Indiana Supreme Court

Chambers of Justice Derek R. Molter • 317-232-2547 • courts.in.gov

September 30, 2026

The Honorable Mike Braun
Governor of Indiana
c/o Steve Carter
200 W. Washington Street, Statehouse Room 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Braun:

The Marion County Judicial Selection Committee met on September 22 and September 23 and selected five nominees each for two vacancies in the Marion Superior Court due to the retirements of Judge James Osborn and Judge Gary Miller. On behalf of the commission, and pursuant to Indiana Code section 33-33-49-13.4, we submit to you the candidates the committee found to be the most qualified.

For the first vacancy, the committee nominates the following five candidates:

- **Magistrate Ross Anderson**
- **Jayson McGrath**
- **Magistrate Katharine Melnick**
- **Magistrate Terrance Tharpe**
- **Samantha Weichert**

For the second vacancy, the committee nominates the following five candidates:

- **Magistrate Marcia Harper**
- **Magistrate David Hooper**
- **Magistrate Andrew Kobe**
- **Magistrate Matthew Symons**
- **Magistrate Michelle Waymire**

In selecting these candidates, the committee evaluated and weighed the nonexclusive list of statutory factors, including legal education, activities in public service, efforts and

achievements in improving the administration of justice, legal experience and reputation as a trial lawyer or judge, and probable judicial temperament.

On behalf of the committee, we offer summaries of each candidate's qualifications in the order listed above.

Magistrate Ross Anderson

Ross Anderson, born in Virginia and an Indiana resident for 22 years, has served as a magistrate for the Marion Superior Court since July 2022. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from Iowa State University in May 2001. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Drake University Law School in May 2004.

Magistrate Anderson served as a Deputy Prosecutor for the Marion County Prosecutor's Office from 2004 to 2009, serving in the Juvenile Division before moving over to Class D and Major Felony Court. He managed a solo practice from 2009 to 2011 before returning to the Marion County Prosecutor's Office in 2011. He was the Arson Prosecutor for the Special Crimes Unit from 2011 to 2016, when he became the Major Felony Supervisor for cases in Courtroom G01. In 2019, he was promoted to Level 6 Felony/Misdemeanor Court Division Chief, and from 2020 to 2022, he was the Major Felony Division Chief. During his time as a Deputy Prosecutor, he conducted over 75 jury trials.

Anderson has served as magistrate in major felony courts 21 and 27 since July 2022 and has presided over 41 major felony jury trials in that time. During his time as magistrate, he has assisted the Marion Superior Court in training judicial officers new to the criminal bench. He currently serves on the Indiana Judicial Conference Criminal Benchbook Committee. A Marion County judge stated that Anderson has "a natural presence and temperament that cannot be taught."

Jayson McGrath

Born in Michigan City, Jayson McGrath has been a Marion County resident for most of the past 23 years. He graduated from Indiana University in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Criminal Justice. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Indiana University McKinney School of Law in 2005.

McGrath joined the Marion County Prosecutor's Office in January 2006, where he eventually became a supervisor in the Major Felony and Municipal divisions in 2016, serving in that role until he left in 2019. He prosecuted over 60 jury trials while serving as a Deputy Prosecutor. In January 2020, he joined the Office of the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana.

At the United States' Attorney's Office, in addition to his regular duties, McGrath is responsible for instructing on indictment drafting and ethical matters related to *Brady* disclosures, as well as being tasked with gathering potential impeachment information about government witnesses. He is co-chair of the intern committee. He was a 2025 recipient of the United States Attorney's Award for Outstanding Collaborative Investigation and the Assistant United States Attorney: Victim Assistance Award, which recognizes "exceptional support and advocacy for victims throughout the federal legal process."

McGrath currently serves as a member of the Executive Committee for the Criminal Justice Section of the Indianapolis Bar Association. A longtime criminal defense attorney noted that McGrath "is highly respectful to all parties and approaches complex legal issues with fairness and integrity."

Magistrate Katharine Melnick

Born in New Haven, Connecticut, Katharine Melnick has served as a magistrate for the Marion County Superior Court since 2023. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from Columbia University in 2003 before earning her Juris Doctorate from St. John's University School of Law in 2007, where she was a recipient of the St. Thomas More Scholarship. She graduated *cum laude* and was an Associate Editor for the St. John's Journal of Legal Commentary.

After graduating, she began as a litigation associate for a New York law firm before taking a role as an assistant district attorney for the New York County District Attorney's Office. In 2014, she moved to Marion County, working as a deputy prosecutor and eventually supervisor of the Marion County Prosecutor's Office Special Victims Unit. During that time, she conducted over 100 jury trials and prided herself on creating a comfortable and collaborative environment, focusing on mentoring young prosecutors and lawyers on the benefits of mutual trust and respect.

In 2023, Melnick was hired as the magistrate for Courts 6 and 11, where she heard evictions, protection orders, damages, medical malpractice, and other civil matters. In 2025, she was appointed to serve as magistrate in Court 6 and Court 32, where she presides over major felony cases.

Off the bench, Magistrate Melnick is a member of the Judicial Protection Order Committee. Another judge declared that her "work experience, calm temperament, and intellect are an asset for our judiciary."

Magistrate Terrance Tharpe

Terrance Tharpe, born and raised in Indianapolis, has been serving as a magistrate on the Marion Superior Court since December 2022. He completed his Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at Wabash College in 2000, earning the distinction of President's Scholar. He then obtained his Juris Doctorate from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in 2003.

After graduating, Magistrate Tharpe first practiced as a solo attorney before joining the Marion County Prosecutor's Office in 2004 as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. During his time there, he rose to become the Chief Felony Firearms Prosecutor and Assistant Supervisor of the felony narcotics unit.

From January 2013 to January 2016, Magistrate Tharpe worked as a law clerk for Judge Rudolph R. Pyle III at the Court of Appeals of Indiana. He then transitioned to GEICO as a staff attorney from January 2016 to December 2018, defending personal injury and property damage lawsuits statewide. Magistrate Tharpe returned to the Prosecutor's Office in December 2018 as Chief Counsel, where he oversaw civil litigation, budgeting, and human resources. He was subsequently promoted to Chief Trial Deputy, taking charge of criminal operations and technology initiatives.

Magistrate Tharpe has served as first or second chair in 31 criminal jury trials and has participated in over 100 bench trials. In his role as magistrate, he is the Supervisory Magistrate for the Court Processing Office (CPO), overseeing probable cause determinations, initial hearings, bond settings, and search-warrant requests, while also managing the scheduling of magistrates assigned to the CPO.

Samantha Weichert

Samantha Weichert is a lifelong Marion County resident, currently serving as the Team Lead Attorney for the F6 Division of the Marion County Public Defender Agency. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Butler University in 2013. Samantha earned her Juris Doctorate from the Indiana University McKinney Schol of Law in 2016, where she was the Executive Articles Director for the Indiana Health Law Review.

Weichert has worked her entire career at the Marion County Public Defender Agency. She began defending standard misdemeanor cases before being transitioned into domestic violence matters. Subsequently, she was assigned to Level 6 felony cases and then major felony drug cases before moving to the Problem-Solving Division, handling cases in Drug Treatment Court. She currently serves as the Team Lead in Marion Superior 17, still defending Level 6 felony cases, while also supervising and assisting younger public defenders. She manages a Level 5 felony caseload in addition to her Team Lead duties.

During her time as a public defender, she estimates that she has conducted 20 criminal jury trials.

Weichert has earned the respect of a Marion County judge who said, “I know that Sam would meet the challenge of becoming a judicial officer with the same commitment and purpose that I observe daily, and would be an asset to the Marion Superior Courts as a judicial officer.”

Magistrate Marcia Harper

Marcia Harper was born in Linton and is a long-time resident of Marion County. She graduated from Purdue University in 1991 with a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education and earned her Juris Doctorate from Valparaiso University School of Law in 1998.

Magistrate Harper began her law career as a clerk and then associate attorney at the firm of Laudig George Rutherford & Sipes, practicing civil and criminal law. She then owned and operated her own law office for six years, representing clients in criminal, family, probate, and business matters. From 2008 to 2016, Harper worked as a magistrate in the Marion Circuit Court and Paternity Division, handling family law matters, name changes, and protective orders. From 2016 to 2017, she served as a commissioner in Marion Superior Court, presiding over initial hearings, probable cause determinations, and search warrant requests. Thereafter, until 2020, she served as a magistrate in the Juvenile Division, managing primarily CHINS and family law matters. Since 2021, she has been a magistrate in the Family Division, presiding over family and probate matters ranging from paternity, dissolution, guardianship, adoption, CHINS, and TPR cases.

Magistrate Harper has served on the Indiana Judicial Conference Criminal Benchbook Committee from 2009 to 2014 and since 2024 has served on the Protection Order Committee. A Marion County judge stated that “[s]he approaches her work with a positive attitude and has the insight, perseverance, and ambition that would make her an effective contributor and leader.”

Magistrate David Hooper

David Hooper is a long-time resident of Marion County. Hooper graduated from Indiana State University with a double major in Criminology and Political Science. He then attended the Southern Illinois University School of Law, earning his Juris Doctorate in 2003.

After obtaining his license, Hooper began as an associate at Thomasson, Thomasson, Jackson, & Long in Columbus until 2007, when he started a solo practice that he maintained until 2011. During that time, he was also contracted to work with the Marion

County Public Defender Agency, and his practice spanned criminal law and nearly every aspect of family law, including divorces, custody matters, CHINS, and TPR cases. In 2011, he was hired as a magistrate for the Marion Superior Court. Since then, he has presided over 100 criminal jury trials and manages all levels of criminal cases at all stages of proceedings. Magistrate Hooper is the sole judicial officer in Marion County entrusted to hear "Red Flag" Jake Laird Law cases, designed to ensure firearms are kept out of the hands of dangerous individuals.

Magistrate Hooper has served multiple terms on the Indiana Judicial Conference Criminal Benchbook Committee and is currently a member of the Jury Committee. A Marion County judge noted that Hooper "stands out as a leader who … regularly volunteers to take on extra duties beyond his normal assignments and gives his time freely in developing training to benefit all judicial officers."

Magistrate Andrew Kobe

Born in Van Nuys, California, Andrew Kobe has been a resident of Marion County since 2010. Kobe earned his Bachelor of Science in Government from Liberty University in 1997. In 2000, he graduated from Indiana University Maurer School of Law with his Juris Doctorate degree.

Upon receiving his law license, Magistrate Kobe worked as a law clerk for Justice Brent Dickson from 2000 to 2002. Thereafter, he was a Deputy Attorney General for the Office of the Indiana Attorney General in the appellate section. From 2006 to 2010, he was a trial prosecutor in Huntington County, handling cases ranging from infractions to major felonies. During that time, he was first chair for almost 20 criminal jury trials. He later returned to the Attorney General's Office in 2010 as a Section Chief of Criminal Appeals, maintaining a regular caseload while supervising more than 20 attorneys. In January 2026, Kobe was hired as a magistrate for the Marion Superior Court in the Family Division, presiding over family law and child welfare cases.

Magistrate Kobe was a longstanding member of the Complex Litigation Committee for the Indiana Prosecuting Attorney's Council while serving at the Attorney General's Office and frequently consulted with legislators on bills that touched on criminal law. A fellow magistrate from Huntington County describes Kobe as "an exceptional leader… because of his collaborative approach, wisdom, and integrity[, who] would be a brilliant and honorable judge of the Marion County Superior Court."

Magistrate Matthew Symons

Matthew Symons was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and has been a Marion County resident since 2004. He graduated from Wabash College in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 2010, he received his Juris Doctorate from the Indiana University McKinney School of Law.

Prior to finishing law school, Magistrate Symons was the Director of Public Affairs for the Marion County Prosecutor's Office from 2006 to 2008. Upon receiving his license, he began as a deputy prosecuting attorney, serving in the Misdemeanor and D Felony Division for four years, before moving to the Major Case Division in July 2014. During his time as a deputy prosecutor, he tried nearly 50 jury trials. He joined the Marion Superior Court in February 2021, originally as a Commissioner in the Initial Hearing Court, reviewing warrants and bonds and making probable cause determinations. In January 2022, he became a magistrate in Courts 26 and 29, overseeing criminal matters. During his time as a magistrate, he has presided over 50 jury trials.

Magistrate Symons has been a member of the Indiana Army National Guard since 2013. He has served as a Judge Advocate, Trial Counsel, Military Magistrate, and Chief of National Security Law for various Indiana-based military units. He has also served on the Indiana Judicial Conference's Pretrial Services Committee since 2023. A Marion County judge states that Magistrate Symons "remains thoughtful, even-tempered, and composed. He exercises great judgment and treats everyone who comes before him—attorneys, litigants and court staff alike—with genuine respect."

Magistrate Michelle Waymire

Michelle Waymire is a longtime resident of Marion County and was born in Marion. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Law and Society in 1991 from Purdue University. Subsequently, she received her Juris Doctorate in 1994 from the Indiana University McKinney School of Law.

Magistrate Waymire began as a certified legal intern at the Marion County Prosecutor's Office in 1993, transitioning to a role as deputy prosecuting attorney in 1995. From 2002 to 2019, she served as the Supervisor for the Community Prosecution Division, responsible for reviewing investigations, making charging decisions, trying jury cases, training law enforcement officers, developing crime prevention initiatives, and supervising attorneys and support staff. From 2020 to 2021, she served as a deputy prosecuting attorney for the Major Felony Division. While a prosecutor, she tried approximately 35 criminal jury trials. She began as a magistrate in 2022 and has been assigned to Initial Hearing Court, Level 6 Court, Major Felony Court, Family Court Protective Order Court, and Civil Court. During her

time as Supervisory Magistrate of the Court Processing Office, she conducted a systemic review of processes to help reduce the risk of over-detention or erroneous releases. During her time as a magistrate, she has presided over 21 criminal jury trials.

Magistrate Waymire is a member of the Indiana Judicial Conference Court Personnel Committee and the Language Access Advisory Committee. A Marion County judge believes that "[i]f the respect and courtesy she shows others are any indication of her judicial temperament, Michelle will set the standard for how judges should treat litigants, attorneys, and everyone who appears before the court."

***

We would be pleased to discuss any of these nominees with you in greater detail. Based on their interviews and the committee's assessment, each nominee is well suited for the bench and has the legal ability and professional experience to serve with distinction. Our committee is confident that each nominee is of high caliber and would be an excellent selection for the Marion Superior Court.

Sincerely,



Derek R. Molter
Justice of the Supreme Court of Indiana and MCJSC Chairperson



Paul A. Felix
Judge, Court of Appeals of Indiana and MCJSC Vice Chairperson