Award and was bestowed with an Order of the Barristers distinction.

After graduation, Judge Porter lived in Las Vegas, Nevada, and worked at a law firm that specialized in construction-defect litigation. After returning to Iowa in 2006, he served as the Violence Against Women (VAWA) Prosecutor for Wapello County. In February 2007, Judge Porter joined the Polk County Attorney's Office, wherein he prosecuted OWI related offenses, vehicular homicides, sexually-based offenses, and crimes against children.

Currently, Judge Porter is a member of the Board of Counselors for the Drake University law School. He serves on the Iowa Domestic Abuse Death Response Team. Judge Porter is also a member of the C. Edwin Moore Inn of Court, as well as a member of the Polk County and Iowa State Bar Associations.



District Court
Judge Scott D.
Rosenberg

Judge Rosenberg, Des Moines, was appointed to the bench in January of 1997. Born in Des Moines, Iowa, he earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa in 1976 and his law degree from Drake University Law School in 1979. He has experience in private law practice and private business, as well as experience at the state appellate defenders office and as Assistant Polk County Attorney. Judge Rosenberg was appointed to the district associate bench in 1992. He is a member of the Polk County Bar Association. Judge Rosenberg is married and has two children.

District 5C Judges



District Court
Judge Paul D.
Scott

Judge Scott, Des Moines, was appointed to the bench in 2014. He received his undergraduate degree from Drake University in 1984 and his law degree from Drake University Law School in 1987. Prior to taking the bench, he was in private practice. Judge Scott practiced in the State and Federal courts of Iowa, as well as the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. He is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association, the Polk County Bar Association, and the Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers. Judge Scott is a past president of the Iowa Judges Association.

He is married and has three children.



District Court
Judge Jeanie K.
Vaudt

Judge Vaudt was appointed to the bench in 2014. She received her undergraduate degree from Upper Iowa University in 1976 and a master of arts in Public Administration from Drake University before graduating from Drake University Law School with honors in 1991, where she was a member of the Drake Law Review. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Vaudt served as a graduate law clerk to Justice Louis A. Lavorato on the Iowa Supreme Court, was a litigation associate at the Davis Brown law firm, and for the last 15 years of her practice she was an Assistant Attorney General in the Iowa Department of Justice.

She is a member of the Polk County and Iowa State Bar Associations. She is a member of the Jack Levin Inn of Court and the C. Edwin Moore Inn of Court, and is a past president of the latter. She currently serves on the Board of the Iowa Judge's Association.



District Associate
Judge Susan Cox

Judge Cox was appointed to the bench in 2014. She grew up on the northeast side of Des Moines. After graduating from the University of Northern Iowa with highest honors, she received her law degree with distinction from the University of Iowa College of Law. Judge Cox practiced law for more than 20 years at Legal Services and the Polk County Attorney's Office.

District 5C Judges



District Associate
Judge Cynthia
Moisan

Judge Moisan, Des Moines, was appointed to the bench in 1995. She was born in Chicago, Illinois, and earned her bachelor's degree from Western Illinois University. In 1982 she received her law degree from Drake University Law School. Judge Moisan practiced law with a firm from 1984 until her appointment to the bench. She is a member of the National Association of Women Judges and the Polk County Bar Association.



District Associate
Judge Brent
Pattison

Judge Pattison was appointed to the bench in May 2020. He received his bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University in 1993, and completed his law degree at the University of Minnesota Law School in 1999, graduating magna cum laude. Before his appointment, Judge Pattison was a clinical professor of law at Drake University Law School, as well as a staff attorney for Team Child in Seattle, Washington. He is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association.



District Associate
Judge Jesse T.
Ramirez

Judge Ramirez was appointed to the bench in July 2021. He received his undergraduate degree from Iowa State University in 2009 and law degree from Drake University Law School in 2013. Prior to his appointment, Judge Ramirez worked in private practice, as well as an assistant Story county attorney, assistant Polk county attorney, and assistant attorney general in the Iowa Attorney General's office.

District 5C Judges



District Associate
Judge Kimberly
Rodgers Smith

Judge Smith was appointed to the bench in December 2020. She received her undergraduate degree from Mount Mercy University in 2000 and her law degree from Drake University Law School in 2003. She worked as an associate attorney at the Roehrick Law Firm from 2003 to 2008, an assistant public defender in the Des Moines Public Defender's Office from 2008 to 2020, and as an adjunct professor at Drake University Law School from 2017 to 2021 prior to her appointment. She is a member of the C. Edwin Inn of Court, Pretrial Screening Assessment Implementation Committee, St. Thomas More Center Advisory Board Member, and the Iowa Public Defender Association.

District 6 Judges



Chief District
Court Judge Lars
G. Anderson

Judge Anderson, Iowa City, was appointed to the bench in July 2014. He earned his bachelor's degree from Luther College in 1992 and his law degree, with distinction, from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1995. Prior to being appointed to the bench, he was in private practice in Iowa City from 1995-2014 and was an adjunct professor at the University of Iowa College of Law in 2014. Judge Anderson served as an alternate Judicial Hospitalization Referee for Johnson County from 1997 to 2001 and as a Judicial Hospitalization Referee from 2003 to 2014. Judge Anderson is a member of the Johnson County Bar Association, The Iowa State Bar Association, and the Dean Mason Ladd American Inn of Court.

District 6 Judges



District Court
Judge Christopher
Bruns

Judge Bruns, Cedar Rapids, was appointed to the bench on December 17, 2014. He earned his bachelor's degree in History and Political Science from Drake University in 1988 and his law degree from Drake Law School in 1991, Order of the Coif. After graduation from law school, Judge Bruns was in private practice with Cedar Rapids law firms until his appointment to the bench. He is a Fellow in the Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers and a member of the Linn County Bar Association. He is married and has one child.



District Court
Judge Valerie L.
Clay

Judge Clay was appointed to the bench on September 22, 2022. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Iowa in 1997. She then earned her law degree at the University Of Maryland Law School in 2006. After graduation from law school, Judge Clay was an associate at Norton Law Firm in Lowden, Iowa, from 2007-2008. From 2008-2015, Judge Clay served as Assistant Attorney General with the Linn County Child Support Recovery Unit in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In 2015 Judge Clay became an Assistant Linn County Attorney. She began as a criminal prosecutor, and then transferred to the Juvenile Division in 2018, where she remained until her appointment to the district court. Judge Clay is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association, Iowa Judges Association, Linn County Bar Association, Sixth Judicial District Mediation Advisory Committee, and Jones County Magistrate Nominating Commission. She is also a former member of the Jones County Bar Association. Judge Clay is married with two children.

District 6 Judges



District Court
Judge Chad A.
Kepros

Judge Kepros, North Liberty, was appointed to the district court bench in February 2015. He earned his bachelor's degree from Coe College in 1993 and his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1996, with high honors. He worked as a private attorney and mediator in Iowa City beginning in 1996 and also served as a Johnson County Magistrate from June 2013 until his appointment to the bench. He is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association (Past Chair of the Family & Juvenile Law Section) and Johnson County Bar Association, and previously served as Sixth District Representative in the Iowa Association of Magistrate Judges. Judge Kepros also serves on the Iowa Supreme Court Family Law Case Processing Reform Task Force and co-chairing the Iowa Supreme Court Child Support Guidelines Review Committee.



District Court
Judge Justin A.
Lightfoot

Judge Lightfoot, Cedar Rapids, was appointed to the bench on March 25, 2021. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Criminal Justice Studies from Iowa State University in 2003, and his law degree with high distinction, Order of the Coif, from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2006. After graduation from law school, Judge Lightfoot served as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Carol E. Jackson in the Eastern District of Missouri for four years. Since clerking, he has served as Assistant United States Attorney from 2010-2021, and was Chief of the Criminal Division from 2018-2021. Judge Lightfoot is a member of the Linn County Bar Association (Board of Governors 2018-2021), The Iowa State Bar Association, Dean Mason Ladd Inn of Court, and has also served as the Eighth Circuit Representative on the Department of Justice's Criminal Chiefs' working group.



District Court
Judge Kevin
McKeever

Judge McKeever, Iowa City, was appointed to the bench on September 30, 2015. He earned his bachelor's degree from Northwestern University in 1991 and his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2001. Prior to being appointed to the bench, he was an Officer with the United States Navy (1991-1998), an Assistant Ramsey County Attorney (2001-2007), a Staff Attorney with ACT Inc. (2007-2011), and an Assistant Muscatine County Attorney (2011-September 2015). Judge McKeever serves as a board member of the African American Museum of Iowa, is a past member of the Iowa Access to Justice Commission, and he enjoys bicycle riding and reading books about history.

District 6 Judges



District Court
Judge Sean W.
McPartland

Judge Sean W. McPartland is a district court judge in the Sixth Judicial District of Iowa, based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Judge McPartland was appointed to the district court bench in 2008 after practicing in general civil litigation with law firms in Kansas City, Missouri (1984-1989), and in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (1989-2008). Judge McPartland received his undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa in 1981, with distinction, and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and Kappa Tau Alpha honor societies. Judge McPartland received his law degree in 1984, with distinction, from the University of Iowa College of Law.

After appointment to the bench, Judge McPartland served on the Iowa Civil Justice Reform Task Force from 2009-2012 and contributed to the 2012 report of the Task Force. Judge McPartland also served as a member of the Advisory Committee Concerning Certain Civil Justice Reform Task Force Recommendations beginning in 2012, with the work of the Committee leading to the adoption of 2015 amendments to the Iowa Rules of Civil Procedure related to areas including required initial disclosures, discovery, and expedited civil actions. Judge McPartland was appointed in 2017 to serve as a judge on the Iowa Business Specialty Court and served in that capacity until 2020. Judge McPartland also has served regularly since 2012 as a faculty member in orientation programs for new judges presented by the Iowa Judicial Branch.



District Court
Judge Ian K.
Thornhill

Judge Thornhill, Cedar Rapids, was appointed to the district court bench September 25, 2009, and began his career as a district judge October 23, 2009. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Iowa in 1989. In 1991 he received his Master of Business Administration from the University of Iowa, and in 1998 received his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law with High Distinction. Previous professional experiences have included: Assistant United States Attorney (August 2002 to October 2009), United States Navy Reserve Attorney (August 2002 to present), and United States Navy Active Duty Attorney (October 1998 to August 2002). From November 2007 to May 2008, Judge Thornhill was recalled to active duty and deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Judge Thornhill is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association, the Linn County Bar Association, and the Iowa Judges Association.

District 6 Judges



District Associate
Judge Carrie K.
Bryner

Judge Bryner, Cedar Rapids, was appointed to the bench on July 24, 2020. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from Hillsdale College in 1991, and her law degree from the University of Toledo College of Law in 1997. After graduation from law school, she worked as an Assistant Cedar Rapids City Attorney from 1998-99, prosecuting simple misdemeanors and handling municipal infractions and small claims cases. From 1999-2003, she was an Assistant Linn County Attorney, prosecuting simple, serious, and aggravated misdemeanors. Beginning in 2003 to her appointment to the bench, she was a sole practitioner focusing on juvenile court, representing parents and children in Child in Need of Assistance cases. She was also a certified mediator, mediating dissolution, custody, and contempt cases. Additionally, on January 2, 2015, until her appointment as a District Associate Judge, she served as a part-time magistrate in Linn County, hearing simple misdemeanor and small claims cases. She is married and has three children.



District Associate
Judge Jason A.
Burns

Judge Burns, Iowa City, was appointed to the bench on August 18, 2015. He graduated Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Justice Systems from Truman State University in 1999 and his Juris Doctorate degree, with distinction, from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2002. He was an Assistant Linn County Attorney from 2002 until his appointment to the bench. Judge Burns is a member of several local bar associations. He is married and has one child.



District Associate
Judge Heidi A.
Carmer

Judge Carmer was appointed to the bench in August 2021. She graduated from Cornell College in 1998 and received her law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2002. Prior to her appointment, she worked as Assistant Linn County Attorney from August 2003 to July 2021.

District 7 Judges



District Court
Judge Jeffrey D.
Bert

Judge Jeffrey D. Bert was appointed to the bench in December of 2019. In April of 2021, Judge Bert was also appointed by the Iowa Supreme Court to the Iowa Business Specialty Court. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree with distinction from Iowa State University in 1989 and his law degree with distinction from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1992. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Bert maintained a private practice for 28 years with an emphasis in civil litigation and trial work. He is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association and the Scott County Bar Association. Before his appointment, Judge Bert served on the Board of Directors for the Vera French Mental Health Center and One Eighty, Inc., and was a member of the Bettendorf Planning & Zoning Commission from 2012 to 2019.



District Court
Judge Meghan K.
Corbin

Judge Corbin, Davenport, was appointed to the bench in 2021. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa in 2008 and her law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2011. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Corbin was in private practice and served as a judicial magistrate from 2017 until her appointment to the bench.

Judge Corbin is a member of the Scott County Bar Association and The Iowa State Bar Association. She serves on the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Rules of Criminal Procedure and the Court Reporter Utilization Committee.



District Court
Judge Stuart P.
Werling

Judge Werling, Tipton, was appointed to serve Cedar County as a magistrate in 1986 before being appointed to the district court bench in 2014. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa in 1978 and his law degree from the University of Arkansas in 1980. Stuart Werling is a member of the Cedar County and Iowa State Bar Associations and has served as president of the Cedar County Bar and a Governor of The Iowa State Bar Association. He is the recipient of the first Meritorious Service Award from the Judicial Department presented in 2004. Judge Werling is married with two children.

District 7 Judges



District Associate
Judge Michael E.
Motto

Judge Motto, Davenport, was appointed to the bench in 2021. He received his undergraduate degrees from the University of Iowa in 2002 and his law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 2006. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Motto served as a magistrate in Scott County from 2017 - 2021, and was in private practice for 15 years as a general practitioner with an emphasis in criminal defense and trial work. Judge Motto is a member of the Scott County Bar Association and The Iowa State Bar Association. He is married with three children.



District Court
Judge Kimberly
Shepherd

Judge Shepherd, Bettendorf, was appointed to the bench in 2021. Born in Clinton, Iowa, she earned her bachelor's degree from Iowa State University in 1997 and her law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2003. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she served as an Assistant County Attorney in Clinton and Scott County. Judge Shepherd is a member of the Clinton County Bar Association, The Iowa State Bar Association, and the Iowa Judges Association. She is married and has two children.

District 8A Judges



District Court
Judge Joel D.
Yates

Judge Yates, Sigourney, was appointed to the bench in December 2007. He received his bachelor's degree from Mt. Mercy College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1986 and his law degree from the Drake University Law School in 1994. Judge Yates spent 12 years in private practice with Clements Law Firm in Oskaloosa, Iowa. He is a member of the Iowa Judges Association and the Keokuk County Bar Association. He is married with three children.



District Associate
Judge Kirk Arthur
Daily

Judge Daily, Ottumwa, was appointed to the bench in 1998. He received his bachelor's degree from University of Iowa in 1981. In 1984 he received his Juris Doctor from the University of Iowa College of Law, graduating With Distinction. After graduation, he went into private practice until his appointment in 1998. He was also a magistrate for Wapello County from 1984 -1986. Judge Daily presides over Drug Court and Mental Health Court in District 8A. Judge Daily is a member of The Iowa State Bar Association and the Iowa Judges Association. In 2016 he was named "Outstanding Public Official" by the Iowa Corrections Association. He is married with two children.

District 8A Judges



Associate Juvenile
Judge William S.
Owens

Judge William Owens was appointed as an Associate Juvenile Judge in January 1999. Judge Owens received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Kansas in May 1981, and his law degree from Drake University Law School in May 1984. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Owens was in private practice and also served as Monroe County Attorney from 1991 until 1998.

Judge Owens is co-chair of the Iowa Supreme Court's Advisory Committee for Children's Justice, is a member of the State Council of the Iowa Supreme Court Commission for Children's Justice, is chair of the Juvenile Judge and Senior and Retired Judges Committees of the Iowa Judge's Association, and is a member of the Iowa Judge's Association Board of Directors.

In 2018 and 2022 Judge Owens was appointed by Governor Kim Reynolds to the Iowa Child Advocacy Board, which oversees CASA and Foster Care Review Boards in Iowa, and in March 2022 Judge Owens was selected as Chair of the Board.

Judge Owens is a member of the Iowa Judges Association and National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

Judge Owens and his wife, Heidi, reside in Ottumwa, Iowa. They have three daughters and four grandchildren. Judge Owens is an avid runner and has competed in nine marathons.