

PRESS RELEASE

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Iowa is pleased to announce that the Court has selected Charles J. (“C.J.”) Williams of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for the position of United States Magistrate Judge upon the confirmation of Magistrate Judge Leonard T. Strand as a United States District Court Judge.

In accordance with 28 U.S.C. Section 631 and the Regulations of the Judicial Conference of the United States Establishing Standards and Procedures for the Appointment and Reappointment of United States Magistrate Judges, the District Court published a public notice and appointed a Merit Selection Panel to assess the qualifications of applicants for the position. The Merit Selection Panel considered each applicant’s character, judgment, legal ability, temperament and commitment to equal justice under the law and, after conducting interviews, forwarded the names of the five lawyers that they decided were the most qualified to the District Court. After assessing the qualifications of each of the five applicants and conducting interviews, the District Court judges selected Mr. Williams.

Attorney John Gray of Sioux City chaired the Merit Selection Panel. Other members of the Panel were Stuart Cochrane, attorney from Fort Dodge; Jay Denne, attorney from Sioux City; Tim Duax, attorney from Sioux City; Priscilla Forsyth, attorney from Sioux City; Brad Hansen, attorney from Sioux City; Tim Hill, attorney from Cedar Rapids; Patrick “P.J.” Jennings, attorney from Sioux City; Barb Knepper, community member from Sioux City; Paul Lundberg, attorney from Sioux City; Amy Macfarlane, community member from Sioux City; Maria Rundquist, community member from Sioux City; and Corey Wrenn, community member from Sioux City.

Mr. Williams was born in 1963 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He graduated from the College of Business Administration at the University of Iowa, receiving a B.B.A. with high distinction. He attended the University of Iowa College of Law, earning a J.D. with high distinction in 1988. While a student, he was an Associate Editor of the Iowa Law Review, an Editor on the Moot Court Board and received numerous academic honors. Following graduation, Mr. Williams served as an elbow law clerk for the late Donald E. O’Brien, United States District Court Judge for the Northern District of Iowa. In 1990, Mr. Williams joined the United States Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. as a trial attorney and worked as a prosecutor in the United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Virginia on a one-year detail. Following his two years with the Department of Justice, Mr. Williams joined the law firm of Lathrop & Gage, L.C. in Kansas City, Missouri, specializing in civil and criminal trial work. In 1997, Mr. Williams earned an L.L.M. with an emphasis in criminal law from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. In 1997, he joined the United States Attorney’s Office in the Northern District of Iowa as an Assistant United States Attorney. During 2010 and 2011, Mr. Williams was detailed to the Capital Case Section of the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. where he assisted attorneys in other judicial districts with capital litigation and authored a manual regarding mental health issues in capital cases. He currently serves as Senior Litigation Counsel in the United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Iowa, carrying a significant criminal case load as well as serving as the legal training officer for attorneys and other law enforcement officers and assisting other attorneys with complex or difficult criminal or civil litigation.

Mr. Williams has received numerous awards for his work from the Department of Justice and law enforcement. In 2014, he was awarded the Richard S. Arnold Award for Distinguished Service and Lifetime Achievement after being nominated by the judges of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Iowa. He was voted into membership in the Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers in 2013.

Teaching and writing have also been prominent in Mr. Williams's career. He has been an adjunct professor at the University of Iowa College of Law since 2001, teaching the Federal Criminal Practice course and Federal White Collar Crime course. He taught federal criminal law at the University of Missouri-Kansas City for a year. From 2000 to the present, he has delivered lectures on a variety of topics at the United States Department of Justice National Advocacy Center. In addition to writing a number of law review articles on criminal and civil topics, he is currently co-authoring a book for West Publishing Company titled Federal Criminal Practice.

Mr. Williams was an Iowa Legal Aid volunteer from 1998-2010, representing victims of domestic abuse in hearings involving the violation of no-contact orders. Since 1997, he has been a volunteer judge and trainer in mock trial competitions at the law school, college, high school, middle school and elementary school levels.

The office of magistrate judge was established by the Federal Magistrates Act of 1968, enacted by Congress to create a new federal judicial officer who would conduct a wide range of judicial proceedings to expedite the disposition of the civil and criminal caseloads of the United States district courts. The authority that a magistrate judge exercises is the jurisdiction of the district court itself, delegated to the magistrate judge by the district judges of the court under governing statutory authority and local rules of court.