

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL DISABILITIES AND TENURE**

515 FIFTH STREET, N.W. BUILDING A, ROOM 246
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001
(202) 727-1363

March 25, 2010

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: Evaluation of the Honorable Ronna Lee Beck

Dear Mr. President:

The term of the Honorable Ronna Lee Beck, an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, expires on May 25, 2010. She is seeking reappointment to another term.

Pursuant to section 433(c) of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act, P.L. 93-198, 87 Stat. 774 ("The Home Rule Act"), as amended by the District of Columbia Judicial Efficiency and Improvement Act of 1986, P.L. 99-573, 100 Stat. 3228. Section 433(c) provides as follows:

Not less than six months prior to the expiration of his term of office, any judge of the District of Columbia courts may file with the Tenure Commission a declaration of candidacy for reappointment. If a declaration is not so filed by any judge, a vacancy shall result from the expiration of his term of office and shall be filled by appointment as provided in subsections (a) and (b). If a declaration is so filed, the Tenure Commission shall, not less than sixty days prior to the expiration of the declaring candidate's term of office, prepare and submit to the President a written evaluation of the declaring candidate's performance during his present term of office and his fitness for reappointment to another term. If the Tenure Commission determines the declaring candidate to be well

qualified for reappointment to another term, then the term of such declaring candidate shall be automatically extended for another full term, subject to mandatory retirement, suspension, or removal. If the Tenure Commission determines the declaring candidate to be qualified for reappointment to another term, then the President may nominate such candidate, in which case the President shall submit to the Senate for advice and consent the renomination of the declaring candidate as judge. If the President determines not to so nominate such declaring candidate, he shall nominate another candidate for such position only in accordance with the provisions of subsections (a) and (b). If the Tenure Commission determines the declaring candidate to be unqualified for reappointment to another term, then the President shall not submit to the Senate for advice and consent the renomination of the declaring candidate as judge and such judge shall not be eligible for reappointment or appointment as a judge of a District of Columbia court.

The Commission reserves the term “well qualified” for those judges whose work product, legal scholarship, dedication, efficiency, and demeanor are exceptional on the bench, and the candidate’s performance consistently reflects credit on the judicial system. To be “qualified,” a judge must at least satisfactorily perform his or her assigned duties or be one whose strong positive attributes are materially offset but not overcome by negative traits. “Unqualified” signifies that the judge is unfit for judicial service.

In evaluating Judge Beck’s qualifications for reappointment, the Commission has carefully reviewed her record as an Associate Judge. On October 28, 2009, Judge Beck provided the Commission with a comprehensive statement of her service on the Court which reviewed the significant aspects of her judicial activities. The statement included specific assignments during the past fifteen years, a discussion of her work in the area of adoption procedures, teaching and community activities, and her appellate record.

The Commission has reviewed written communications from attorneys and judges concerning Judge Beck's qualifications. Court personnel and attorneys familiar with aspects of Judge Beck's record were interviewed. On March 10, 2010, the Commission met with Judge Beck to discuss her record and the information the Commission had received during the course of its evaluation. Chief Judge Satterfield also provided additional information concerning Judge Beck's judicial performance, qualifications for reappointment, and contributions to the Court. Judge Beck's physician has advised the Commission that she is in good health and is capable of continuing her judicial career.

The Commission also reviewed Judge Beck's time reports and annual financial statements, which are required to be filed by every judge. The Commission reviewed its complaint file concerning the Judge, which disclosed nothing of a questionable nature that would adversely affect her reappointment.

All comments concerning Judge Beck's performance and qualifications were highly favorable. She was praised for being "an informed, intelligent, thorough, and thoughtful jurist", "fair to both sides", "a pleasure to work with", and praised for "a commitment to work to make things right." Regarding the specifics of Judge Beck's service, she has served in every division of the Superior Court except Probate.

The Commission believes that Judge Beck's most significant contributions to the Court has been her service in the Family Court. She volunteered to serve in the

restructured Family Court where she was assigned to a Domestic Relations Calendar and later to an Adoptions Calendar. During her tenure in Family Court she made decisions or facilitated actions that had an immediate and substantial positive impact on the lives of children and their families.

While serving on the Domestic Relations Calendar she placed a premium on mutual reconciliation of disputes rather than trial. She often successfully mediated custody and visitation issues herself during the parties' initial court hearing. Her experience led her to encourage Multidoor to create a same-day mediation program for Domestic Relations calendar matters, and she helped train the mediators.

While serving on the Adoptions Calendar, she realized that children who had been adjudicated to be neglected or abused would be better served if the judge responsible for supervising them was also responsible for their adoption cases. As a result, on the Adoptions calendar she handled private adoptions (i.e., adoptions from outside the neglect and abuse system) for the many neglected or abused children whose cases she was supervising. In that connection, she developed and updated a manual describing how to manage adoptions, which included model orders. She also recommended best practices, provided on-going training, and published a bulletin to address problems judges were experiencing in adoption cases. Under her guidance, the procedures for handling Adoption cases court-wide were modified so that Adoptions could be completed in a significantly reduced period of time.

During her tenure on the Superior Court, she has volunteered to serve on numerous committees, including the following; an Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Chief Judge to investigate complaints against a sitting Magistrate Judge; the Adoption Day Committee; the CJA Panel Committee; the CJA Panel Implementation Committee; the Courtroom Clerk Evaluation Committee; the Disciplinary Committee for CJA Appointments; the External Affairs Committee; the Family Court Panel Committee; the Family Rules Advisory Committee - Adoptions; the Liaison Committee with the Judicial Disabilities and Tenure Committee; the Subcommittee of the CJA Implementation on Investigators; and the Technology and Automation Committee. Judge Beck made significant contributions to the work of each Committee she served.

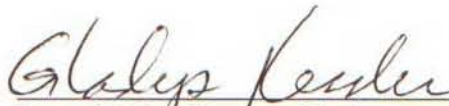
Over the years, she has been involved in numerous court-related teaching activities, including; serving as a judge for moot courts for public high school students; leading discussions about domestic violence with public high school students; annually coordinating a week of court-related activities for 7th and 8th graders; leading training sessions for lawyers interested in volunteering to represent adoption petitioners and for Family Court mediators; and leading training sessions for other judicial officers on a variety of topics, including training for new judges on chambers management.

In the community, Judge Beck devotes time and energy to children and their families at the Children's Inn of the National Institute of Health and as a Child Life Volunteer at the Children's National Medical Center in the District of Columbia.


The Commission is convinced that Judge Beck's judicial qualifications, her performance and contributions over the past fifteen years on and off the bench, and the manner in which she has performed her duties fully merits her automatic reappointment to another fifteen year term. We believe that Judge Beck will continue her excellent record, and that her dedication and industry will continue to benefit the Court and the community. For the foregoing reasons, the Commission finds Judge Beck well qualified for reappointment, and her term shall be automatically extended from May 25, 2010.

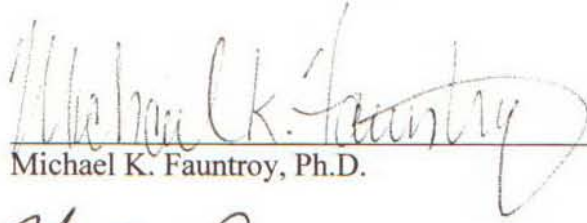
Respectfully submitted,

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COMMISSION ON
JUDICIAL DISABILITIES AND TENURE


Hon. Gladys Kessler, Chairperson


William P. Lightfoot, Esq., Vice Chairperson

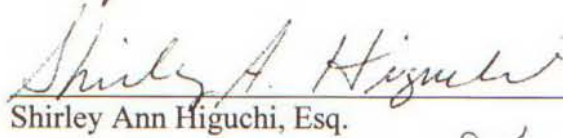

Gary C. Dennis, M.D.



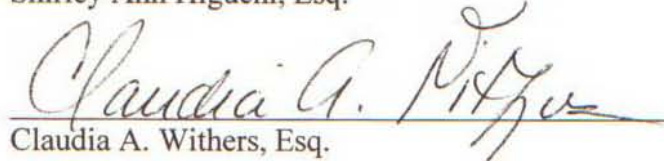
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