

Governor O'Malley Appoints Seven Circuit Court Judges

September 28th, 2011

Highly Qualified, Diverse Candidates Selected to Serve Across the State

ANNAPOLIS, MD (September 28, 2011) – Governor O'Malley announced today the appointment of seven Circuit Court judges who will serve in Baltimore City, Prince George's County and Cecil County. The seven appointees represent the geographic and ethnic diversity of the State of Maryland, and all the appointees share in common their exceptional qualifications to serve as Circuit Court judges in our state.

"The appointment of judges is one of the most important responsibilities of any chief executive," said Governor O'Malley. "I am pleased to announce today the appointment of seven highly qualified, talented and diverse candidates from across the State to serve on Maryland's bench."

Over the last several months, Governor O'Malley has conducted numerous interviews with candidates recommended to him by the trial court judicial nominating commissions. All of the judges selected to serve on Maryland's Circuit Court were recommended to him by the commissions.

In **Baltimore City**, Governor O'Malley has appointed two individuals to serve on the Circuit Court: District Court Judge Jeannie J. Hong and Michael Wilson Reed.

Governor O'Malley elevated Judge Hong to the Circuit Court after nine years of service on the District Court for Baltimore City. Judge Hong was the first of two Asian Pacific American Judges to serve on the bench in the State of Maryland and now becomes the first judge of Asian background to serve on the Circuit Court level. Since May of 2011, Judge Hong has served as Judge-In-Charge of the North Avenue District Court. The caseload of the North Avenue District is one of the largest in the State of Maryland. Prior to her service on the bench, Judge Hong served as an assistant state's attorney in Baltimore City and as a staff attorney for the Maryland Department of Human Resources.

Mr. Reed is currently a litigator with the Law Office of Peter T. Nicholl. He started with the firm in early 2011, and currently practices product liability, negligence, strict liability and wrongful death law. Prior to joining the Law Office of Peter T. Nicholl, he spent five years as a litigator at the Office of the Attorney General where he represented the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in federal and state trial courts. Mr. Reed previously served as an assistant state's attorney for Baltimore City and as legislative counsel to the Maryland General Assembly.

In **Prince George's County**, Governor O'Malley has appointed four individuals to serve on the Circuit Court. Governor O'Malley has elevated District Court Judge Krystal Quinn Alves,

District Court Judge Daneeka Varner Cotton, District Court Judge Hassan Ali El-Amin, and has appointed John Paul Davey to the Circuit Court.

Judge Alves has been a District Court judge in Prince George's County since 2005. Before her appointment to the bench, Judge Alves spent most of her career as a government lawyer in Prince George's County – both at the State's Attorney's Office and also in the County Office of Law. With this appointment, Judge Alves now assumes the seat previously held by the Honorable William D. Missouri, for whom she clerked from 1991-1992.

Judge Cotton has served as a District Court judge in Prince George's County since 2006. She currently serves as chairperson of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council for Prince George's County. Judge Cotton previously served in the State's Attorney's Office of Prince George's County, where she prosecuted felonies in District and Circuit Courts. In 1998, she was appointed Master of the Family Division of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County where she worked until her appointment to the District Court bench in 2006.

Judge El-Amin has been a District Court judge for Prince George's County since 2000. After graduating from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1983, Judge El-Amin practiced law in both Maryland and Washington, D.C. in a wide variety of practice areas. Judge El-Amin is very active in the Muslim community and in 2006 organized and conducted a workshop entitled, "What Judges Need to Know About Islam" at a Maryland Judicial Conference in Cambridge, Maryland.

Mr. Davey has been in the private practice of law in Prince George's County for the past 21 years. For 12 of those years (1991-2003), Mr. Davey also served as Prince George's County's representative to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. In that position, he promoted the County's transportation policies, ensured fiscal accountability, and developed strategies designed to protect the system while promoting services. Prior to entering private practice, Mr. Davey worked as the chief administrative officer for Prince George's County from 1987 to 1991.

In **Cecil County**, Governor O'Malley has appointed Master Jane Cairns Murray to the Circuit Court. Since 2006, Master Murray has been a domestic relations master for Cecil County, where she handles over 2,300 cases per year. Master Murray previously spent two years as a law firm associate, 16 years with the Cecil County Public Defender's Office, and two years as a sole practitioner. Upon graduation from the University of Baltimore School of Law in 1987, Master Murray worked as an associate for a small law firm in Elkton.

More information on the trial courts judicial nominating commissions established by Governor O'Malley can be found at <http://www.gov.state.md.us/executiveorders/01.01.2008.04eo.pdf>.