

Morgantown Regional Meeting Presenter Bios

C. Casey Forbes

C. Casey Forbes is the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia and the Intermediate Court of Appeals of West Virginia. Casey is the sixteenth person to serve as Clerk of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia since the State was founded in 1863, and the second Clerk of the Intermediate Court of Appeals of West Virginia since it was founded in 2022.

Casey is a native of Charleston. He has a bachelor's degree in English from Shepherd University, a master's degree in English from the College of Charleston, S.C./Citadel, and a law degree from the University of Montana. He has worked in the Office of the Clerk since 2018 as a staff attorney then deputy clerk. He previously served as a staff attorney for the West Virginia Legislature; a writ clerk in the Supreme Court's Office of Counsel; an attorney in private practice, during which time he was appointed as a mental hygiene commissioner in and for Kanawha County; and an assistant attorney general.

Rachael L. Fletcher Cipoletti

Rachael L. Fletcher Cipoletti is Chief Lawyer Disciplinary Counsel for the West Virginia Office of Lawyer Disciplinary Counsel. She has been with the ODC since 2002 and became Chief Disciplinary Counsel in 2008. Rachael also serves as Special Judicial Disciplinary Counsel for the Judicial Investigation Commission. Rachael is a frequent lecturer on ethics and professionalism for the West Virginia University College of Law, the WV State Bar, and the American Bar Association.

Rachael is admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia, United States Southern District of West Virginia, United States Northern District of West Virginia, United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and the Supreme Court of the United States of America. Rachael was previously an attorney with Legal Aid of West Virginia. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from West Virginia University and also earned her Juris Doctorate from West Virginia University. She currently serves on the Future of the Law Committee for the WV State Bar, is the ODC liaison to the WV Judicial and Lawyer Assistance Program, serves on the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, and serves on the ABA's standing committee for the Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs Consortium on Professionalism Initiatives. She is a lifetime member of the West Virginia University Alumni Association, a member of the American Bar Association, a member of the Center for Professional Responsibility, and a member of the National Organization of Bar Counsel.

Judge Paul W. Gwaltney, Jr., Seventeenth Judicial District

Judge Paul W. Gwaltney, Jr., was sworn in as a judge in the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit (Monongalia County) on June 2. Governor Jim Justice appointed Judge Gwaltney to replace Judge Susan B. Tucker, who retired April 28, 2023.

Judge Gwaltney was admitted to the West Virginia Bar in October 2003 after he graduated in the top 15 percent of his class in May 2003 from West Virginia University College of Law. He served as executive research editor of the Law Review his third year of law school and was an associate editor his second year. Before law school, he worked as a clerk in the Education Department for the Louis A. Johnson Veterans' Administration Medical Center.

Judge Gwaltney has an undergraduate degree from Bob Jones University, where he participated in the South Carolina Student Legislature and also judged high school debates.

Before taking the bench, Judge Gwaltney had an active criminal defense practice in North Central West Virginia. During the first 17 years of his practice, he was a civil litigator. In December 2020, he opened Gwaltney Law Office with the sole purpose of representing individuals in criminal and juvenile abuse cases.

Judge Perri Jo DeChristopher, Seventeenth Judicial District

Perri Jo DeChristopher is Chief Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit Court (Monongalia County). Governor Jim Justice appointed Judge DeChristopher to the bench to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Judge Philip D. Gaujot. She took office on January 27, 2023.

She was born and raised in Monongalia County and attended Morgantown High School. She is a graduate of West Virginia University and West Virginia University College of Law.

Judge DeChristopher's career in public service began when she accepted a position in the Harrison County Prosecuting Attorney's Office in 1994. In 1998, she began working in the Monongalia County Prosecuting Attorney's Office as an assistant prosecuting attorney, and she became chief assistant in 2000. She was elected Prosecuting Attorney of Monongalia County in 2016 and re-elected in 2020.

For more than 20 years, Judge DeChristopher was responsible for prosecution of murder charges, violent felony offenses, felony drug cases, and sexual assault crimes involving children and adults. She was a member of the Monongalia County Sexual Assault Response Team, chair of the Mon Metro Drug Task Force Board of Directors, a founding member of the Monongalia County Adult Drug Court, vice president of the West Virginia Association of Counties, and is a past president of the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Association.

She was appointed by the governor to the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Commission and was the vice chair of the West Virginia Sentencing Commission under the Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency, and Correction. She was inducted as a West Virginia Bar Fellow in 2023.

Judge Cindy Scott, Seventeenth Judicial District

Judge Cindy Scott was elected on June 9, 2020, to the bench in the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit (Monongalia County, Division 2), to fill the unexpired term of Judge Russell M. Clawges, Jr., who retired. Upon taking the oath of office on June 29, 2020, Judge Scott assumed the role of Chief Judge for the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit and will continue serving in that capacity until December 31, 2021.

Judge Scott is a native of Morgantown, West Virginia and graduated from Morgantown High School in 1982. She received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration-Marketing from West Virginia University in 1986, and after a brief career in banking, she returned to school and received a law degree from West Virginia University College of Law in 1994.

Judge Scott began her legal career by engaging in the general practice of law for 12 years, focusing on the representation of defendants in misdemeanor and felony criminal cases and respondents in child abuse and neglect cases, while also serving as a Guardian Ad Litem in child abuse and neglect cases, practicing in Family Court and engaging in Civil Litigation.

From 2006 to 2016, Judge Scott served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney with the Monongalia County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and in 2016, she joined WVU's Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Office of Equity Assurance, where she addressed discrimination, harassment, and intimate partner violence involving WVU's faculty, staff and students while leading the Prevention and Education Team and reviewing Title IX Case Investigations.

Judge Scott serves as the Judge for the Monongalia County Adult Drug Court, and previously served on the Monongalia County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), the Monongalia/Preston Counties Violence Against Women Act - STOP Team, the Human Rights Committee for the Monongalia County Youth Services Center, and she worked directly with the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA).