

Application for Judicial Vacancy Indiana Appellate Courts

PART ONE

This document will become a matter of public record and may be published on the courts.in.gov website once your application is complete, so do not include confidential information that must be redacted.

1. Contact/General Information

A. Full legal name and any former names.

Stephen Edward Scheele

B. State the full name (use initials for minor children), age, and relationship of each person residing in your household. For each adult living in the household (other than yourself), also state the person's occupation and employer.

1) Christine Michele Scheele; 53; spouse. Occupation: licensed physical therapist. Currently not employed (by choice/stay-at-home mom);

2) NSS; 16; son;

3) EGS; 14; daughter.

C. Business address, email, and telephone number.

Business Address: Lake Superior Court/Room 5
232 Russell Street
Hammond, IN 46320

E-mail: sscheele@lakecountyin.org

Telephone numbers: land: (219) 933-2880; cell: (219) 718-5668

D. Attorney number.

19685-45

E. Month and year you were admitted to the Indiana Bar.

January, 1997

a. Indicate current law license status (i.e. active/inactive/retired).

Active

b. If you are or have been a member of the Bar of any other state, identify the jurisdiction and provide date(s) of admission and current license status.

I have never been a member of any other state's bar. Other (non-state) jurisdictions:

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Indiana: 01/06/1997; active;

U.S. District Court, Southern District of Indiana: 03/17/2011; active;

U.S. Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit: 06/22/2000; active.

F. Date and place of birth.

02/24/1971, Chicago, Illinois.

G. County of current residence and date you first became a resident.

Lake County, Indiana. I became a resident of Lake County in 1973, when I was 2 years old.

2. Secondary Education/Military Experience

A. List all undergraduate colleges and universities you attended. Include the school name; dates enrolled; degree or certificate earned; and any academic honors, awards, or scholarships you received and when. **As part of your Supplemental Materials, provide a transcript—including a certified transcript for your original hard copy—for each school listed; redact your Social Security number if it appears on the transcript.*

- University of Denver; 1989-1993; B.A. (1993); honors/awards/scholarships/etc.:

* *Magna Cum Laude* – GPA: 3.87/4.00;

* Triple Major: Political Science, International Studies, German;

* Political Science Departmental Honors; Honors Thesis: *Assessing the United States Sentencing Commission's Mandatory Federal Sentencing Guidelines* (1993);

* Legal Internship: 10th Circuit Federal Clerk of Court, Denver, Colorado (Fall 1991);

- * President, Graduating Class of 1993;
 - * President, Beta Theta Pi Fraternity (1992-1993); Treasurer (1991-1992);
 - * John Reilly Knox Memorial Scholarship (1992);
 - * University of Denver tuition grant (1989-1990);
 - * Various undergraduate academic/university/Greek life honors/awards/achievements (e.g., Dean’s Honor Roll, Student Orientation Leader, Student Council; Distinguished Senior Man; Senior Greek Man)(1989-1993).
- University of Leipzig, Germany – Herder Institute: Full summer 1992 scholarship and stipend for overseas study in recently-reunified Germany, sponsored by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD): 200+ course hour intensive language and culture courses (the equivalent of 20 transfer hours of German language credit was granted by my home University of Denver, which opened the door for me to capture a 3rd undergraduate major in German).

My University of Denver (D.U.) transcript is included within the Supplemental Materials. The D.U. transcript references the 20 hours of transfer credit from the DAAD’s University of Leipzig 1992 summer semester; to the best of my knowledge, no formal transcript from the University of Leipzig exists.

- B. If applicable, list any military service. Include the name of the military branch; dates of service; last rank achieved; and any honors, awards, or commendations received and when. **As part of your Supplemental Materials, provide a copy of your Certificate of Release or Discharge from active duty (“DD 214” paperwork).*

Not applicable.

3. Post-Secondary Education

- A. List all law schools, graduate schools, and post-J.D. programs attended. Include the school name; dates enrolled; degree or certificate earned; class rank; and any academic honors, awards, or scholarships you received and when. **As part of your Supplemental Materials, provide a transcript—including a certified transcript for your original hard copy—for each school listed; redact your Social Security number if it appears on the transcript.*
- Indiana University/Bloomington (now known as the Maurer School of Law); 1993-1996; J.D. (1996); class rank: unknown/untracked (The I.U. Maurer School of Law’s Office of Student

Affairs informed me on 05/13/2024 that they have a policy of not tracking or providing class ranks); GPA: 3.11/4.00; honors/awards/scholarships/etc.:

- * Glenn D. Peters Scholar (1995-1996);
- * *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, Managing Editor (1995-1996); Associate (1994-1995);
- * Sherman Minton Moot Court (1994-1995);
- * Samuel L. Mitchell Memorial Fellow (1994-1995);
- * Various law school academic/organization achievements (e.g., Dean's Honor Roll, Inmate Legal Assistance Clinic, Student Law Association, Delta Theta Phi Legal/Academic Fraternity; ABA Student Representative)(1993-1996).

My Indiana University/Maurer School of Law transcript is included within the Supplemental Materials.

- German Academic Exchange Service/Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD); 1996-1997; Young Lawyer Program, a 10-month Post-JD Legal Fellowship sponsored by the German Department of Education: scholarship and stipend for legal studies and work at the University of Tübingen, German Ministry of Justice (Düsseldorf, Germany) and a Berlin law firm (October 1996 - August 1997).
- As for other post-JD programs: Since becoming licensed, I have consistently exceeded all continuing legal and judicial education requirements as set by our Indiana Supreme Court and monitored by its Office of Admissions and Continuing Education. This training resume, spanning 1997-present, is extensive; highlights include:
 - * Judicial Officer Faculty, Spring 2024 Spring Judicial College, Indiana Office of Court Services;
 - * Judicial Officer Faculty, Spring 2023 Spring Judicial College, Indiana Office of Court Services;
 - * Judicial Leadership and Climate Science, 2022, National Judicial College/Reno, NV and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, MA;
 - * General Jurisdiction Orientation Program for Judicial Officers, 2020-2021, Indiana Office of Court Services;
 - * General Jurisdiction Orientation Program for Judicial Officers, 2017, Indiana Office of Court Services;
 - * Indiana Death Penalty Certification, 2005-2016, Indiana Public Defender Commission;

- * Federal Practice and Strategies (Boston/2004, San Diego/2006, San Antonio/2016), Administrative Office of the United States Courts;
- * 42 U.S.C. §1983 Civil Rights Litigation, 2001, Kent College of Law/Chicago.

Since taking the Room 5 bench, I have also attended every Spring Judicial College, Fall Judicial Conference and Winter Judicial Workshop offered by our Indiana Office of Court Services.

- Indiana Judicial College, Graduate, 2021. Dovetailing with my continuing judicial education noted above, this certification is awarded to a judicial officer upon completing 120 hours of judicial education through the Indiana Office of Court Services.
- Graduate Program for Indiana Judges, Student, 2024-2025. The Indiana Office of Court Services offers an academically-intensive, two-week graduate school for select judicial officers. I am honored to have been accepted into the 2024-2025 graduate class. The program is currently underway; in-person orientation and the first week of classes commence in French Lick on June 16. The second week of classes and graduation will occur in June, 2025.

4. Employment

A. Provide your employment history since graduation from college. Include name of employer, titles or positions, locations, and dates of employment.

Lake Superior Court	Judge (Civil/Room 5)	Hammond, IN	2019 – present
Lake Circuit Court	Magistrate	Crown Point, IN	2016 – 2019
Stephen E. Scheele, P.C.	President/Attorney at Law	Highland, IN	2005 - 2016
Office of the Lake County Public Defender	Deputy Public Defender	Crown Point, IN	2005 - 2016
Goodman, Katz & Scheele	Managing Attorney/ Member	Highland, IN	2001 - 2016
Goodman, Ball, Van Bokkelen & Leonard, P.C.	Associate Attorney	Highland, IN	1997 - 2001

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German Academic Exchange Service	Legal Fellow	Germany	1996 - 1997
State of IN Military Dept.	Law Clerk	Indianapolis, IN	1995 - 1996
Hilbrich, Cunningham & Schwerd	Law Clerk	Highland, IN	Summer 1995
Lake County Prosecutor's Office	Law Clerk	Crown Point, IN	Summer 1994
Lake County Prosecutor's Office	Victim Witness Intern	Crown Point, IN	Summer 1993

- B. If applicable, describe the nature and extent of your practice of law (present and former), and provide the names of your partners, associates, office mates, and employers.

My practice of law ceased on December 1, 2016, when I was sworn to serve as a judicial officer. To that point, I had practiced for nearly 20 years.

I began as an associate attorney for a Highland, IN law firm in 1997. I transitioned into my own practice in 2001 and thereafter always associated (but never partnered) with other lawyers. My practice was comprised of general civil litigation and criminal defense work in state and federal courts.

My civil practice encompassed a wide range, from minor matters (*e.g.*, one-time consultations, drafts of minor/stand-alone legal documents such as deeds or wills) to more complex litigation (*e.g.*, federal civil rights, receiverships). Clients included insurance companies, governmental entities, a regional bank and various other corporate concerns; I prosecuted and defended their claims in state and federal courts. I occasionally represented plaintiffs in personal injury actions, from run-of-the-mill/insubstantial injury claims to ones entailing great tragedy, including instances of traumatic brain injury and wrongful death. I occasionally represented plaintiffs in prosecuting §1983 or other civil rights claims. In my final years before taking the bench, my practice grew to include clients involved in commercial and residential planning/development. I represented myriad others—individuals and businesses—on matters small and large, mostly in litigation. Administrative work included, among others, appearances before local school boards, local planning commissions and town boards, state professional licensing boards, and administrative reviews of environmental matters.

My criminal defense practice also encompassed all case types, from low misdemeanors to major felonies. Privately, individual criminal defendants engaged me to represent them. Upon court appointment, I also represented indigent defendants in state and federal courts. In federal court, I was a member of the Northern District of Indiana's Criminal Justice Act (CJA) Panel since at least 1999. In state court, I handled public defender appointments since at least 2003. Through the years, I represented individuals charged in state and federal jurisdictions with seemingly every type of crime imaginable.

My clientele was thus an eclectic mix, from municipalities and private corporate concerns to development enterprises, and more. Individual clients crossed the spectrum from "pillar of the community" types and business owners and highly-educated or licensed professionals involved in civil (and some criminal) matters to violent criminals.

I regularly appeared in our state and federal courts. Legal and factual issues spanned the spectrum. Some cases involved dozens of litigants and attorneys, tens of thousands of pages of discovery and hundreds of hours of video/audio/digital discovery. Some cases were high profile. Some cases involved high stakes, and even the death penalty. I lawyered for and against individuals, corporations, government entities and more. I engaged experts of nearly every kind—investigators, interpreters, court reporters, other attorneys, doctors, accountants, scientists and more. I participated in mediations and judicial settlement conferences of all kinds. I tried both civil and criminal cases to juries in both state and federal courts. I litigated appeals through and argued before both our State Court of Appeals and State Supreme Court.

Of course, courtroom appearances, hearings and trials are only part of the practice; much more time as a lawyer is (or should be) spent outside of the courtroom, in the way of case investigation, discovery tasking and review, client/witness interfacing, adversary counsel interfacing, research and preparation of pleadings and legal memoranda, dispositive litigation, alternative dispute resolution, hearing/trial preparation and so much more. Many cases, especially in the civil realm, proceed from inception to conclusion without the need for counsel to physically step into the courtroom. Throughout my years of practice, I was as or more engaged in these activities as I was inside the courtroom.

My practice evolved over the years. My first year after law school (1996-1997) was spent overseas, as a guest of the German government, through a branch of its education department known as the German Academic Exchange Service. This program included 8 months of educational programming on German and European law that included a 5-month externship

with the German Ministry of Justice, followed by a 3-month clerkship in a Berlin law firm. I returned to the U.S. in September, 1997, to practice with the Goodman, Ball & Van Bokkelen law firm, which specialized in insurance defense, family law and federal practice. A reason for my hire was to back up our insurance defense partner, Frederick J. Ball; throughout the late 1990's, a bulk of my work was doing insurance defense litigation. That law firm dissolved in 2001, whereupon I went into practice for myself, in association with Attorneys Samuel J. Goodman and J. Michael Katz. The name of our legal association was Goodman, Katz & Scheele; my individual law practice also maintained a professional corporation, simply entitled Stephen E. Scheele, P.C. As the years went by, my practice developed into that noted above.

The names of my employers are provided above, including under Section 4(A). Attorneys with whom I was partnered or associated throughout my lawyering years (in reverse chronological order) include:

Samuel J. Goodman;
 J. Michael Katz;
 Aaron A. Koonce;
 Maureen R. Koonce;
 Lisa M. Ross;
 Dana J. Hada;
 Brian W. Borchert;
 Frederick J. Ball;
 The Honorable Joseph S. Van Bokkelen;
 Paul A. Leonard, Jr.;
 Connie L. Bauswell;
 Barbara M. Shaver;
 Gail Oosterhof;
 Jim B. Brown;
 Peter Villarreal;
 Wendy Fletcher.

5. Trial/Judicial Experience

A. Describe the extent of your jury trial experience, if any.

See Section 5(C), below, for a list of jury trials over which I have presided as a trial court judge.

As a practicing attorney, I tried the following cases to juries:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Venue/Case #/Type:</u>	<u>Dates:</u>
<i>State of Indiana v. Alexis Young</i>	U.S. District Court, N.D. Ind. Case No.: 2:13-CR-1380-JVB-JEM (Bank Fraud/Aggravated Identity Theft)	01/11/16 - 01/14/16
<i>State of Indiana v. Nicholas Moore</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-1111-FB-109 (Residential Burglary)	07/15/13 - 07/17/13
<i>State of Indiana v. Prince Harris</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-1002-MR-2 (Murder/Robbery/Aggravated Battery)	01/09/12 - 01/12/12
<i>State of Indiana v. Charles Cook</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-1005-FB-37 (Carjacking/Robbery)	09/12/11 - 09/13/11
<i>State of Indiana v. Curtis Sample</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-0602-FA-10 (Habitual Offender: retrial after remand)	04/11/11 - 04/12/11
<i>State of Indiana v. Roderick Wiggins</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-0707-MR-5 (Triple Murder)	10/25/10 - 10/29/10
<i>State of Indiana v. David Serrano</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-0603-FC-33 (Child Molesting)	08/23/10 - 08/24/10

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<i>State of Indiana v. Terry Duncan</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-0908-FB-86 (Aggravated Battery/Habitual Offender)	03/01/10 - 03/03/10
<i>State of Indiana v. Steven Allen</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-0610-MR-11 (3-week trial: Triple Murder/Arson)	03/09/09 - 03/27/09
<i>State of Indiana v. Curtis Sample</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-0602-FA-10 (Attempted Murder/Rape/Habitual Offender)	09/15/08 - 09/19/08
<i>Hammond Group, Inc. v. Grant Thornton, LLP</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D04-0501-CC-1 (Civil Tort/Contract)	06/23/08 - 06/30/08
<i>State of Indiana v. Donte Gildon</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45G02-0605-MR-4 (Murder/Attempted Murder)	06/09/08 - 06/16/08
<i>United States of America v. Shawn Coleman</i>	U.S. District Court, N.D. Ind. Case No.: 2:03-CR-49-RL (Felon in Possession/Armed Career Criminal)	06/23/03 - 06/24/03
<i>Jonathon Siner v. Mary Beatty, et. al.</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D10-0111-CT-471 (Car Crash)	12/09/02 - 12/11/02
<i>Booker Blumenberg v. City of Gary, et.al.</i>	U.S. District Court, N.D. Ind. Case No.: 2:98-CV-199-TS (Plaintiff Civil Rights)	12/17/01 -12/20/01
<i>United States of America v. Roosevelt Fleming</i>	U.S. District Court, N.D. Ind. Case No.: 2:99-CR-138-RL (Drug Distribution)	01/18/00 - 01/20/00

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Additionally, as a practicing attorney, I litigated the following cases through the Indiana Court of Appeals and/or Indiana Supreme Court, including the noted oral arguments before each of these courts:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Venue/Case #:</u>	<u>Dates:</u>
<i>Larry Briski v. Peoples Bank</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 45A03-1208-PL-343	2012
<i>Secrena Erwin v. HSBC Mortgage Services, Inc., et.al.</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 32A01-1202-CT-80	2012 Argued: 11/27/2012
<i>Gregory Brown v. J. Michael Katz.</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 45A05-0701-CV-43	2007
<i>City of Gary v. Smith & Wesson, et.al.</i>	Indiana Supreme Court Case No. 45S03-0301-CV-36	2003 Argued: 02/27/2003
<i>City of Gary v. Smith & Wesson, et.al.</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 45A03-0105-CV-155	2001
<i>Hickory Hills Development v. Lake County Solid Waste Management District</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 45A03-0010- CV-352	2000
<i>Lawrence McGann v. Focus Homes, Inc.</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 64A03-0001-CV-14	2000
<i>Burger King Corp. v. Landings, Inc., et.al.</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 45A04-9810-CV-501	1998
<i>Dana Vasiljevich v. Patz Market, et.al.</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 45A03-9808-CV-342	1998
<i>Diane Helton v. Jeff Harbrecht Construction Co.</i>	Indiana Court of Appeals Case No. 45A04-9810-CV-501	1998

James McKinney v. State of Indiana

Indiana Court of Appeals

1997

Case No. 45A03-9610-PC-396

B. Describe the extent of your bench trial experience, if any.

Inasmuch as a bench trial could entail adjudication of anything from a minor traffic infraction to high-stakes civil damages or criminal sentencing or family law determinations, I have litigated or presided over thousands of them. They were a regular part of what I did as a lawyer and what I now do as a judge. Judicial trials of traffic and small claims cases, injunctions, protection orders, family/domestic matters, contract issues, summary judgments, monetary damages, bond hearings, sentencings, probation revocations, post-judgment petitions and more were weekly, if not daily, occurrences within my law practice. This bench trial frequency remains within the court in which I preside. There were (as a lawyer) and are (as a judge) days when a dozen or more bench trials may occur within a single morning or afternoon. Alternatively, the longest bench trial I now recall litigating occurred over the course of six days on a Petition to Let Bail in a murder case. *See State of Indiana v. Reginald Coleman*, 45D02-1004-MR-6. I believe that I have litigated or presided over bench trials of nearly every sort and that my bench trial experience is extensive.

C. If applicable, describe the nature and extent of your judicial experience (including as a judge pro tempore). Include a description of your experience presiding over jury trials, if any.

I currently preside in Room 5 of the Lake Superior Court's Civil Division. I was appointed by Governor Eric Holcomb on June 26, 2019. Lake County voters retained me for a six-year term on November 8, 2022. My current term expires on December 31, 2028.

Previously, on December 1, 2016, I was appointed to serve as the Lake Circuit Court's Domestic Relations Magistrate by the Honorable Thomas W. Webber, Sr., the then-sitting Lake Circuit Judge. I was retained to serve as the Lake Circuit Court's Civil Magistrate by the Honorable Marissa J. McDermott upon her taking the Lake Circuit Bench on January 1, 2017. I departed that service for my current position.

As a practicing lawyer, I regularly accepted appointments to serve as judge pro tempore to area courts needing such service. In the last 10 years of my practice, this mostly occurred in the Schererville Town Court. I also presided as judge pro tempore in other municipal courts and the Lake Superior Court's County Divisions.

As a Lake Superior Judge, I have jurisdiction to preside over any filing brought within the Lake Superior Court system. By virtue of Lake County’s local rules and caseload allocation plan, the Lake Superior Court/Room 5 maintains primary local jurisdiction over all civil cases. To that end, I am tasked to handle and have handled—from inception to conclusion—civil cases of every variety: civil torts, contracts, collections, mortgage foreclosures, real estate partitions, land usage, family law/domestic cases, protection orders, injunctions, adoptions, estates, guardianships, trusts, real estate tax sales, juvenile paternity, mental health commitments, name changes and more. Most of these cases are concluded via bench trial or other disposition; some are concluded via jury trial; we have disposed of thousands of cases in my five-year tenure in Room 5. *See* Response to Section 7(A), below (re: case management and judicial housekeeping).

I also preside over judicial mediations of trial-bound Superior and Circuit Court cases; this program has been greatly successful. *See* Response to Section 7(A), below (re: alternative dispute resolution and judicial settlement conference programming). I also review *ex parte* search warrant applications on a rotating basis with my Lake County bench mates. *See* Response to Section 7(A), below (re: search warrant judicial rotation). I also receive special judge assignment and transfer cases from all Lake County and other trial courts throughout the state.

In this backdrop, guiding litigants’ cases toward and presiding over bench and jury trials is a daily part of my job. As a judge, I have presided over the following jury trials:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Venue/Case #/Type:</u>	<u>Dates:</u>
<i>Tommie Johnson v. Clinton Scott, DPM</i>	Lake Superior Court/Room 5 Case No.: 45D05-2103-CT-307 (Medical Malpractice)	04/15/24 - 04/16/24
<i>Diane and James Styles v. Allstate Insurance Company</i>	Lake Superior Court/Room 5 Case No.: 45D05-1710-CT-178 (Underinsured Motorist)	01/22/24
<i>Roshunda Burrell v. Ameristar Casino East Chicago LLC</i>	Lake Superior Court/Room 5 Case No.: 45D05-1907-CT-759 (Slip and Fall)	03/06/23 - 03/09/23

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<i>Nancy Kinsella v. Nichole Vasser</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D05-2005-CT-528 (Car Crash/Comparative Fault)	04/18/22 - 04/20/22
<i>Christin Yakima v. Laura Smits</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D05-1909-CT-1007 (Car Crash)	08/23/21
<i>Nels Nelson and Dawn Nelson v. Franciscan Alliance, Inc.</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D05-1905-CT-547 (Medical Malpractice)	06/01/21 - 06/03/21
<i>Sherry Neely v. Allstate Insurance Company</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D05-2005-CT-493 (Uninsured Motorist/Comparative Fault)	05/03/21 - 05/04/21
<i>Maria Barman v. Theresa Riebe</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D05-1808-CT-399 (Car Crash)	09/14/20 - 09/15/20
<i>Francis Becker v. Allstate Insurance Company</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D05-1903-CT-308 (Car Crash)	08/24/20
<i>Dale Pruim and Jackie Pruim v. Barrick Builders, Inc. v. Jeff Chandler and Timber Ridge Construction Co.</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D05-1707-PL-75 (Contract/Construction Warranty/ Third Party Indemnification)	12/09/19 - 12/12/19
<i>Scott Coates v. Jill A. Bruhn</i>	Lake Superior Court Case No.: 45D05-1708-CT-126 (Car Crash)	09/09/19 - 09/10/19

6. Professional Experience

**As part of your Supplemental Materials, include as writing samples four selections (in total) from the written materials listed below in Questions 6A through 6C.*

- A. If applicable, list up to five trial or appellate briefs and/or judicial opinions you have written. Refer to them by caption, case number, and filing date.
- 1) Motion for Change of Venue and Memorandum of Supporting Authorities and subsequent Reply to Government's Response to Defendant's Request for Change of Venue, *United States v. Mark S. Weinberger*, United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, Case #: 2:06-CR-23087-PPS-PRC, DE 73 and DE 89, respectively filed on 7/31/2011 and 9/8/2011. This briefing is included within the Supplemental Materials. The issue involved a bench trial/determination on venue transfer from the Northern District of Indiana's Hammond Division (motion was granted). I authored both filings. Co-counselor Adam Tavitas (Adam Tavitas, Esq., 751 E. Porter Ave., Suite 3, Chesterton, IN 46304, Tel.: 219/245-2655) assisted with final proof-reading. This case is also referenced under Section 6(D)(1), below.
 - 2) Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order Compelling Specific Performance, *Griffith v. Walsh, et.al.*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-1907-PL-421, entered 09/05/2019.
 - 3) Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Declaratory Judgment, *County Seat Bakery, LLC v. Sakura KJ Japanese Restaurant, LLC*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-1909-CT-918, entered 11/22/2019. This judicial opinion is included within the Supplemental Materials.
 - 4) Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Order Sustaining Objection on Relocation and Order on All Other Pending Issues, *In Re the Marriage of James E. Burns and Michelle K. Burns*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-1609-DR-160, entered 05/17/2022. This judicial opinion is included within the Supplemental Materials.
 - 5) Declaratory Judgment and Order on Cross-Motions for Summary Judgment, *Lake County Sheriff Oscar Martinez v. Lake County Board of Commissioners, et.al.*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-2201-PL-72, entered 06/30/2022. This judicial opinion is included within the Supplemental Materials. This case is also referenced under Section 6(D)(2), below.

B. If applicable, list up to five legislative drafts or court rules you have written or to which you contributed significantly. Refer to them by official citation, date, and subject matter.

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|-----------------------|------------|---|
| 1) N.D. Ind. L.R. | 01/01/2012 | Northern District of Indiana Local Civil Rules |
| 2) N.D. Ind. L. Cr. R | 01/01/2012 | Northern District of Indiana Local Criminal Rules |
| 3) N.D. Ind. L. P. R. | 01/01/2013 | Northern District of Indiana Local Patent Rules |

A link to all three of the above rule sets is available here: [CurrentLocalRules.pdf \(uscourts.gov\)](#).

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|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 4) Ind. A.D.R. Rules. | 2019-2023
and pending | Indiana Rules for Alternative Dispute Resolution |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|

A link to the current Indiana ADR Rules is here: [Indiana Rules for Alternative Dispute Resolution](#).

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|----------------------------|--------------|--|
| 5) I.C. §33-23-6-2(d), (f) | July 1, 2023 | Statutory change to enable “ADR Plan Funds” to be used for Guardian ad Litem services as well as to benefit families that might otherwise be barred. |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|

A link to I.C. §33-23-6-2 is here: [IGA | 2023 Indiana Code](#)

- Greater detail of my contribution to these authorities is referenced under Section 7(A), below (re: efforts to improve the law/legal system).

C. If applicable, list up to five of your contributions to legal journals or other legal publications. Provide titles, official citations, and a brief description of the subject matter.

In law school, I served as an Associate (as a second-year law student) and a Managing Editor (as a third-year law student) for the I.U. School of Law’s *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*. As a part of that work, I wrote a short synopsis of trending immigration issues that was selected for inclusion within the *Journal’s* publication. See Scheele, Stephen E. (1995) “The Politics of Western Immigration,” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 17.

D. Identify the five most significant legal matters entrusted to you, whether as a judge or lawyer, and describe why you believe them to be so.

- In pondering my legal career, it is difficult to narrow the body of my work to just five cases. Every case that a lawyer handles or a judge decides is conceivably the most significant matter going on in those litigants' life at the time. Even so, the following cases come to mind:
- 1) *United States of America v. Mark S. Weinberger*, Northern District of Indiana Case #: 2:06-CR-230-PPS-PRC.

Mark Weinberger was an ear, nose and throat doctor with a surgery center in Merrillville, IN between 2001 and 2004. In September, 2004, he vacationed to Europe and infamously did not return. In the wake of his disappearance, more than 300 medical malpractice and other claims were filed against him before various civil courts and boards. In 2006, the U.S. government filed 22 counts of criminal health care fraud against him. In 2009, Mark was arrested and extradited from Italy. Attorney Adam Tavitas and I were co-appointed by the U.S. District Court to defend Mark against the government's indictment.

Mark's personal life, disappearance, arrest, extradition and circumstances surrounding his civil and criminal litigation were much ballyhooed in local and national media. Throughout the late 2000's – early 2010's, Mark's civil and criminal cases were probably the most publicly sensational of all being litigated within Lake County or the Northern District of Indiana. Nationally, Mark was profiled on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, *CNBC's American Greed*, *Dateline NBC*, *Larry King Live* and numerous episodes of *America's Most Wanted*. Local media coverage was saturated. The media spectacle, public vilification, overlapping civil litigation and weight of the government's case presented great challenges for Mark's defense.

A plea agreement was submitted and rejected as too lenient. Due to local bias, the parties vigorously litigated whether to hold the trial in Hammond or elsewhere. A writing sample included within the Supplemental Materials is my legal briefing on this issue, which provides greater detail. In the only instance of which I am aware in the Northern District of Indiana, the Court granted a motion to venue out of Hammond due to negative pre-trial publicity, and the trial was ordered to South Bend. *See* Opinion and Order, DE 94, *U.S.A. –v- Weinberger*, N.D. Ind. Case #: 2:06-CR-230-PPS-PRC (entered 10/24/2011). A doctor, accountant and statistician were engaged to serve as trial witnesses, and heavily-litigated discovery depositions were taken. Banker boxes of discovery materials were produced and reviewed. For legal reasons, new counsel eventually substituted in while Attorney Tavitas and I withdrew as Mark's

lawyers. New counsel was able to seamlessly move forward without duplicity of prior legal efforts. Ultimately, Mark pled guilty and was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Mark's case was significant for all of the above reasons; it involved hundreds of ancillary cases, thousands of witnesses/interested persons and seemingly endless discovery—all within the focus of a media microscope. Although presumed innocent, Mark was condemned in the public eye before his case even started and he was in obvious need of counsel. Few cases are as publicly sensational or as factually and legally challenging as his; there were recurring times when Mark, co-counsel and I felt the “pressure cooker” phenomenon that sometimes occurs throughout trial court litigation. It is a memorable case in which I lawyered.

- 2) *Lake County Sheriff Oscar Martinez v. Lake County Board of Commissioners, et.al.*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-2201-PL-72.

In the early 2020's, the Lake County Sheriff and Lake County Board of Commissioners disagreed on how best to operate the Lake County Jail. Each office asserted that it, and not the other, was authorized to contract with third-party vendors to effectuate jail operations. The dispute primarily related to provision of medical care for jail inmates and attendant costs, and evolved to the point where inmate access to medical care was at risk. The emergent nature of this case required a fair and timely resolution.

Suit was filed in January, 2022; each party sought a court order declaring it—to the exclusion of the other—as the entity authorized to enter jail contracts. In February, the parties agreed to assign the case to me as special judge. From March-May, the parties filed and fully briefed dispositive motions to declare as a matter of law which office had contracting authority. Legal arguments were heard in June. I entered a Declaratory Judgment and Order on Cross-Motions for Summary Judgment later that month, granting partial judgment in favor of the Sheriff and observing his office to have the expressed statutory duty to take care of the jail and its prisoners.¹ This ruling was affirmed on appeal (link: [Opinion](#)). With this issue resolved, the parties were able to settle their remaining issues and agreeably dismiss the case.

For as vigorous as the parties litigated, no facts were at issue and Indiana's Constitution and applicable statutes delineated the outcome. The challenge for me was—as it is in many cases—to enter an order effectively explaining the legal reasoning for the decision; doing so

¹ A copy of this order is included as a writing sample within the Supplemental Materials; see Section 6(A)(5), above.

ideally provides understanding to the parties and, by extension, promotes litigant and public confidence in the legal system.

Significant was the nature of the parties' dispute: office holders' disagreement about the efficient operation of a fundamental government function. Altruistic and well-intentioned officials sometimes overlap or conflict with each other in faithfully discharging their duties. These public officials resorted to and trusted our court system to timely and peacefully resolve their dispute, and the system worked as it should. More significant was the subject matter underlying the parties' dispute: inmate health care and access, to which they are constitutionally entitled. Time was of the essence for all stakeholders, especially the inmates, and a trial court resolution of the principal issue was achieved within six months.

- 3) *Brandon M. Winters v. City of West Lafayette, Indiana, and Officer David Smith, in his individual and official capacity as a police officer of the West Lafayette Police Department*, Northern District of Indiana Case #: 4:11-CV-49-PPS-PRC.

In March, 2013, I received a telephone call from a law clerk for Chief Judge Philip P. Simon of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana. The Court was seeking to appoint *pro bono* counsel for Brandon Winters, a self-represented plaintiff in a civil rights action who was suing the West Lafayette, IN Police Department on claims that included excessive force. In 2009, then-20-year-old Brandon was arrested by West Lafayette police, during which an officer's weapon was discharged. The bullet entered Brandon's right neck and exited his mouth, blowing out his lower jaw, teeth and part of his tongue. Brandon filed his lawsuit in September, 2011. His lawyer withdrew, and Brandon thereafter struggled through the legal process to the point where he was at risk of being legally defaulted, begetting the District Court's interest in appointing him *pro bono* counsel.

Having litigated these types of cases, I knew the uphill run Brandon faced in prevailing on his claims as well as the hardship that would attend the legal work needed to effectively represent him. The honor of being called upon by the District Court's Chief Judge to step up as a member of the bar to ensure due process, access to counsel and—in turn—access to justice was something I could not refuse. I enlisted my associate law partner, J. Michael Katz, to assist me, and we appeared on Brandon's behalf.

The discovery and dispositive litigation processes were every bit as rigorous and challenging as expected. Brandon's claims against all but one defendant were dismissed on summary judgment. Even so, we succeeded in brokering a settlement that accorded relief, the most

important component of which was that Brandon's jaw and teeth were medically rebuilt by a team of local specialists engaged by the defense. Prison furloughs were obtained to accommodate Brandon's many transports to Highland, IN for his medical treatments.

This was a tremendous result that dramatically improved this young man's quality of life for the rest of his life; Brandon has a jaw and teeth and is able to chew and eat like a normal person. The case is significant for this reason, alone. It is also demonstrative of how the legal system can and should function to provide equal justice under the law, and the instrumental role of lawyers toward that end.

- 4) *In Re the Marriage of Todd Sturgill and Terri Sturgill*, Lake Circuit Court Cause #: 45C01-1710-DC-398.

In October and November, 2018, I presided over the Final Hearing/Bench Trial in this highly-charged divorce. Case circumstances and party/court calendars were such that the equivalent of three days of testimony was packed into two actual calendar days. This was accomplished by starting early, working through lunch hours and breaks, and proceeding beyond the usual close of business. An in camera interview of the parties' minor child occurred on another day. I entered a Decree of Dissolution of Marriage on December 28, 2018.

This case involved seemingly every type of contested factual/legal issue that might present in a domestic relations case: child custody, parenting time, child support, asset/debt division, spousal maintenance, ancillary order(s) for protection, allegations of parental alienation, guardian ad litem dynamics, repudiation of a previously-brokered settlement agreement, family counseling disputes, post-secondary/college expense considerations for the parties' adult child, in camera proceedings attendant to the parties' minor child, GAL and attorney fees, contempt citations and more. The parties' emotions in this case were charged and their perceived stakes could not be more personal: children, family, home, assets and more. This case may be emblematic of many high-emotion domestic cases in which I have presided over multi-day bench trials through the years. *See, e.g.,* among others, *In Re the Marriage of Timothy Olmstead and Jelena Olmstead*, Lake Circuit Court Cause #: 45C01-1701-DC-30; *In Re the Marriage of James E. Burns and Michelle K. Burns*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-1609-DR-160; *In Re the Marriage of Jerry and Cheri Palm*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-1706-DC-80; *In Re the Marriage of Patrick and Megan Brennan*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-2102-DC-118; *In Re the Marriage of Brian and Kimberly Burbach*, Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45D05-2010-DC-598.

I find these cases the most difficult to judge. Always significant is the great emotion the parties and witnesses bring into the courtroom. These trials are emotionally, mentally and physically exhausting for everyone: the parties, their attorneys, the court’s staff and—of course—a presiding judge. Also always significant are the children, and the guidepost upon which most of the important legal decisions in these cases are made: their best interests. Throughout, I seek to preside in calm and balanced and fair fashion, to consider all sides before rendering decisions, and to timely enter a Decree that brings finality to the myriad issues and is squarely based in fact and law.

- 5) *State of Indiana v. David Potchen*, Lake Superior Court Cause #'s: 45G02-1406-FC-54 and 45G02-0109-CF-194.

In June, 2014, David Potchen—a skilled welder by trade—was on probation and parole after serving time in prison. David was laid off from his job, could not find another job, and was reduced to sleeping in the woods. Homeless and hopeless, David decided he was better off in prison. He walked into a Merrillville bank, demanded and received money from a teller, walked outside, sat down on a parking block, and waved police down upon their arrival so he could be arrested. David was charged with Bank Robbery under Lake Superior Court Cause #: 45G02-1406-FC-54. Lake County Probation and the Indiana Parole Board both moved to revoke his probation and parole under his older Cause #: 45G02-0109-CF-194. I was appointed to represent David as his public defender.

David refused to plead guilty to robbing the bank unless he could be assured of receiving maximum sentences on the new and old charges. For ethical and legal reasons, neither the Lake County Prosecutor nor I could permit or guarantee as much. David demanded a jury trial unless Judge Clarence D. Murray would agree to impose a maximum sentence. These circumstances were explained to Judge Murray at an emotional hearing on February 25, 2015. By complete chance, Post Tribune reporter Ruth Ann Krause was in the gallery. She wrote a coverage article, archived here: [Homeless ex-con tells judge he robbed bank to get caught – Chicago Tribune](#). David’s story went viral in Chicagoland and national media.² This

² The Chicago Tribune’s daily columnist, John Kass, picked up on the story and ran a series of five columns archived at: 02/27/2015: [A judge prays for ex-con in court, and he is heard – Chicago Tribune](#); 03/05/2015: [Welder who robbed an Indiana bank says he ‘had no other choice’ – Chicago Tribune](#); 03/18/2015: [Bank robber who just wanted to work makes most of second chance – Chicago Tribune](#); 04/08/2015: [Indiana bank robber who just wanted work finds it with help from others – Chicago Tribune](#); and 03/17/2016: [A year later, bank robber thanks judge for 2nd chance – Chicago Tribune](#). NBC Nightly News ran its own televised national exposé on 05/31/2015, archived here: [Bank Robber Gets An Unexpected Sentence | NBC Nightly News - YouTube](#). The

prompted a groundswell of positive public support and outreach. Prospective employers from around the country contacted me to offer David jobs. Family members that had lost touch with David contacted me; one offered to loan him a vehicle. A private client of mine offered David an apartment. The Lake County Sheriff permitted me to arrange job interviews for David at the jail. Everyone, it seemed, was touched by David's story. David was offered a well-paying job as a welder with a local trucking company. From there, everything fell into place: the Lake County Prosecutor and Probation/Parole Boards were persuaded to exercise some prudent discretion. David was released from jail, went to work, and his legal processes were concluded. I remain in contact with David. He still works with the same company and is one of its most prized employees.

Significant was the media exposure David's case garnered, which—itself—was instrumental in the way things turned out. More significant was the exceptional role that seemingly every “cog” in the system played—starting with the right judge and right news reporter in the right place at the right time, on down through the roles of the prosecutor, probation officer, parole board, jail staff, members of the public, and so on—such that the best possible outcome occurred. Most significant is that today David thrives instead of being in prison. I will never forget David, his case or its circumstances.

7. Efforts to Improve the Legal System, Administration of Justice, or Society

- A. Describe your efforts, achievements, or contributions (including written work, speeches, or presentations) toward the improvement of the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice. Include a description of any management or leadership roles you undertook to achieve these goals, and describe any specific instances in which your collaborative efforts helped achieve these goals.

- **Room 5 Case Management and Judicial Housekeeping:**

When I was appointed in 2019 to serve as Judge in Room 5, my vision was to run as fair and efficient a court as possible. As I initially took stock of the case load, 4,471 cases were docketed as statistically “pending.” I sensed from my review of the case numbers, their ages and case types that many were or should be prone to closure. This occasioned Room 5's staff and me to embark upon a years-long, case-by-case review of every pending Room 5 case, and to

Associated Press picked up the story, and it ran in publications throughout the country, including in the American Bar Association Journal's *Weekly Newsletter*.

systematically undertake to procedurally dispose or advance each one. To date, these efforts have yielded great success, as follows:

Date	<u>pending caseload</u>
12/31/2016—end 4Q	4230
06/30/2017—end 2Q	4191
12/31/2017—end 4Q	4216
06/30/2018—end 2Q	4320
12/31/2018 – end 4Q	4530
06/30/2019—end 2Q	4471
SCHEELE TAKES ROOM 5 BENCH	
12/31/2019—end 4Q	4110
06/30/2020—end 2Q	3934
12/31/2020—end 4Q	3574
06/30/2021—end 2Q	3301
12/31/2021—end 4Q	3088
06/30/2022—end 2Q	2441
12/31/2022—end 4Q	2137
06/30/2023—end 2Q	1941
12/30/2023—end 4Q	1671
03/31/2024—end 1Q (latest record available)	1663

Room 5 docket management and judicial housekeeping remain a work in progress.

- **2023 and 2024 Spring Judicial College Faculty:**

In 2023, I was invited by the Office of Court Services to present at the Spring Judicial College on climate science and the law. This invitation stemmed from my participation in a 2022 National Judicial College (NJC) program on the topic. I enlisted and worked with NJC staff to assemble a lecture panel consisting of a Purdue climate science professor, an environmental lawyer, Kentucky Judge Charles Cunningham, Marion Superior Judge James Joven and myself. Our presentation was well-attended and well-received. Audience feedback demonstrated an appetite for this type of programming. The Education Committee’s continuing interest permitting, future presentations on water law, PFAS and similar topics can be accommodated.

In February of this year, I was invited by the Office of Court Services to present at the 2024 Spring Judicial College with fellow Lake County judges on civil procedure. My presentation was on Rule 12/motions to dismiss. Lake Superior Judges Bruce Parent, John Sedia and Lake Circuit Judge Marissa McDermott respectively presented on discovery, summary judgment and motions to reconsider/correct error. Collectively, my fellow judges and I spent dozens of hours preparing for and presenting our panel presentation. The presentation was well-attended and well-received. Again, the Education's Committee's continuing interest/need permitting, I am happy to present on future topics of courtroom and civil procedure or related subjects.

- **Federal/Northern District of Indiana Local Rules:**

From 2009-2012, I served a four-year appointment to the Local Rules Advisory Committee for the United States District Court, Northern District of Indiana. Throughout, we regularly met to review and effectuate an overdue modernization of the Northern District's standing Local Civil Rules and Local Criminal Rules, and to promulgate new Local Patent Rules. Then-standing Local Civil Rules dated back to 1994, Local Criminal Rules to 2000, and no Local Patent Rules were then in existence. A result of our collaborative work was promulgation of re-styled Local Civil Rules and Local Criminal Rules, effective January 1, 2012, and all new Local Patent Rules, effective January 1, 2013. These rules (with revisions) remain in effect today. Official citations for each are noted under Section 6(B), above. A link to all three of these rule sets is available here: [CurrentLocalRules.pdf \(uscourts.gov\)](#). My service concluded at the end of 2012.

- **Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee:**

From 2017-2023, I served on the Indiana Supreme Court's Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee. I chaired this committee from 2019-2023. This committee facilitates best alternative dispute resolution (ADR) practices and strategies for the betterment of our state's courts, lawyers and litigants. Areas addressed during my tenure included amendments to the ADR Rules (*see below*), judicial mediation, domestic relations mediator credentialing, parenting coordinator qualification and immunity, mediation registration and on-line portaling, ADR Plan Funds expansion (*see below*), small claims ADR, on-line dispute resolution, mortgage foreclosure facilitation, eviction diversion/facilitation and more. As Chair, I regularly interfaced with the Family Law Taskforce, fellow Supreme Court committees, State and local bar representatives and other stakeholders to enhance the ADR realm.

--ADR Rules:

To that end, a part of our committee's work was to review and effectuate necessary updates and revisions to Indiana's ADR Rules. A number of incremental revisions were effectuated. Considerable time was spent fashioning larger-scale amendments to streamline, clarify, correct and improve the current rules, throughout which we collaborated with stakeholder judges and lawyers and their representative groups. I cycled off the ADR Committee in July, 2023, at which time we were interfacing with the Rules Committee to reconcile our proposed rule amendments with others flowing from the Civil Litigation Taskforce. As of this writing, I am informed their effectuation is expected. A link to the current Indiana ADR Rules is here: [Indiana Rules for Alternative Dispute Resolution](#).

--Expansion of ADR Plan Funds:

Also throughout my term, judges and other stakeholders brought to our attention their concerns with limitations on statutory funding available in divorce and paternity cases. Prior to July 1, 2023, Indiana statute allowed for monies generally known as "ADR Plan Funds" to be used for mediation, reconciliation, arbitration and parental counseling. There was a perceived need to also make ADR Plan Funds available for Guardian ad Litem services and cases involving a spouse or parent and children otherwise barred due to criminal history. Prospective revisions to I.C. §33-23-6-2(d) and (f) to accommodate these needs were reviewed, considered and wholly endorsed by our committee. Our work dovetailed with and gained momentum from the Innovation Committee's Family Law Taskforce's greater work of identifying strategies to improve family court processes; two of our committee members served as co-members and liaisons to that Taskforce. Throughout 2020 and 2021, members of our Committee and I interfaced with the Family Law Taskforce on this and other ADR issues of mutual concern, a bulk of which—including the proposed revisions to I.C. §33-23-6-2(d) and (f)—were included within the Family Law Taskforce's March 2021 Final Report and Recommendations.

In early 2023, members of Indiana's General Assembly introduced these statutory changes into H.E.A. 1493, which were approved and enacted into law as of July 1, 2023. Greatest credit for effectuating this statutory change goes to our Indiana General Assembly, the Family Law Taskforce, individual members of the ADR Committee and the many committed attorneys and staffers at Indiana's Office of Court Services. I am happy to have been able to contribute to this effort through my work as Chair of the ADR Committee. A link to H.E.A. 1493 is here: [H.E.A. 1493](#). A link to I.C. §33-23-6-2 is here: [IGA | 2023 Indiana Code](#).

- **Commission for Continuing Legal Education:**

From 2019-2023, attendant to my duties as ADR Chair, I served as an *Ex Officio* Member of the Commission for Continuing Legal Education (“CLE Commission”). The CLE Commission administers and regulates continuing educational requirements for judges and attorneys, registration and training of mediators, and accreditation of attorney specialization programs. The CLE Commission’s work attendant to regulation of mediators, in particular, is central to the ADR Committee’s work, and *vice versa*, and collaboration between these groups is essential. Throughout my term, matters of mutual consideration included domestic relations mediator credentialing, mediator qualification and regulation, on-line portaling of the Mediation Registry, distance/remote education for judges and lawyers and mediators, and more.

- **Innovation Committee:**

Since July, 2023, I have been serving on the Indiana Supreme Court’s Innovation Committee. I am one of 18 members and we are chaired by Justice Derek Molter. This committee was commissioned in 2019 with challenging directives to, *inter alia*, analyze research on justice reform, assess court reform efforts in other states, identify innovative strategies (such as technology or specialized procedures or pilot programs) to manage different case types, and make recommendations to our Supreme Court on how to improve court processes. By the time of my appointment, this committee had already overseen reports and recommendations from its subgroups Family Law Taskforce, Civil Litigation Taskforce and Technology Working Group, as well as implementation of pilot projects on civil case management, online dispute resolution and digital evidence. Since my appointment, issues attendant to remote court access, technology, on-line dispute resolution (and ADR more generally), standardized legal forms, access to the courts, legal aid organizations, legal desert/attorney shortages, and more, are under review. I anticipate many more years of service to this committee and look forward to our continuing work.

- **Working Group to the Commission on Equity and Access in the Court System:**

Throughout 2022 (January-December), I served as a member of the Pathways to the Bench and Bar Working Group to the Commission on Equity and Access in the Court System. I was one of 16 work group members, co-chaired by State Chief Equity Officer Karrah Herring and St.

Joseph Superior Court Judge Steven Hostetler. The larger Commission was created in 2021 to help create and restore public trust and confidence in Indiana’s courts. Our work group was one of eight established by the Commission. Our purpose was to assess the demographics of Indiana’s bench and bar, identify initiatives focused on pathways to Indiana’s bench and bar, and provide recommendations on those or other initiatives to enhance diversity within the bench and bar. Our report and recommendations were submitted to the Commission in November, 2022. The Commission’s Final Report—a collaborative effort of over 100 participants across all working groups—was issued in December, 2022. A link to the Final Report, inclusive of our subgroup’s findings and recommendations, is here: [equity-access-final-report-2023.pdf](#).

- **Education and Outreach Subcommittee to the Commission on Race and Gender Fairness:**

In March of this year, I was appointed to the Education and Outreach Subcommittee of the Indiana Supreme Court Commission on Race and Gender Fairness. I am one of 12 members. We are chaired by Elkhart Superior Court Judge James Fox. Our mission is to review and make recommendations to the larger Commission on how to address perceived legal deserts and attorney shortages throughout the state. In our limited work to date, we have focused on ways to promote interest in the law amongst Indiana’s youth, particularly K-12 and undergraduate populations, and how best to engage these communities and to make this engagement sustainable and replicable. Some vehicles of engagement already exist, such as We the People and Constitution Day and Appeals on Wheels and kindred programming. Other vehicles need to be promoted or enhanced or altogether developed. Our work is newly underway and remains in progress. I look forward to my service to this subcommittee.

- **Judicial Mediation:**

My service on the ADR Committee dovetailed with my own ADR work in the Lake County courts. Since taking the bench in 2016, I have presided over dozens of judicial settlement conferences for trial-bound cases. This program has been hugely successful; a substantial majority of judicially-mediated cases are settled. This success has spared scarce court resources while greatly serving the parties’ needs. The program has expanded to include nearly all Lake County civil courts, such that I am available to judicially mediate other judges’ trial-bound cases and they—in turn—are available to mediate mine. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time this type of inter-court ADR cooperation has been utilized in Lake County.

- **Shared Search Warrant Allocation:**

As a magistrate in the Lake Circuit Court (2016-2019), I oversaw Lake Circuit’s contribution to and participation in the Lake Superior Court’s search warrant workload. Prior to 2016, the Lake Superior Criminal Division’s judicial officers were overwhelmed with the volume and logistics attendant to law enforcement’s regular and continuing needs for judicial review of search warrant applications. Lake Circuit and Superior Court civil judges are now a regular part of the search warrant judicial rotation. These added hands make lighter lifting for everyone. This had never happened before.

- **Inter-Court Cooperation and Teaming:**

Also while serving as a Circuit Court Magistrate from 2016-2019, I had occasion to sit on the Superior Criminal Room 2 bench when then-presiding Judge Clarence Murray had the need and our calendars permitted. That remained a standing arrangement until my transfer to the Hammond Courthouse in 2019. To the best of my knowledge, that type of Lake Circuit-Superior inter-court cooperation had never happened before. This experience served as a model upon my transfer to the Hammond Courthouse, where my fellow Hammond judges and I will “back each other up” on our respective benches on an as-needed basis.

- **Senior Judge Utilization:**

In another first, from 2017-2018, I worked with the late Senior Judge Edward T. Page to spearhead Lake Circuit’s utilization of Senior Judges. Judge Page and I formulated the concept and logistics to get it done, and this utilization spread to other courts. Senior Judge utilization remains an efficient and regular component of Lake County courtroom administration. My work with Judge Page also served as a primer for my current work in Room 5, where I marshal available senior judge resources on an as-needed basis.

- **Career and Judicial Approaches:**

Finally, as I take stock of my career’s body of work—lawyering and now judging on countless cases of countless variety—I’m pleased to observe my whole career has been devoted to these pursuits, *i.e.*, improvement of the law, the legal system and the administration of justice. This Section 7(A) topic by and large defines what have been my lawyer and judge job descriptions.

As a lawyer and a judge, I have always done my best to abide by the Indiana Oath of Attorneys and my judicial oath. *See Ind. R. Att’y Adm. & Discip. 22* (link: [Rule 22 - Oath of Attorneys, Ind. R. Att’y Adm. & Discip. 22 | Casetext Search + Citator](#)); I.C. §33-34-2-11 (link: [Section 33-34-2-11 - Oath, Ind. Code § 33-34-2-11 | Casetext Search + Citator](#)). To that end, my efforts and contributions to improve the law, the legal system and the administration of justice span the last 27+ years. Some of the achievements are chronicled above and below. These efforts, achievements and contributions remain a work in progress.

- **Other:**

See also Responses to Sections 7(B), below (re: educational/community outreach and scouting); 7(C), below (re: firefighting, youth coaching and scouting); 7(D), below (re: *pro bono*/reduced fee and public defender services); 7(E), below (re: legal/judicial teaching and outreach); and 8(A), below (re: LCBA involvement and leadership, legal/professional organizations).

B. Describe your efforts, achievements, or contributions (including written work, speeches, or presentations) concerning civic, political, or social issues. Include a description of any management or leadership roles you undertook in this area, and describe any specific instances in which your collaborative efforts in this area led to a successful result.

- **We the People:**

Early in my career, I had occasion to teach elementary school students about government, the court system and civics through the Indiana Bar Foundation’s “We the People” program. This program promotes and teaches notions of civic competence and responsibility to students. I volunteered with other lawyers to visit and present to students in their classrooms.

- **K-12 Outreach:**

Since becoming a judicial officer, I have regularly hosted elementary, middle and high school students to observe court proceedings, conduct mock trials and learn about civics and the law. I enjoy this outreach and am typically impressed by the students’ youthful enthusiasm and engagement.

To that end, I am enrolled with the Indiana Supreme Court’s “Judges Speakers Bureau,” a directory of judicial officers available to speak with K-12 classrooms. The Speakers Bureau is intended to connect schools with volunteer judges to speak about courts and the law and promote an understanding of the purpose and structure of Indiana's judicial system.

- **Cub Scouting:**

From 2014-2019, I served as a Den Leader, Assistant Cub Master and Executive Committee Member with Cub Scout Pack 504/Schererville. Fundamental to scouting is the study of the rights and duties of citizenship, *i.e.*, civics. I regularly presented and taught 1st through 5th grade scouts on these topics. We regularly participated in town parades and festivals, holiday services, September 11 memorials and other municipal events. I organized and led 2nd and 3rd grade scouts on tours of the Schererville Fire Department and Schererville Police Station, and 4th and 5th grade scouts on tours of the Lake County Government Complex, courtrooms and Sheriff's Department. These activities allowed the scouts to accomplish various achievements or other requirements to advance through their scouting ranks. They also ideally impressed lasting tenets of good citizenship and public service.

Since 2019, I have been serving as an Assistant Scout Master, the Executive Secretary and the Outdoor Excursions Coordinator for Scout Troop 532/Schererville. A greater description of these efforts, achievements and contributions are provided under Section 7(C), below (re: improvement to local/state/national communities).

- **Appeals on Wheels**

I also note I believe our judiciary's Appeals on Wheels program is an incredible vehicle for community outreach, especially to our youth. For the last many years, Lake County has enjoyed the benefit of regularly hosting the Appeals on Wheels. I attend every session possible; I am happy to show local support to our traveling jurists as well as capture the opportunity to engage with our students. Nearly every session includes a luncheon or similar student exchange, where I enjoy talking with students about the law, our court systems, legal careers, pathways to the profession and other civic engagement. Again, I am typically impressed by the students' engagement and perspectives.

- **Other:**

See also Responses to Sections 7(A), above (re: judicial committee/commission and other civics-related work); 7(C), below (re: firefighting, youth coaching and scouting); 7(D), below (re: *pro bono*/reduced fee and public defender services); 7(E), below (re: legal/judicial teaching and outreach); and 8(A), below (re: LCBA involvement and leadership, legal/professional organizations).

C. Describe your efforts, achievements, or contributions (including written work, speeches, or presentations) to improve your local, state, or national community through charitable work or public service. Include a description of any management or leadership roles you undertook in this area, and describe any specific instances in which your collaborative efforts in this area led to a successful result.

- **Volunteer Firefighting:**

From 1999-2005, I served as a volunteer Firefighter with the Lake Hills Fire Department (LHFD). I received Firefighter I and Firefighting II certifications through the State of Indiana, and accompanying training as a first responder. Our department provided emergency fire protection and medical services to the unincorporated areas of St. John Township as well as “mutual aid” emergency services to our surrounding communities. We regularly and successfully provided first-responder emergency services, most often in the way of ambulance service, car crash response and fire suppression. In addition to my rank and duties as Firefighter, I served as Secretary to the Department’s Executive Board for a number of years. I resigned from the Department in 2005 to permit more time for my growing legal practice and in anticipation of moving outside the Lake Hills firefighting district (which I did in 2006).

- **Youth Coaching:**

From 2014-2016 and in 2018, I served as an Assistant Coach for my son’s baseball teams in the Youth Baseball Programs for the Towns of Highland and Schererville. Youth leagues benefit our local communities as much as our youth participants, and I was glad to play these roles.

- **Scouting BSA:**

Since 2019, I have been serving as an Assistant Scout Master, the Executive Secretary and the Outdoor Excursions Coordinator for BSA Scout Troop 532/Schererville. My commitment as a BSA volunteer derived from my son’s graduation from cub to full scouting in 2019. Current membership (youth and adult) of our troop is several dozen strong. We are an exceptionally active troop: we meet every Monday night, camp at least once each month and are greatly occupied with philanthropic and community events of a seemingly-endless variety (*e.g.*, church and VFW fish fries, municipal events, flag ceremonies, service activities, Eagle Scout projects, merit badge classes, fundraising and more).

As the Outdoor Excursion Coordinator, I plan and attend nearly every monthly campout. This component has been wondrous: our troop has camped at BSA reservations in Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio and West Virginia; we have been to many of the greatest state/national

parks in Indiana (Clifty Falls, the Dunes, McCormick's Creek, Potato Creek, Pokagon, Prophetstown, Salamonie Lake, Shades, Turkey Run), Michigan (Fort Custer, Mackinac Island, Sleeping Bear Dunes, Warren Dunes, Wilderness) and Illinois (Illini, Matthiessen, Starved Rock); we attended the 2023 BSA National Jamboree; every month brings a new experience. Tentative 2025 plans include a "High Adventure" excursion to Minnesota or New Mexico or Florida and a hike of the Appalachian Trail. These excursions have instilled into these boys (and us adults) qualities of vision, planning, communication, cooperation, team work, accountability, confidence, resilience, adaptability, leadership and endless other life skills.

And, yet, camping has been only a component of this commitment. Themes central to scouting are citizenship, service, leadership and character development. Scouting currently has four required merit badges specifically devoted to citizenship: Citizenship in Society, the Community, the Nation and the World. Related merit badges include the Law, Communications, Public Speaking, Personal Finance, Conservation, Sustainability, Fire Safety, Emergency Preparedness and more. Fellow adult leaders and I regularly teach or co-teach or serve as merit badge counselors for each of these. I also regularly counsel on less "civics"-related but perhaps more "traditionally outdoors" topics such as Backpacking, Hiking, Mountain Biking, Canoeing, Kayaking, Camping, Wilderness Survival, Forestry, Nature, Weather and many more.

To make all of this happen requires tremendous dedication from the adult leaders. It is startling to take stock of the time volunteered by the troop's Adult Executive Committee Chairman, Treasurer, Scout Master, Assistant Scout Masters and many others to allow for this organization to thrive and these events to happen. There are truly thousands of hours that have been volunteered. I am inspired by my fellow volunteer servant-leaders and happy to do my part.

When I began this scouting adventure with my son, I had no idea it would take on the role in my life and levels of effort and commitment it has. Currently, outside of work, I easily spend more time on scouting-related activities than any others. While these efforts and commitments have been considerable, the achievements are invaluable: these experiences and their memories, together with the relationships forged, will last lifetimes.

Moreover, these efforts and commitments are labors of love; nearly all of us adult leaders are involved because our sons are scouts. We all appreciate we will never get this time back. We also appreciate there is no better return on this investment—this youth is our future; when these scouts are my age (53), I will be in my 90's. The education and values and experiences

we imprint upon them now will hopefully be lasting and positive. That will be the greatest achievement of all.

- **Other:**

See also Responses to Sections 7(A), above (re: case management and housekeeping, judicial committee/commission and related work, judicial mediation and other inter-court cooperation); 7(B), above (re: educational/community outreach, youth coaching and cub scouting); 7(D), below (re: *pro bono*/reduced fee and public defender services); 7(E), below (re: legal/judicial teaching and outreach); and 8(A), below (re: LCBA involvement and leadership, legal/professional organizations).

D. Describe the nature and extent of any *pro bono* legal services you have contributed.

I have always been generous with my time, personally and professionally. From the time I started practicing law, *pro bono* or reduced compensation clients were a part of that practice. My involvements in *pro bono* or reduced fee adoptions, divorces, name changes and myriad other matters are too many to recount. My decisions to accept these clients invariably hinged upon their inability to pay, my sense of legal justification for their case, and their need for competent counsel that they might not otherwise receive. If I perceived that their lack of access to counsel might be tantamount to a lack of access to justice, I more often than not found myself taking them on as a *pro bono* or reduced fee client.

As my early practice took shape in the late 1990's, I was introduced to the U.S. District Court/Northern District of Indiana's panel of Criminal Justice Act (CJA) attorneys. Lawyers on this panel agreed to accept appointments to represent indigent defendants for reduced fees. In those years, the hourly rate for CJA representation was nominal, and most members of the bar looked down on CJA work because of the stigma associated with indigent defendants and the low/no pay. I enjoyed the work, the experience and the District Court's appreciation of my services, and was glad to accept as many appointments as the District wished to send my way. Thus began my near-20 years of work in representing indigent criminal defendants.

In about 2003, my work representing federal defendants begat my introduction to the Lake County Public Defender's Office, which also began appointing me to represent indigent state court defendants on an as-needed (and reduced fee) basis. My relationship with that office grew, and I was named a Deputy Public Defender in 2005, assigned to represent major felony defendants in the Lake Superior Court's Criminal Division. I continued in that capacity until taking judicial office in 2016.

Indigent defense work is challenging but rewarding; it comprised some of the most fulfilling work of my legal career. As far as lawyering goes, it is where some of my clients’ greatest successes were achieved—both in and out of the courtroom.

As an extension to these commitments, my practice included times when I stood appointed by the District Court to represent *pro se* plaintiffs in pursuit of civil rights actions. One case involved an HIV+ inmate in the state prison system, seeking medical relief. Another involved a young man seriously injured as a result of allegedly-excessive police force. *See* Section 6(D)(3), above. These litigants did not have lawyers and were struggling through the legal process. I surmise the District Court sensed that these plaintiffs’ lack of access to counsel might result in their lack of access to justice, and I was thus appointed. All of these were *pro bono* assignments, although a financial settlement was achieved in one case that included payment of some legal fees.

Other areas of *pro bono* work included my past participation in the Lake County Bar Association’s “Talk to a Lawyer Day” held each January, and regular appointment to serve as judge pro tempore to local courts on an as-needed basis.

As a judicial officer, I am currently prohibited from practicing law and—by extension—accepting *pro bono* or reduced fee clients. I now marshal my charitable energies toward judicial outreach to the bar and public, as well as general community involvement through teaching, scouting, youth sports, scholastic activities and more.

- E. Indicate your experience teaching law. Provide the dates, names of institutions or programs, and a description of the subject matter taught.

As my career grew, so did opportunities to teach law to students spanning elementary through law school, as well as colleagues in the bar and on the bench. Teaching and community outreach are an enjoyable part of my job.

Through the years, I have presented or served as a panelist many times. As a practicing lawyer, those presentations mostly involved ethics and criminal law. As a judicial officer, they include courtroom and civil procedure, alternative dispute resolution, family law, tax sales and petitions, specialized driving privileges and more. Presentations to youth K-12 typically focus on basic understandings of civics, citizenship, the law, government, our courts and judicial system. Older youth (college+) presentations typically entail real-world applications of the law and legal careers.

I N D I A N A J U D I C I A L N O M I N A T I N G C O M M I S S I O N

As noted in Section 7(A), above, in 2023 and 2024, I had the honor of serving as a member of our Office of Court Services' Spring Judicial College faculty.

A list of sessions in which I have presented to judges, lawyers, college students and even high/middle/elementary school students (where those dates could be recalled) include:

- * 05/16/2024 *5th Graders Come to Court, Redux* - Eads Elementary School
- * 05/15/2024 *5th Graders Come to Court* - Elliot Elementary School
- * 04/10/2024 *Clearing Up Contentious Civil Litigation* - Indiana Office of Court Services/Spring Judicial College 2024
- * 02/19/2024 *Incarceration in America - Perspectives* - University of Denver/Department of Sociology and Criminology
- * 04/18/2023 *Climate Science and our Hoosier State: An Introduction* - Indiana Office of Court Services/Spring Judicial College 2024
- * 03/15/2023 *Probate Practice and Procedure* - Lake County Bar Association (LCBA) Probate Section
- * 02/10/2023 *Murder in America - Courtroom Vignettes* - University of Denver/Department of Sociology and Criminology
- * 12/07/2022 *Legal Ethics* - Calumet American Inns of Court
- * 10/05/2022 *Lake County Bench and Bar Conference* - LCBA
- * 02/21/2022 *Murder in America - Courtroom Vignettes* - University of Denver/Department of Sociology and Criminology
- * 03/13/2021 *Law Merit Badge* - Schererville BSA Scouting Troop 532
- * 03/03/2021 *The Covid of Things* - LCBA
- * 05/21/2020 *Covid and the Courts* - LCBA
- * 05/05/2020 *Covid and the Lake County Judiciary* - LCBA
- * 08/02/2019 *Indiana Tax Sales* - William Richards PC/Indianapolis, IN
- * 12/07/2018 *Family Law Seminar* - LCBA Family Law Section
- * 10/03/2018 *Civility in the Practice of Law* - Calumet American Inns of Court
- * 09/21/2018 *Lake County Bench and Bar Conference* - LCBA
- * 06/19/2018 *Courtroom Procedures* - LCBA Young Lawyers Section
- * 12/8/2017 *Alternative Dispute Resolution in Domestic Cases* - LCBA Family Law Section
- * 09/21/2017 *Lake Circuit Court's Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau* - LCBA Family Law Section
- * 06/13/2017 *Courtroom Procedures in the Lake Circuit Court* - LCBA Young Lawyers Section
- * 06/07/2017 *Specialized Driving Privileges in Indiana* - LCBA Criminal Defense Lawyer Section
- * 10/29/2014 *Legal Ethics* - Calumet American Inns of Court
- * 05/28/2014 *Legal Ethics* - Calumet American Inns of Court
- * 04/25/2013 *Criminal Law in the Lake County Courts* - LCBA Young Lawyers Section
- * 11/28/2012 *Legal Ethics* - Calumet American Inns of Court
- * 03/16/2007 *Northern District of Indiana Federal Bench and Bar Conference* - LCBA
- * 02/28/2007 *Legal Ethics* - Calumet American Inns of Court
- * 12/01/2004 *Promoting Civility* - Calumet American Inns of Court
- * 01/28/2004 *Presentation on Legal Ethics* - Calumet American Inns of Court
- * 11/12/2001 *Bridge the Gap (Applied Professionalism Course)* - LCBA

As or more fulfilling has been my career’s opportunities to mentor and teach younger (and sometimes older) lawyers or interns/clerks about the law and the practice of law. As a lawyer, I had occasion to hire and train five newly-minted lawyers and an untold number of law students/interns/clerks. This training included having young lawyers or law students sit with me as a 2nd chair in jury trials (in Indiana, 3rd year law students may sit as co-counsel if under the tutelage of experienced lead counsel). In now reflecting on the young attorneys and others I had the opportunity to mentor through those years, I pulled an old “Thank You” card from a former Associate Attorney, Dana J. Hada, who—upon her family’s relocation to Oklahoma in 2010—thoughtfully expressed:

. . . Most importantly, thank you for taking a chance on a young law clerk 7 years ago. You have no idea how appreciative I am for everything you’ve taught me and the experiences I’ve had at GKS. Thanks for teaching me about federal criminal law – how fun is that?! Hopefully, I’ll be able to continue to practice federal law in OK. . . .

Today, Attorney Hada maintains a successful law practice in Weatherford, Oklahoma.

As a judge, I’ve had the benefit of hosting and mentoring many Valparaiso and Maurer Law School students as summertime law clerks. This exposure provides unique practical experience. I recall my own summertime law school/clerk experiences and am happy to now pay it forward.

A fun offshoot in the last several years has been my reconnection with my undergraduate alma mater, the University of Denver, where I have been invited to guest lecture to criminology students. In the last three years, these sessions have included “student connect” and mentoring exchanges. Lectures entail discussion of some of the practical applications of undergraduate academic/coursework to the real world and legal jobs, together with shared observations and stories of some of the lawyering work I’ve done in our state and federal courts. Since my February, 2024 lecture, Professors Lisa Pasko and Michael Gibson-Light thoughtfully shared the following student/audience commentary:

One of the best things about the class was the Judge.

I really liked seeing what alums do after they graduate. It’s cool to see how things turn out.

The guest speaker was really interesting, and gave us real-world examples from his time when he worked as a defense lawyer.

Judge was really great. He gave up his own time for an interview afterwards.

I particularly enjoyed our guest speaker Judge Stephen Scheele's discussion of the different cases that he worked on during his time as a public defender. I am interested in becoming an attorney and found his experience with those cases inspiring. His insight surrounding the veteran who committed homicide provided a real-world example of an instance where an adverse experience can impact the likelihood that one will engage in violence.

Judge was great.

I believe outreach to the legal and non-legal communities, teaching law and mentoring are a part of a judicial officer's job. I am glad to do it.

8. Memberships and Other Activities

- A. List any memberships and offices you have held in professional organizations, including dates and descriptions of both the organization's purpose and your involvement.
- * *9013 Indianapolis Boulevard Building, LLC*, 2002-present. In 2002, I became a general member of the LLC that owned the building in which I practiced law. I also assumed the role of building/premises manager, which I resigned upon taking judicial office in 2016. The nature of this LLC's business was real estate ownership, maintenance and rental. The building, which was the sole LLC asset, sold in 2022. This LLC remains administratively open and is likely to be dissolved within this calendar year.
 - * *Stephen E. Scheele, PC*, 2005-present. In 2005, I incorporated my law practice as a professional corporation (PC) under the name "Stephen E. Scheele, P.C." The purpose of this PC was to conduct the practice of law. I am the President and sole shareholder of this PC. Although I stopped practicing law upon taking judicial office on 12/01/2016, the PC remains administratively open for accounting purposes and eventual dissolution.

- * *Lake County Bar Association (LCBA)*, 1997-present; Board of Managers, 2000-2011. The LCBA’s fundamental purpose is to serve the needs of Lake County’s legal community. This includes, among many other things, a fostering of the relationship between the legal profession and general public, regular hosting of educational seminars for lawyers and others, and wide-ranging philanthropic endeavors. I have been a member for as long as I have been a lawyer. I served on the LCBA Board of Managers from 2000-2011. In my current role as judicial officer, I am regularly engaged with the LCBA’s outreach and educational missions.

- * *Indiana State Bar Association (ISBA)*, 1997-present. The ISBA’s fundamental purpose is to serve and advocate for the needs of the State’s legal community. I have been a member for as long as I have been a lawyer.

- * *Calumet American Inns of Court (Inns)*, 2004-present; President, 2020-2021. The overarching purpose of Inns is to promote professionalism, ethics, civility and excellence in the legal profession. The Calumet American Inn is the Lake County, Indiana chapter of the American Inns of Court.

- * *Indiana Judges Association (IJA)*, 2017-present. The IJA is a voluntary association comprised of members of the Indiana judiciary. It promotes the interests and needs of our state’s judiciary and legal practitioners. I have been a member since 2017.

- * *Supreme Court of Indiana Innovation Committee*, 2023-present. As noted under Section 7(A), above, the Innovation Committee was commissioned in 2019 to analyze research on court reforms, assess reform efforts in other states and make recommendations for innovative strategies to improve court processes. I am one of 18 current members.

- * *Education and Outreach Subcommittee to the Indiana Supreme Court Commission on Race and Gender Fairness*, 2024-present. As noted under Section 7(A), above, this subcommittee’s mission is to review and make recommendations to the larger Commission on how to address legal deserts and attorney shortages throughout the state. I am one of 12 members.

- * *Supreme Court of Indiana Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Committee*, 2017-2023; Chair, 2019-2023. As noted under Section 7(A), above, the ADR Committee facilitates best alternative dispute resolution (ADR) practices and strategies for the betterment of Indiana’s courts, lawyers and litigants. I was appointed as a member in 2017 and chaired this committee from 2019-2023.

- * *Supreme Court of Indiana Commission for Continuing Legal Education (CLE Commission), 2019-2023.* As noted under Section 7(A), above, I served as an *Ex Officio* Member to this commission. The CLE Commission administers and regulates continuing educational requirements for judges and attorneys, registration and training of mediators, and accreditation of attorney specialization programs.

- * *Pathways to the Bench and Bar Work Group to the Indiana Supreme Court Commission on Equity and Access in the Court System, 2022.* As noted under Section 7(A), above, the larger Commission was created in 2021 to help create and restore public trust and confidence in Indiana’s courts. Our subgroup reported to the Commission on initiatives to enhance pathways to the legal profession. I was one of 16 members of this working group.

- * *American Judges Association (AJA), 2017-2018.* The stated purpose of the AJA is to promote and improve administration of justice, status and independence of the judiciary, provide a forum for continuing legal education of its members and the general public, and for the exchange of new ideas among judges. My membership expired in 2018 and has not been renewed.

- * *Local Rules Advisory Committee for the United States District Court, Northern District of Indiana, 2009-2012.* As noted under Section 7(A), above, I was appointed to serve a four-year term in 2009. The purpose of this Committee was to modernize and write new local rules to govern legal procedure in the federal courts of our Northern District of Indiana.

- * *Lake County Bar Association’s Criminal Defense Lawyer’s Section, ~2002-2016.* This Section of the LCBA facilitates the needs of its Section members, their clients, and Lake County’s criminal and traffic court systems. I was a member from early in my career until taking the bench in 2016. My membership accommodated my work as a public defender in the state and federal courts.

- B. List any memberships and offices you have held in civic, charitable, or service organizations, including dates and descriptions of both the organization’s purpose and your involvement.

- * *Pathway to Adventure Counsel, Scouts BSA, Troop 532/Schererville, 2019-present; Assistant Scout Master (2019-present), Outdoor Excursions Coordinator (2021-present), Executive Committee Secretary (2021-present).* Scouts BSA’s stated missions are to prepare young people to become the best version of themselves, and to provide fun, adventure, learning, challenge and responsibility for youth ages 11-17. Aims of scouting are citizenship, character, personal fitness and leadership. *See also* Section 7(B) and (C), above.

- * *Calumet/Pathway to Adventure Counsel, Scouts BSA, Cub Scout Pack 504/Schererville, 2014-2019; Den Leader (2014-2019), Assistant Cub Master (2014-2015), Executive Committee Secretary (2014-2015). The missions of Cub Scouting are the same as noted above, but for youths in grades K-5. See also Section 7(B), above.*

- * *Indiana Chapter of the Walnut Council, Member: 2023-present. The Walnut Council is a not-for-profit corporation that promotes sustainable forest management and utilization of American black walnut and other high quality fine hardwoods. My interest in this organization dovetails with my family's farming operation (referenced below) and management of our ~40 acres of woodlands.*

- * *Schererville Baseball/Little League, Asst. Coach: 2016 (Angels), 2018 (Marlins). Mission: youth baseball.*

- * *Highland Baseball/Little League, Asst. Coach: 2014 (Rays), 2015 (Phillies). Mission: youth baseball.*

- * *Indiana University Alumni Association, Member: ~2013-present. Mission: to promote the interests of Indiana University and its students, graduates, communities and stakeholders. As a graduate of IU's law school, I am glad to give back to the institution that provided the foundation for my career.*

- * *University of Denver Alumni Association, Member: ~2021-present. Mission: to promote the interests of the University of Denver and its students, graduates, communities and stakeholders. The University of Denver is my undergraduate alma mater. I am glad to give back to the institution that provided my formative education.*

- * *German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Alumni Association, Member: 2007-present. Mission: to foster academic exchange and research on an international level. As noted under Sections 2 and 3, above, I was the recipient of two generous DAAD grants to study and work in Germany, both as an undergraduate student and young lawyer. My membership in the DAAD's Alumni Association is my own small way of giving back to this organization that has provided so much to my personal and professional education and growth.*

- * *Lake Hills Fire Department, Firefighter: 1999-2005. As noted under Section 7(C), above, the Lake Hills Fire Department is charged with providing first responder fire protection and emergency medical services to the unincorporated areas of St. John Township, Lake County, IN. I served*

as a volunteer Firefighter from 1999-2005. I also served as Secretary to the Department's Executive Board for a number of years.

- C. List any memberships and offices you hold in social clubs or organizations. If any club or organization restricts its membership on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin, please describe your efforts within the organization to eliminate restrictions.

My wife, children and I attend Catholic mass weekly, most often at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Schererville, where my family has been members since 2016. We previously attended St. James the Less Catholic Church in Highland, IN, where my wife and I were married in 2006.

Aside from the memberships noted above (including in Sections 8(A) and (B), I belong to no others. I am not aware of any of the above organizations practicing any forms of discrimination. Prior to 2018, youth females were able to formally join some but not all scouting programs. In 2018, Scouts BSA completely opened all of its ranks to youth females (hence the change of its name from "Boy Scouts of America" to "Scouts BSA," which is now rebranding to "Scouting America").

- D. Describe your hobbies and other leisure activities.

My wife and I maintain our family's legacy Pulaski County farm along the Tippecanoe River, where timber and row crops (corn, soybeans and wheat) are grown. About 25 of our ~40 forested acres are designated as Classified Woodlands through Indiana's DNR. We derive great enjoyment from our family time there, which includes wandering the woods, beekeeping, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, ATV/dirt-biking and so much more.

I am drawn to nearly anything outdoors. The Scheele family has a pop-up camper that we've pulled around most of the country. My son and I also get our regular camping "fix" from our monthly scouting excursions, detailed above. I love hiking, whether in a city or the wilderness; I will hike anywhere.

My family and I enjoy traveling and exploring. This has occasioned many epic vacation experiences, nationally and internationally.

I am also a fan of team sports on all levels. My kids' involvement in youth sports (little league/soccer/softball/tennis/diving/and more) has been and remains a great source of

entertainment and joy. I am a fan of nearly all Indiana and Chicagoland college and professional teams.

9. Legal Proceedings

- A. List any lawsuits or legal proceedings in any jurisdiction, including but not limited to bankruptcies, dissolutions, and criminal matters to which you have been a party. Provide dates, case numbers, courts, names of other parties, and, if needed, a brief explanation. (If minor children are involved [i.e. an adoption], use initials only.)

I have been arrested twice: in May, 1999, and May, 2000. I believe that neither arrest should have occurred. The charge attendant to each arrest was summarily dismissed. Case information attendant to each:

State of Indiana v. Stephen E. Scheele: 45I02-9905-CM-09635: Schererville Town Court. A Class B Misdemeanor charge of Public Intoxication was filed in May, 1999. A Special Prosecutor was appointed and moved to dismiss the case on/about November 17, 1999, for want of probable cause. Greater detail is provided under Paragraph 9(B), below.

State of Indiana v. Stephen E. Scheele: 66D01-0006-CM-188: Pulaski County Superior Court. A Class B Misdemeanor charge of Battery was filed in June, 2000. The case was summarily dismissed on/about October 16, 2000. Greater detail is provided under Paragraph 9(B), below.

- B. If you ever have been arrested or cited for any violation of the law other than for routine traffic violations, provide dates, jurisdictions, and an explanation of the event and its resolution.

As noted, I have been arrested twice: in May, 1999, and May, 2000. The charge attendant to each arrest was summarily dismissed. Details:

Arrest #1: Wednesday, May 13, 1999, Schererville, Indiana.

On the afternoon of May 13, 1999, I attended a post-funeral gathering of family and friends at a deceased neighbor's home, two doors down from where I lived. While there—unbeknownst to me—my brother crashed his car into a neighborhood tree and driveway up the block. I was told of this, walked up the street to survey the crash, observed my brother's disabled vehicle (it was a single-car crash with no injuries), spoke with the homeowner, and was walking back when a Schererville police officer approached for questioning. He became frustrated with my

truthful assertions that while I knew the broken car to be my brother's, I was not present at the time of the crash and had no information to provide on how the crash occurred or where my brother had since gone. The officer directed me and another funeral attendee to submit to arrest. No explanation was given. I peacefully submitted.

At the station, I was told that I would be charged with Public Intoxication, a Class B Misdemeanor under Indiana law. I felt then (and now) that my arrest and charge were pretexts, due to my nearness in time and place and relation to my brother, but I was helpless to do anything but allow the process to take course. As I was being processed, my brother came into the booking room, in custody for reckless driving and/or leaving the scene of his car crash (misdemeanors). We bonded out from the police station a short time later.

I was charged with a single count of Public Intoxication in the Schererville Town Court. A Special Prosecutor was appointed. When I learned of the Special Prosecutor's appointment, my brother's attorney and I conference called her to discuss status. In that discussion, the Special Prosecutor informed me that she found no probable cause for my arrest and would be filing a motion to dismiss the charge against me, which she did on/about November 17, 1999.

Arrest #2: Sunday, May 21, 2000, Winamac, IN

On the evening of May 20, 2000, my sister and I were in Winamac, IN, to attend a cousin's wedding. Many family members attended. Post-reception, my sister, others and I found ourselves in a downtown Winamac bar called "Mandarino's." As we were planning to leave, I returned from the bathroom to find my sister holding her head in a blood-soaked bar towel. As I took stock of her situation, a bar brawl erupted (or re-erupted) from the other side of the room, involving a dozen or more people. I was not involved in any brawling. Police arrived and started arresting people. My sister and I stood by, as she wished to provide a witness statement about the assault upon her. We stood by for about 30 minutes waiting to provide her statement; we could have left at any time. When her opportunity came to provide a statement, an officer inexplicably told both of us that we were under arrest. No explanation was given. We were surprised, displeased, and knew our arrests were wrong, but we also knew better than to do anything but peacefully submit. En route to the Pulaski County Jail, my sister was taken to the hospital to treat her facial injury; she received 5 stitches. At the jail, we were told that I would be charged with Battery and my sister with Disorderly Conduct, both Class B Misdemeanors under Indiana law. This was wrong: we had done nothing to deserve arrest or charging. We bonded out. My sister was never formally charged. My charge was summarily dismissed on/about October 16, 2000. I was personally told by the

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney on that day that there was no evidence to substantiate the charge against me.

I am glad to provide additional information or detail, as necessary or requested.

- C. If you have been disciplined or cautioned, formally or informally, by the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission, by the Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications, by the Indiana Supreme Court, or by similar entities in any other jurisdiction, identify each instance by date, case number (if applicable), and describe the circumstances and the nature of the outcome or resolution.

Not applicable.

- D. If you have any outstanding federal, state, or local tax obligations, please itemize and explain.

Not applicable.

10. References

- A. Provide the names of three attorneys who have been your professional adversaries in your practice or who have litigated substantial cases in your court and who would be in positions to comment on your qualifications for appointment to an Indiana Appellate Court (*contact information to be included in Part Two of this application*).

- 1) David J. Nozick, Esq.
- 2) The Honorable Joshua P. Kolar
- 3) Carley A. Brandenburg, Esq.

- B. Provide the names of three professional references other than those listed in Question 10A (*contact information to be included in Part Two of this application*).

- 1) The Honorable John M. Sedia
- 2) The Honorable Natalie Bokota
- 3) Paul A. Leonard, Esq.

INDIANA JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION

C. Provide the names of three personal references other than those listed in Question 10A or 10B
(contact information to be included in Part Two of this application).

- 1) Paul C. Morely
- 2) James Matthew Barry
- 3) Timothy J. Ormes