



Judicial Conduct Board
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Melissa L. Norton, Chief Counsel
717-234-7911

Press Release

Monday, July 17, 2023

FROM: Melissa L. Norton
Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania Elects Officers

HARRISBURG, PA -- At its regularly scheduled meeting held on June 12, 2023, the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania elected a new Chair and Secretary. The Board unanimously elected Attorney Scott B. Cooper as Chair and the Honorable Risa Vetri Ferman as Secretary. The Board acted to fill its vacant Chair position, previously held by Nancy L. Clemens who resigned from the Board on May 31, 2023. Mr. Cooper previously served as Secretary and as a member of the Board's Budget Committee. The Board unanimously elected Judge Risa Vetri Ferman as Secretary to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Cooper's election to Chair.

The twelve-member Judicial Conduct 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.

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 Pennsylvania Bar Association and a member of the Dauphin County Bar Association where he currently serves as its Immediate Past-President. 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 where he is currently its Vice-Chair 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 Judge Risa Vetri Ferman

Judge Ferman is a trial court judge in the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas. She was elected in 2015 and took the bench in January 2016. She currently serves in the Criminal Division.

Judge Ferman previously served as Administrative Judge of the Juvenile Division, overseeing dependency and delinquency cases. She has served in the Family and Criminal Divisions of the Court of Common Pleas. Prior to her election to the bench, Judge Ferman was twice elected as the District Attorney of Montgomery County where she served two terms. Judge Ferman was the first woman to serve as President of the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association. Before becoming District Attorney, Judge Ferman spent fifteen (15) years working in the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office as a courtroom prosecutor, specializing in homicide, child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence cases. She was appointed as First Assistant District Attorney before her election.

As an attorney, Judge Ferman co-founded two nonprofit charities to protect and support abused children, Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center and the Montgomery Child Advocacy Project (MCAP). Judge Ferman wrote two children's books, "The Mouse Who Went Surfing Alone" and "The Mouse Who Beat the Jungle Bullies". Both books were developed as teaching tools to educate youngsters and their parents about dangers online and how to deal with bullies.

Awards recognizing Judge Ferman include: Children's Champion 2015, PA State Chapter of Child Advocacy Centers and Multi-Disciplinary Teams, 2015 MCAP Salute to Heroes; 2015 Mission Kids Honoree, 2015 Montgomery County Black Law Enforcement Officers Association Lifetime Achievement; 2015 Martin Luther King Community Service Award for "Back On Track" Youth Mentoring Program, 2015 Honoree Children's Crisis Treatment Center, 2014 Girl Scouts "Take The Lead" Award; 2013 Aspen Institute's Aspen-Rodel Fellowship in Public Leadership; 2012 L'Oreal Paris USA National Honoree/Women of Worth; 2012 Alan Lerner Child Advocacy Award-Field Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the 2010 National Children's Advocacy Center Award, and the 2003 Montgomery Bar Association Louis D. Stefan Law Enforcement Award.

Judge Ferman was appointed to complete the unexpired term of former Board member, Judge Mia R. Perez, who left the Board to serve as a Federal District Court Judge for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Created by constitutional amendment in 1993, the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania is an independent board within the judicial branch of the Commonwealth's government responsible for reviewing, investigating, and, where warranted, prosecuting 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.

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

END