

2026 Recent Developments by the Judiciary

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Michele Avery received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin – Superior in 1995 and a Master's in Business Administration from Louisiana State University in 1998. Ms. Avery joined Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC (CPAs and Advisors) in 2024 and now serves as a Partner in the firm's Consulting practice, where she is responsible for providing consulting, forensic and valuation services to clients. Prior to joining Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC, Ms. Avery was a Director of Forensic and Valuation Services at a local CPA firm. She has over 20 years of experience providing consulting, forensic and valuation services in areas including: business valuation, analysis of complex financial transactions, identification of hidden assets, quality of earnings reviews, and calculating and refuting lost profits and other financial damages related to shareholder disputes, marital dissolutions, personal injuries, wrongful termination, product and professional liabilities, contract disputes, business interruptions, expropriations, and unjust enrichment. Michele is licensed as a Certified Public Accountant in the State of Louisiana. She is accredited in Business Valuation by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants ("AICPA"). She is also a Certified Valuation Analyst and a Master Analyst in Financial Forensics through the National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts. Ms. Avery is a member of the AICPA, the Louisiana Society of Certified Public Accountants, and the Association for Corporate Growth. In 2025 Governor Landry of Louisiana appointed her to the Louisiana State Board of CPAs.

J. Bert Babington is an attorney at Cook, Yancey, King & Galloway, APLC. Mr. Babington's litigation practice includes general commercial litigation and litigation involving oil and gas companies, in both state and federal court. Mr. Babington spent many years in his previous career working in the title insurance industry, as well as serving in the United States Army Reserve. He achieved the rank of Sergeant in the Army and served two tours of duty in Iraq and Kuwait, before being honorably discharged from service in May 2020. After returning to school to obtain a law degree, Mr. Babington received his Juris Doctor and Diploma in Comparative Law from the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University. He graduated *summa cum laude* and was inducted into the prestigious Order of the Coif. During law school, Mr. Babington served as Managing Editor of the LSU Journal of Energy Law and Resources and competed in the National Energy & Sustainability Moot Court Competition, receiving the runner-up award for best brief. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2021 and served as law clerk to Chief Judge S. Maurice Hicks, Jr. of the United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana. He joined the firm in 2022.

Luke Britt is a partner of CRI Advisors, LLC, Luke Britt leads the Advanced Planning Practice for its wealth planning group, Level Four Financial. In this role he serves business owners and ultra-high-net-worth families and their advisors by creating plans that solve complex problems in the areas of tax, estate, and business succession planning. A key part of his practice is integrated estate planning, a process that brings professional advisors together to deliver clear, data-driven recommendations and strategies to his clients. Luke also leads the Level Four Business Solutions practice. This work is focused on helping business owners enhance their company's value with strategic consulting engagements in the areas of tax planning, employee retention & executive benefit planning, and exit/transition planning. Luke is well respected in the industry and is a sought-after speaker, nationwide, on the topics of estate planning, income tax planning, business planning, and charitable giving. He currently serves on the Board for Forum 400, a historic group of the nation's best life insurance advisors and is an active member of Finseca and the Dallas Estate Planning Council. Luke continues to be named by Forbes, in collaboration with SHOOK Research, as one of the Top Financial Security Professionals in the state of Texas.

Meredith Bro is an associate attorney at Pettiette, Armand, Dunkelman, Woodley & Cromwell, L.L.P. Her practice focuses on large loss, complex cases, industrial and oilfield accidents, products liability, construction and insurance coverage litigation, and first-party property insurance claims. Meredith obtained her Juris Doctorate from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law in 2019. In law school, she served as the Managing Editor of the Loyola Maritime Law Journal, case summary contributor for the Loyola Current, and a brief writer and oralist for the National Environmental Moot Court Team. Following law school, Meredith served as a Judicial Law Clerk at the Caddo Parish First Judicial District Court for the Honorable Judge Katherine C. Dorroh and the Honorable Judge Michael A. Pitman. Meredith is admitted to practice in Louisiana.

Drew Burnham is a shareholder at Cook, Yancey, King & Galloway, APLC. Drew has a diverse practice in both civil litigation and transactional work. However, much of his practice involves assisting oil and gas operators and pipeline companies in their transactions, all manner of litigation, and in permitting before the Office of Conservation. He graduated magna cum laude from Centenary College of Louisiana and from LSU with his law degree, where he was Order of the Coif. After law school, he served as law clerk to the Honorable Elizabeth E. Foote, U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana. Drew is admitted to practice in both Louisiana and Texas.

Honorable Edwin Henry Byrd, III is a graduate of Louisiana State University Law Center, where he graduated Order of the Coif and was Senior Editor of the Louisiana Law Review. He served as law clerk to the Honorable Tom Stagg, United States District Judge. He was a founding partner of Pettiette, Armand, Dunkelman, Woodley & Cromwell where his practice primarily consisted of civil litigation defense in state courts involving civil rights, employment, and general casualty matters. He has been a district judge at the First Judicial District Court since August, 2022, currently assigned to Domestic Section F.

Elizabeth Mendell Carmody is special counsel at the law firm of Cook, Yancey where she practiced with the firm from 2000 through 2002 and rejoined the firm in 2009. Elizabeth represents employers of all sizes in the private and public sectors and primarily represents management's interests in almost all aspects of labor and employment law. She also represents local government entities in Louisiana, including sheriffs, municipalities, and police juries. She also regularly handles insurance defense litigation. She is licensed in Louisiana and Texas, is A/V rated and has been listed in Best Lawyers in America Employment Law - Management since 2018. A native of Lafayette, she received her B.A. from Newcomb College of Tulane University in 1995. She graduated from LSU Law School in 1998. She served as a law clerk for United States District Judge Donald E. Walter from 1999 to 2000 and 2002 to 2008. She also served as a law clerk for United States District Judge Rebecca Doherty in Lafayette from 1998 to 1999. She is the Shreveport Bar Association President, first vice president of the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel and former president of the Shreveport Bar Foundation and the Red Mas Society. Elizabeth is a Team Leader in the local Inn of Court. She is also a member of the LSBA Ethics Advisory Service Committee

Justice Cade R. Cole was elected without opposition to the Louisiana Supreme Court in 2025. He represents the Third District covering Western Louisiana. Prior to his election to the Supreme Court, he served as Louisiana's first state and local tax judge. Justice Cole graduated with honors from DeQuincy High School, Tulane University, and the Tulane School of Law. In law school he received the CALI Award for highest performance in Obligations II, Income Taxation, Energy Regulation and Public Utility law. After law school, he served as a law clerk to Justice Jeannette T. Knoll at the Louisiana Supreme Court before entering private practice in Lake Charles. His legal practice involved complex business and tax litigation along with work as appellate counsel for a wide variety of cases. Justice Cole trained as a mediator at Pepperdine's Straus Institute and successfully mediated over 1,500 cases. He was asked by other state and federal judges to serve as Special Master and to design the program to expedite the handling of over

10,000 Hurricane Laura lawsuits. As Tax Judge, he handled a docket involving billions in disputed taxes while also leading efforts to improve procedural fairness for taxpayers. Those successful efforts were recognized with Louisiana being named the “Most Improved State” by the Council of State Taxation moving up from last in the nation to being tied for 9th best. Justice Cole was previously an assistant district attorney, city attorney for Sulphur and Vinton, and served his hometown, DeQuincy, as city magistrate. He previously served as a member of the Louisiana Service Commission and Louisiana Tax Institute. He is a board-certified tax law specialist and chaired the Board of Legal Specialization's Tax Law Advisory Commission. He served the Louisiana State Bar Association as Tax Section Chair, House of Delegates member, and on the CLE programming committee. Justice Cole is a Past President of the Southwest Louisiana Federal Bar Association and a former board member of the Acadiana FBA. He also served on the senatorial vetting committee for Louisiana federal judicial nominees and as chair of the U.S. Magistrate Judge selection committee for the U.S. District Court for Western Louisiana. Justice Cole was awarded the bar association's Outstanding Service Award in 2013 for work to improve indigent defense funding in Southwest Louisiana. He also organized the Ranch Collective to support McNeese student athletes. Justice Cole is married to Rebekah Cole, a former chemical engineer who is now a PTO leader, member of the Parent Advisory Commission for Calcasieu Parish Schools, and diligent volunteer for countless school and community causes. They have four children and reside in Lake Charles.

Honorable (Ret) Scott Crichton having completed a ten-year term as Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court, Scott Crichton is Of Counsel for the Law Offices of Mary Watson Smith, LLC, a firm focused on appellate advocacy in complex areas of civil law and also has a formal association with the law firm of Sternberg, Naccari & White, LLC, focusing on legal ethics, judicial ethics, discipline and other professional matters. Further, he serves clients through Scott J. Crichton Law, LLC, operating offices in Shreveport and New Orleans. Finally, he is both a mediator and arbitrator with Perry Dampf Dispute Solutions. While on the State's high court, Scott chaired the Executive Committee as well as the Louisiana Judicial College; he was also the Court's statutory designee to the Louisiana Sheriffs' Executive Management Institute Board. He is the recipient of the 2022 Judge Benjamin Jones Judges in the Classroom Award, and the 2024 President's Award from the Louisiana Judicial College Board of Governors in recognition of his years of service to judicial education. For five years, as an adjunct faculty member at Tulane Law School, he taught two 3L courses, Advanced Appellate Advocacy and Contemporary Issues in Legal Ethics, publishing coursebooks on each subject. He has also served on the faculty of the LSU Law Center Trial Advocacy Program. Prior to his election to the Supreme Court, Scott served 24 years as a judge with the First Judicial District Court (Shreveport/Caddo Parish), presiding in both civil and criminal divisions. From 1980-1990, Scott had an extensive civil and criminal litigation practice. Scott credits his parents, Tom (owner, hardware store/cattle rancher) and Mary (homemaker and life master, bridge), with teaching and instilling virtues of humility, education, and a commitment of service to community, all of which have guided him throughout life. Scott, age 71, and his wife, Susie, have two sons (both of whom are lawyers) and twin granddaughters!

Judge Danny Ellender serves on the Second Circuit Court of Appeal. Prior to beginning his term in January of 2023, Judge Ellender served for 14 years as a District Judge on the Fourth Judicial District Court for Morehouse and Ouachita parishes. A graduate of the Louisiana Judicial Leadership Institute, Judge Ellender has been active on various state-wide boards for the administration of justice, including serving on the Louisiana State Law Institute, the Judicial Council of the Louisiana Supreme Court, the Supreme Court's Committee on Judicial Ethics, the Board of Governors for Louisiana's Judicial College, and the Louisiana District Judges Association Executive Committee. Judge Ellender and his wife, Amy, are the proud parents of six children and four grandchildren. They are active members of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Bastrop.

Melissa Fox received her undergraduate degree at Tulane University and her Juris Doctorate degree from Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University. She began her career as a law clerk for the 26th Judicial District Court in 2008 and was named Senior Staff Attorney in 2012. Mrs. Fox was appointed as Judicial Administrator by the 26th Judicial District Court, in January 2015. She was named one of the Top 15 Under 40 Young Professionals by the Minden South Webster Chamber of Commerce in 2015 and is a past president of the Minden Junior Service League. Mrs. Fox is a member of the Louisiana Court Administrators Association where she currently serves as Chair of the State Rules Committee and is a member of the Rules Committee with the Louisiana Supreme Court. She is also a member of the Shreveport, Bossier and Louisiana Bar Associations.

Sarah Midboe Hood was raised in Baton Rouge and graduated from McKinley Senior High School in 1997. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Louisiana Tech University in 2001 and her Juris Doctorate and Bachelor of Civil Law degrees from the Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center in 2004. Upon graduation, Sarah served as the judicial law clerk for the Thirtieth Judicial District Court, located in Leesville, Louisiana. In 2006, she joined the Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office and served in many roles during her sixteen-year tenure as an Assistant District Attorney. Some of her work included serving as the Section Chief of the Criminal Drug Section and Section Chief of Criminal Offenses, Section Three. Her last six years in the District Attorney's Office, she was the sole prosecutor of Child in Need of Care ("CINC") cases for Caddo Parish. In 2022, she joined the Caddo Parish Juvenile Court as the Deputy Judicial Administrator and Hearing Officer. In February 2026, Sarah accepted a position as a Hearing Officer and Staff Attorney for the Twenty-Sixth Judicial District, serving Bossier and Webster Parishes. Sarah is married to Michael Hood, who recently retired as the Chief of Fire Prevention and Bomb Squad Commander for the Shreveport Fire Department and is currently the Director of the Foster Ministry for Cypress Baptist Church. They have two children and reside in Benton.

Whitney E. Howell Whitney Howell is the Career Law Clerk to Judge Maury Hicks in the Western District of Louisiana, Shreveport Division. She has served in this capacity for 21 years. In 2020, when Judge Hicks was Chief Judge of the District, Whitney served as a member of the COVID jury trial committee for the Western District and was part of a team who assisted the Court in ensuring the continuity of operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whitney is originally from Minden and has lived in Shreveport since 2003. She graduated summa cum laude from LSU in 2000 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. In 2003, she graduated from the Paul M. Hebert Law Center where she served as a Senior Editor of the Louisiana Law Review and was Order of the Coif. Prior to her career clerkship with Judge Hicks, she practiced law at Cook, Yancey, King and Galloway and served as a term law clerk to Judge Tom Stagg. She has been active in the North Louisiana Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, the Shreveport Bar Association, Harry V. Booth and Judge Henry A. Politz Inn of Court, and the Krewe of Justinian. She also serves as a First Assistant Bar Examiner for Federal Jurisdiction and Procedure. Whitney is married to Jeff Howell and they have a sixteen year old son, Gray. In her free time, she enjoys watching Gray play baseball, beach and lake trips, and playing Mahjong. She also volunteers regularly with the Volunteers of America, First Methodist Church of Shreveport, and various organizations associated with C.E. Byrd High School.

Allison Anne Jones received her undergraduate degree from LSU in 1982 and Juris Doctorate from LSU Paul M. Herbert Law Center in 1985. She currently practices with the law firm Downer, Jones, Marino & Wilhite, LLC in Shreveport, Louisiana. Ms. Jones is a member of the National and Louisiana Employment Lawyers Associations and is a past Chair of the Louisiana State Bar Association Labor and Employment Law Section. Ms. Jones is a member of and has served as President of three bar associations: (i) the Bar Association of the Fifth Federal Circuit, (ii) the Harry V. Booth and Henry A. Politz American Inn of Court, and (iii) the Shreveport Bar Association. She currently serves as (i) Co-Chair of the Louisiana Law Institute Committee on Employment and Labor Law (ii) Member of the Lawyers' Advisory Committee for the United States Court of Appeal for the Fifth Circuit and (iii) Chair of the LSU Law Alumni Board of Trustees. She also has been invited to join several honorary professional organizations, including, but not limited to, the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, Litigation Counsel of America (trial lawyer honor society composed of less than one half percent of American Lawyers) and the Million-Dollar Advocates Forum. A significant part of her practice includes representing plaintiffs in employment discrimination cases. She has successfully mediated, settled and litigated hundreds of employment cases. In 1995, she was counsel for plaintiff in the gender discrimination/retaliation case of Melody Olson v. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tried in federal court in Monroe, Louisiana where she obtained a 3.2-million-dollar jury verdict which was affirmed on appeal. Ms. Jones also successfully represented women seeking admittance into the Southern Trace Country Club "Men's Grille," and she has handled Title IX litigation ensuring equal funding for female sports numerous parishes in the State of Louisiana. Ms. Jones also served as trial counsel for Patricia Powell in prosecuting her claims against the Rapides Parish School Board for revocation of tenure resulting in a final judgment in the amount of \$1,147,732.00, which decision was upheld on appeal. She also recently tried and won a jury trial representing Shelby Webb Cox against Mignon Faget, Ltd on claims of pregnancy discrimination and violations of the Family Medical Leave Act. Ms. Jones does not limit her practice to civil rights work as her practice also includes commercial litigation. In this respect, Ms. Jones has served as counsel for several debtors in Chapter 11 reorganizations in the bankruptcy court for the Western District of Louisiana serving as lead counsel in prosecuting claims on behalf of the reorganized bankrupt estate of Whitaker Construction, Inc. against the City of Shreveport for work done on the Independence Stadium, resulting in a jury verdict of nearly \$800,000.00, which verdict was affirmed on appeal. Ms. Jones has also tried several jury trials involving oil and gas disputes. Ms. Jones devotes a significant part of her time to community activities. She served as Alderman and Mayor Pro Temp for the Town of Blanchard from 1990-2014, was a member and Chair of the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency from 2005-2012 during post-Katrina rebuilding, and she is deeply committed to affordable housing advocacy. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting. Ms. Jones was recently selected as the recipient of the 2023 Professionalism Award given by the Shreveport Bar Association. This award is given annually to attorneys whose practice and personal conduct exemplify the highest level of integrity, dedication, and honor in the practice of law as judged by the Shreveport Bar Association.

William F. Kendig Jr. is a partner at the law firm of Rice and Kendig Injury Lawyers where he practices in the areas of personal injury. Bill received his Bachelor of Science at the University of Utah and earned his Juris Doctorate from Juris Doctor, Paul M. Hebert Law School. He is a member of the Shreveport Bar Association and was President in 2013. He is a Monitor for the Lawyers and Judges Assistance Committee and has extensive experience in state and federal courts and has argued cases before Louisiana Courts of Appeal and Supreme Court.

Andrea Manrique is the Judicial Education Coordinator and Liaison for OurFamilyWizard in Louisiana, where she works with family law professionals to share tools that improve communication and help reduce co-parenting conflict. She recently completed her advanced family mediation training and is passionate about supporting professionals and the families they serve.

Judge Craig Marcotte is a native of Shreveport. He attended Jesuit High School and obtained his undergraduate degree from Louisiana Tech University. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Paul M. Hebert School of Law at Louisiana State University. Judge Marcotte practiced law in Lafayette, Natchitoches, and then with the Shreveport firm of Hubley, Marcotte, Rhodes, and Hussy before taking the bench. Judge Marcotte served in civil and criminal sections at the First Judicial District Court from 2009-2022. Judge Marcotte was elected to the Second Circuit Court of Appeal in March 2022.

Patricia Miramon graduated from Byrd High School in 1979, and attended the University of the South and Centenary College where she obtained her degree in English Literature in 1982. In 1985 she received her law degree from LSU and was admitted to the bar that same year. She opened her own office in 1988. Since then her focus has been primarily in the field of Elder law. She is an experienced trial attorney and can handle contested and complex cases. She is also the founder of Lagniappe Fiduciary Services. Over the years, she has received numerous awards including the #1 Retiree Attorney Award from the Barksdale Air Force Base Retiree Office and has been named one of SB Magazine's Top Attorneys. She is a member of the National Association of Elder Law Attorneys, Women's Philanthropy Network, and a Sustainer in the Junior League. In her spare time, Patricia enjoys reading and traveling, especially to Central America. She also enjoys spending time with her husband, three adult children, two grandchildren, and black lab Ce-Ce.

Jason Nichols is an attorney at Rice & Kendig, LLC. Prior to joining Rice & Kendig in 2021, he was a shareholder at Cook, Yancey, King & Galloway, where he practiced for 17 years. He graduated from Centenary College in 2000 and LSU Law School in 2003. After law school, he clerked for the Honorable Donald E. Walter, United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana. His practice consists of representing plaintiffs in personal injury cases.

Honorable Frances Pitman received a Bachelor of Arts from LSU-Shreveport and a Master of Communication Disorders from LSU Health Sciences Center. She also holds a Juris Doctorate from LSU Law Center. Before attending law school, Judge Pitman was a speech-language pathologist, special education teacher and a member of the medical/educational diagnostic team at the LSU Health Sciences Center, Children's Center. Prior to her election to the Second Circuit Court of Appeal in November 2012, Judge Pitman was a district judge for four years at the First Judicial District Court. Before becoming a judge, Judge Pitman was an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Louisiana, in charge of the North Louisiana Civil Division. Judge Pitman has litigated civil and criminal cases throughout North Louisiana and has authored hundreds of Attorney General Opinions. She was also a certified Family Law Mediator. She has been the co-chair of the Shreveport Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Programs and is an active member in The Harry V. Booth-Judge Henry A. Politz American Inn of Court. Recently, she became the Chief Judge of the Second Circuit Court of Appeal and is the chairman of the Louisiana Conference of Court of Appeal Judges. Judge Pitman and her husband, Judge Mike Pitman, are founders of and instructors for "*Kick It Up*," a Christian martial arts program for children at Summer Grove Baptist Church and "*Don't Be A Victim*," a safety training program for senior citizens, women and children. She is a first degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, an avid tennis player and has competed in a number of marathons and triathlons. She has one daughter and two granddaughters.

Honorable Michael Pitman was first elected to the First Judicial District Court in 2003. He has a Bachelor of Business Administration from Baylor University and a Juris Doctorate from Louisiana State University Law Center. Judge Pitman served as an Assistant District Attorney in Caddo and Bossier Parishes, where he prosecuted high-profile felonies. He also had a civil legal practice, was a Certified Family Law Mediator and taught criminal law at LSU-Shreveport for nine years. Judge Pitman is a National Judicial College Certified Instructor and often lectures for the Louisiana Judicial College, the Shreveport Bar Association and other legal associations. Judge Pitman is a past President of the Louisiana Judicial College Board of Governors. He was appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to serve on the District Court Rules Committee and the Committee to Study Post-Conviction Procedures. He also served as the Co-Chairman for the Shreveport Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Committee for many years. He is an active member of the Harry V. Booth and Judge Henry A. Politz American Inn of Court and currently serves as its Secretary/Treasurer. Judge Pitman previously served in the Criminal and Family Law Divisions of the First Judicial District Court. He currently sits in the Civil Division, Section C. Judge Pitman is a black belt in Tae-Kwon Do and an avid multi-sport athlete. He has completed over 20 marathons including the Boston Marathon in 1999 and 2016, and countless triathlons including Ironman Canada in 1998 and Ironman Florida in 2010. He has a passion for wellness and helping others live a healthier lifestyle.

Chris A. Procell received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Louisiana State University Shreveport in 2012 and his Master of Business Administration, also from LSUS, in 2016. He graduated from University of North Texas at Dallas College of Law in 2021 in the top 10% of his class. While attending law school, he was awarded multiple CALI Awards for achieving the top grade in a particular class. As part of his law school's curriculum, he worked as a temporarily licensed student attorney in the school's Community Lawyering Center, providing indigent clients representation in their family law matters. He is also a founding charter member of the UNT Dallas College of Law – Royal Furgeson Inn of Phi Delta Phi, the international legal honor society. Mr. Procell is a member of both the Shreveport and Louisiana Bar Associations and is admitted to practice before any Louisiana state court. He is also a member of both the Dallas and Texas Bar Associations and is admitted to practice before any Texas state court. He is a member of the Louisiana Association for Justice and active in its workers' compensation and auto-accident sections. He represents plaintiffs in personal injury and workers' compensation claims.

Honorable Doug Stinson serves on the 26th Judicial District Court – Bossier and Webster Parishes. He was elected in March of 2022 and sworn in on April 18, 2022. He was selected as Chief Judge of the 26th JDC in August of 2026. Prior to being elected, Judge Stinson served as an Assistant District Attorney in Bossier Parish for nearly ten years. Judge Stinson also maintained a civil law practice, served as the attorney for the Town of Benton and the DeSoto Parish Sheriff's Office, and was a regular instructor at the Bossier Parish Sheriff's Training Academy. Judge Stinson is a graduate of LSU-Baton Rouge and the LSU Law Center. He is the proud father of three children.

Charles E. Tabor is the founding attorney of Tabor Law Firm, bringing nearly two decades of dedicated legal experience to personal injury victims throughout Louisiana. A native of Homer, Louisiana, Charles earned his undergraduate degree *cum laude* from Louisiana State University in Shreveport before graduating *magna cum laude* from the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University. His legal scholarship includes authored publications in the *Journal of Civil Law Studies* (2009) and the *Louisiana Law Review* (2008). Outside of the courtroom, Charles is a devoted family man who shares his life with his wife and their four children. He is also an avid sailor and an accomplished oil painter.

Julia M. Todd graduated from Byrd High School in 2010. She attended the University of Mississippi and graduated with a degree in accounting in 2013. She worked in oil and gas accounting before attending law school at Louisiana State University and is a licensed CPA. Julia is a member of the National Association of Elder Law Attorneys, Shreveport Bossier Bar Association, The Young Lawyers and Women's Sections of the Shreveport Bar Association, and The Harry V. Booth-Judge Henry A. Politz American Inn of Court. Julia is also a member of Junior League of Shreveport-Bossier. Julia has become focused on letting people know that everyone, regardless of age, needs an estate plan. Julia and her husband Tripp are the proud parents of two young children. Julia enjoys being outside and spending time with her extended family and friends. She also loves running, reading anything she can get her hands on, and traveling.

Josh M. Trahan Josh interacts with a variety of clients in the government, not-for-profit, manufacturing, and construction industry. He has years of experience providing audits for defined contribution retirement, defined benefit health, and welfare plans. Josh works closely with his clients and is determined to get to know them on a deeper level so their interactions are more personable. He strives to provide them with information that is relevant to their business throughout the entire year, even outside of the audit engagement. Josh enjoys working with his clients and helping them understand that his focus is on taking care of their weaknesses so they can focus on their strength.

Honorable Alexander C. Van Hook currently serves as United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana in the Shreveport Division. Judge Van Hook was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on January 8, 2026. Before becoming a United States District Judge, he served as First Assistant United States Attorney with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Louisiana, where he handled a wide range of cases, including public corruption, OCDETF (Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force) prosecutions, money laundering, white collar crime, and asset forfeiture, as well as oversight of the civil division cases. During his tenure there from 1999 to 2025, he also served as Acting United States Attorney from 2017-2018, 2020-2021, and January-September 2025. Prior to that, he worked as a judicial law clerk to United States District Judge Tom Stagg in the Western District of Louisiana and worked as a judicial law clerk for Chief Judge Henry A. Politz in the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. He received his undergraduate degree from Centenary College of Louisiana and his law degree from the Paul Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University where he was an Associate on the Louisiana Law Review and was made a member of the Louisiana Chapter of the Order of the Coif.