

PANELISTS

JUDGE KRISTIN BAYS

Expedited Action Rules Workshop

Judge **KRISTIN BAYS** is the Judge of the 284th District Court in Montgomery County, Texas. It is a civil court, which matches her 25 years of experience as a civil litigator before she took the bench. Her civil litigation interest formed through her attendance at Baylor Law School where civil litigation training is the norm.

In law school Judge Bays was Editor-In-Chief of the Baylor Law Review, she won the Intellectual Property Law award for her law review article on copyright law, she was a three year recipient of the Leon Jaworski Advocacy Scholarship, and she competed in a number of mock trial and moot court competitions, winning awards at local, state and national competitions. Though she loved being a civil litigator, she long wanted to become a judge. After a quarter of a century in private practice, she won the bench where she now sits.

FERNANDO BUSTOS

FERNANDO M. BUSTOS is the Principal of the Bustos Law Firm, P.C. in Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Bustos graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Brigham Young University and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Texas Tech University School of Law. He is licensed to practice in Texas and New Mexico, and is admitted to the Supreme Court of the United States, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, the U.S. Tax Court, all the U.S. District Courts in Texas, the U.S. District Court of New Mexico, and the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Mr. Bustos' practice areas are federal litigation, commercial litigation, intellectual property, labor and employment law, receiverships, civil rights litigation, and appeals.

JUDGE ANN-MARIE
CARRUTH

Before taking the bench in 2015, Judge **ANN-MARIE CARRUTH** enjoyed a private general law practice. She holds both her undergraduate and law degree from Texas Tech University, where she was named best-oralist in mock trial competitions and received the American Jurisprudence award in International Environmental Law. Judge Carruth has served as judge for Precinct 4 and Court-at-Law #3 in Lubbock County and was recently appointed by Governor Abbott as the judge of the 72nd District Court.

While in office Judge Carruth has developed community outreach programs such as Full Court Press, Carruth's Court Camp, and created several other opportunities for the court and community to intersect. Chief Justice Nathan Hecht has appointed Judge Carruth to the Courthouse Security Task Force, the Judicial Committee on Information Technology, the Landlord-Tenant Forms Task Force, and the Pro Bono Work Group. Judge Carruth has twice been named "Judge of the Year" by the West Texas Justices of the Peace and Constables Association, Young Adult Volunteer of the Year by the Lubbock Volunteer Center and a Women of Excellence by the YWCA. In 2018, Judge Carruth was named the Texas Tech University College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) Ag Communications' Outstanding Early Career recipient and her Saturday Court was named the "Best Practice" in the state of Texas by JPCA. The following year, she was presented with the Texas Tech University CASNR Young Alumni Award.

Judge Carruth is a member of the Texas Tech University School of Law Inns of Court and serves on committees for the Texas Bar Foundation. She also serves on the board for the Texas Bar College, the YWCA, and the Community Foundation of West Texas. Judge Carruth has served as an adjunct professor for Texas Tech University, Wayland Baptist University, and Texas Tech University School of Law. She also serves as faculty for the Texas Justice Court Training Center and is frequently invited to speak to various legal, professional, and community organizations. Ann-Marie and her husband, Kyle, have two boys, Thatcher and Baines.

PAULA
HANNAFORD-AGOR

PAULA L. HANNAFORD-AGOR, a staff attorney and Principal Court Research Consultant with the Research Division of the NCSC, joined the National Center in May 1993. Her areas of expertise include civil litigation including civil caseload management and complex litigation; access to justice; jury system management and trial procedure; management of complex litigation; legal and judicial ethics and discipline; state-federal jurisdiction; and probate and guardianship procedure. She directs the NCSC Civil Justice Initiative and is the author of numerous evaluations of the impact of civil justice reform efforts. Ms. Hannaford-Agor received her law degree from William & Mary Law School, and a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy of the College of William and Mary.

JUDGE LES HATCH

Judge **LES HATCH** has presided over civil and family cases in the 237th District Court in Lubbock County since his appointment in 2009. He received a B.S. from Texas A&M University in 1985 and J.D. from Texas Tech University School of Law in 1988. He is a trial advocacy Adjunct Professor for Texas Tech School of Law. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Hatch practiced primarily in the area of personal injury defense and is board certified in that area. He is chair of the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Texas, a member and past president of Texas Association of District Judges, a member and past president of Texas Tech University School of Law American Inn of Court, a member and current president of the Lubbock ABOTA chapter, a member of the Supreme Court of Texas Expedited Actions and Alternative Dispute Resolution Evaluation Advisory Committee, a member and past president of the Lubbock County Bar Association, and former director of the Texas Young Lawyer's Association.

CHIEF JUSTICE
NATHAN HECHT

NATHAN L. HECHT is the 27th Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas. He has been elected to the Court seven times, first in 1988 as a Justice, and in 2014 and 2020 as Chief Justice. He is the longest-serving Member of the Court in Texas history and the longest-tenured Texas judge in active service. Throughout his service on the Court, he has overseen revisions to the rules of administration, practice, and procedure in Texas courts, and was appointed by the Chief Justice of the United States to the federal Advisory Committee on Civil Rules. He is also active in the Court's efforts to assure that Texans living below the poverty level, as well as others with limited means, have access to basic civil legal services.

Chief Justice Hecht was appointed to the district court in 1981 and was elected to the court of appeals in 1986. Before taking the bench, he was a partner in the Locke firm in Dallas. He holds a B.A. degree with honors in philosophy from Yale University, and a J.D. degree cum laude from the SMU School of Law, where he was a Hatton W. Sumners Scholar. He clerked for Judge Roger Robb on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and was a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Reserve Judge Advocate General Corps. He is President of the national Conference of Chief Justices, a Life Member of the American Law Institute and a member of Council, and a member of the Texas Philosophical Society. He won re-election in November 2020 to a term that ends December 31, 2026.

NATHAN JENSEN

NATHAN JENSEN is currently the Assistant Director for Court Services at the Administrative Office for Illinois Courts. Jensen previously worked as Director of Court Administration for Montgomery County, Texas.

He also served in a Chief of Staff role to Presiding Judge Olen Underwood with the Second Administrative Judicial Region of Texas from 2006 to 2013. He holds a

BRITTANY
KAUFFMAN

bachelor's degree from the University of Houston and a Master's in Public Administration from Sam Houston State University. He is also a Certified Court Manager through the National Center for State Courts' Institute for Court Management. Nathan is a member of the National Association for Court Management and the American Society for Public Administration. He and his wife have six children.

BRITTANY KAUFFMAN is a Senior Director at IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System. In this role, she oversees IAALS' programmatic objectives and strategy while also leading IAALS' civil justice reform efforts at both the state and federal level. Kauffman has worked with state and federal courts, rules committees, civil justice task forces, and bar organizations around the country, serving as a facilitator, expert liaison, and consultant on civil justice reform efforts. She provides legal and empirical research and analysis to assist in the development of recommendations, as well as support for implementation—all toward the goal of making our civil justice system accessible, efficient, and relevant to the people whom it serves.

Kauffman joined IAALS in the spring of 2012 after having practiced with Arnold & Porter, LLP. Prior to her work at Arnold & Porter, she served as a law clerk for the Honorable Judge Paul J. Kelly, Jr., of the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Kauffman received her JD from the University of Colorado School of Law and her undergraduate degree in Chemistry from Colorado College.

VALERI MALONE

VALERI MALONE is a Lubbock personal injury attorney dedicated to assisting clients through the toughest moments of their lives.

She is a graduate of Stephen F. Austin University and Texas Tech School of Law. While in law school, Valeri was selected for early admission to Texas Tech School of Law's advocacy program, the Board of Barristers and ranked first in class.

She is licensed to practice law in Texas and Oklahoma state courts, as well as in Federal District Courts in the Northern and Eastern Districts of Texas. Her reputation as a hardworking and successful trial attorney precedes her when she walks into settlement talks and the courtroom. Clients trust that Valeri will handle their cases with the utmost care and get the best possible resolution.

BROOKE MEYER

BROOKE H. MEYER is a Manager at IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, with a focus on civil justice reform at the state and federal levels. She conducts legal and empirical research on a variety of projects ranging from pattern discovery protocols to advocating for civil justice reform for state courts and court users via the 13 Recommendations from CCJ/COSCA.

Meyer joined IAALS in 2019 after practicing in the public and private sectors for approximately 15 years. Her prior practice included employment litigation as well as legal ethics and attorney discipline. She is currently an appointed member of the Committee on Conduct for the U.S. District Court, District of Colorado.

DAVID SLAYTON

DAVID SLAYTON is the Administrative Director for the Office of Court Administration. David Slayton is a Past President of the National Association for Court Management and was formerly the Secretary on the Board of Directors for the Texas Association for Drug Court Professionals. In addition to the aforementioned organizations, David is a member of the Texas Association for Court Administration. Slayton has served as the Administrative Director since May 7, 2012. He has been employed by the Judicial Branch in various roles since 1998, serving as Director of Court Administration for Lubbock County (2004-2012), Deputy

JEFFREY
TSUNEKAWA

Clerk and Court Services Supervisor for the U.S. District Court in Dallas (2001-2004) and Court Coordinator for the 99th District Court in Lubbock County (1999-2001). Mr. Slayton is a graduate of Texas Tech University (B.A.) and Troy University (M.P.A.) and is a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management.

JEFFREY TSUNEKAWA is currently the Director of Research and Court Services at the Texas Office of Court Administration, where he oversees a unit that prepares statistical and data reports, responds to proposed legislation and provides administrative and technical support to courts across the State of Texas. Prior to that, he was the Judicial Operations Manager for Seattle Municipal Court in Washington State, overseeing jury operations, courtroom judicial operations and responsibility for both the digital and paper records of the court. Prior to becoming the Judicial Operations Manager, he was the Senior Executive Assistant to the seven elected Judges and six Magistrates for the Seattle Municipal Court. He previously held positions of similar responsibility at King County Superior Court before joining the Seattle Municipal Court.

Mr. Tsunekawa received a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences from Washington State University in 2007, and a Master's of Public Administration from Seattle University in 2016. Mr. Tsunekawa was a member of the Washington State District and Municipal Court Management Association, from 2011 to 2018. In 2016, Mr. Tsunekawa became a Fellow of the Institute of Court Management with the National Center for State Courts. He has been a member of the National Association for Court Management since 2007. He served as a Director for the NACM Board of Directors from 2016-2019, and is currently Vice President.

SHERI WOODFIN

SHERI WOODFIN began working for Office of Court Administration (OCA) in February 2020 as a Court Consultant, aiding courts across the state with analysis of procedures, best practice implementation and evaluation. Prior to working with OCA, Sheri worked for Tom Green County for 32 years, and was elected District Clerk in 1999. Sheri has served on the board of the Texas Association of Counties, the Executive Board of the County and District Clerks Association of Texas (CDCAT), serving as President in 2012, as well as chaired and served on many committees of CDCAT and State appointed committees, including the Judicial Committee on Information Technology. She was honored as District Clerk of the Year by her peers in 2005.

As District Clerk in 2003, Tom Green County was one of the first to adopt e-filing. With collaboration from the District Judges and court personnel, Tom Green County adopted paperless solution in Civil and Criminal District Courts well before the mandate of e-file. Sheri is married to Lloyd for 38 years; is the mother of four children, Whitney, Davis, Elijah, and Cobi and three beautiful grandsons and two beautiful granddaughters.