



March 2025 Midyear Report
Report of the District 10
Honorable Rachel L. Pickering

Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota

As noted in a prior report, we are keeping with the theme of NAWJ's mission of "promoting the judicial role of protecting the rights of individuals under the rule of law through strong, committed, diverse judicial leadership; fairness and equality in the courts; and equal access to justice," this district will work towards organizing and presenting the rewarding NAWJ programs. Overall, the goal is to successfully implement these programs throughout District 10.

Kansas:

There are plans underway to celebrate "Law Day" on May 1, 2025 in Kansas. For this first year, celebrating Law Day may take place at either one or two different Kansas locations, possibly at a courthouse or a local high school. Ideally, the focus would be on promoting the legal profession and may include involvement with other bar organizations. This past October, another NAWJ program, the *Informed Voter Project*, was also presented at the Sertoma Heartland Club in Topeka and to a Rotary Club in Salina. Also, efforts will begin to launch annual NAWJ programs with the two Kansas law schools.

In terms of judicial appointments, on March 4, 2025, Governor Kelly appointed Judge Lori Bolton Fleming to the Court of Appeals, who will now proceed to Senate Confirmation. And on February 11, 2025, Governor Kelly appointed Natalie Morlock to the 25th Judicial District.

Minnesota:

Governor Walz has appointed several women to the judicial bench, including Jessica Fralich to fill a Sixth Judicial District Vacancy on October 7, 2024; Kathryn Lorschach and Kimberly Wimmer to the Ninth Judicial District on November 21, 2024; Kayla Johnson to the Fifth Judicial District on January 24, 2025; and Beverly Luther Quast to the Tax Court on February 26, 2026. On November 26, 2024, Governor Walz designated Judge Jennifer Frisch as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals. We are looking at furthering our efforts to recruit new members and conduct outreach programs within the legal community through NAWJ's flagship programs.

Nebraska:

On November 5, 2024, Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen announced his appointment of Natalie G. Nelsen-Pacey of Holdrege as county court judge in the 10th Judicial District. That district includes Adams, Clay, Fillmore, Franklin, Harlan, Kearney, Nuckolls, Phelps and Webster counties. Nelsen-Pacey has served as both the deputy county attorney and the county attorney in Phelps County since 2017. Before that, she was an attorney in the Holdrege law firm of Dier, Osborn, Cox & Nelson, P.C., L.L.O for nearly nine years where her areas of practice included corporate, business, real estate, family, juvenile and adoption law. Nelsen-Pacey received her bachelor's degree from Doane College and she earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Nebraska College of Law.

Nebraska trial judges installed new association presidents during their annual meetings in late October, 2024. The Nebraska County Judges Association's newly appointed president is Judge Holl J. Parsley from Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. Presidential terms began on October 11, 2024.

Nebraska Judge Frankie Moore Named President of National Council for State Courts of Appeal

Judge Frankie Moore of the Nebraska Court of Appeals has assumed the role of President of the Council of Chief Judges of the State Courts of Appeal. The transition of leadership occurred during the Council's annual conference in Monterey, California, where Moore received the ceremonial gavel from outgoing President Judge Mark D. Pfeiffer of the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District. Moore's one-year term began November 15, 2024, and will continue through the Council's next annual conference in Washington D.C. in the fall of 2025.

The Council of Chief Judges of the State Courts of Appeal, established in 1980, is a national organization comprising judicial leaders from state appellate courts. Its mission is to improve the administration of justice by facilitating the exchange of ideas, sharing best practices, and fostering education on effective programs, efficiency, and fiscal responsibility in appellate courts. Moore has served on the Nebraska Court of Appeals since January 2000, holding the position of Chief Judge from 2014 to 2020. In 2015, she was honored with the Nebraska Supreme Court's Distinguished Judge for Service to the Community award for her leadership as chairperson of Nebraska's Self-Represented Litigation Committee. Currently, she serves as a member of the Nebraska Access to Justice Commission. Her presidency marks a significant milestone in her distinguished career, reflecting dedication to advancing justice at both the state and national levels.



North Dakota:

North Dakota has several women judges serving throughout the state, including Justice Lisa Fair McEvers, of the North Dakota Supreme Court, an inspiration for many. Serving in a leadership capacity are Judge Robin A. Schmidt, presiding judge in the Northwest District and Judge Cynthia M. Feland, presiding judge in South Central District.

This district will begin efforts to coordinate well-known NAWJ presentations for the benefit of the University of North Dakota law students and lawyers. Additionally, given North Dakota tribal courts present within the nine North Dakota tribal reservations, the district is looking into the best means to initiate outreach with the presiding tribal judges.

South Dakota

Our district's efforts can certainly be replicated in South Dakota. This district will need to consider ushering NAWJ programs at the University of South Dakota School of Law. We will also begin reviewing other venues for presenting our national NAWJ programs, including outreach within the legal community.