



INDIANA SUPREME COURT

200 W Washington St | Rm 304
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
COURTS.IN.GOV

CHAMBERS OF Justice Mark S. Massa

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Braun
Governor of Indiana
c/o Philip Lashutka, Deputy General Counsel
200 W. Washington Street, Statehouse Room 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Braun:

The Lake County Judicial Nominating Commission met on Friday, February 21, 2025, and selected five nominees for the vacancy in the Lake Superior Court Civil Division due to the appointment of the Honorable Stephen Scheele to the Court of Appeals of Indiana. On behalf of the commission, and pursuant to Indiana Code section 33-33-45-36, I submit to you the candidates the commission found to be the most qualified, in alphabetical order:

- **Referee Daniel Burke, Jr.**
- **Natasha Ivancevich**
- **Magistrate Katherine Garza**
- **Angela Marie Jones**
- **Magistrate Shaun Olsen**

In selecting these candidates, the commission 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, diversity, legal experience, and reputation as a trial lawyer or judge, and probable judicial temperament.

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

Referee Daniel Burke, Jr.

Born in Crown Point, Indiana, Daniel Burke, Jr. graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Classical Studies from DePauw University in 2009. In 2013, he earned his Juris Doctorate from Valparaiso University Law School.

During law school, he worked as a law clerk at the law firm of Lucas, Holcomb & Medrea in the summer and fall of 2013. In October 2013, he took a role at the same firm as a contract associate,

staying until 2015. During that time, he represented clients in landlord-tenant matters, business disputes and nuisance claims.

He then served as a Deputy Prosecutor in Lake County from 2015 to 2022. During his time at the prosecutor's office, he handled a caseload of over 200 major felony cases, including murders, as well as high profile cases garnering media attention. He handled matters from filing to plea or trial, including the preparation and filing of all pleadings and motions. He has tried 18 cases to juries, including 15 as the lead attorney. A Lake County judge described him as demonstrating "a level of legal ability, temperament, and demeanor that would make him an excellent fit for the bench."

In February 2022, he became a referee in Lake Circuit Court. In his role, Referee Burke manages filings in the collections docket, as well as presiding over dissolutions of marriage, petitions for protective orders and miscellaneous civil cases, including evictions, personal injury suits and petitions for name changes. During his time as a referee, he has presided over four bench trials lasting more than half a day. He takes pride in the careful handling of pro se cases, which he learned as a deputy prosecutor and has carried over into his role as referee.

Magistrate Katherine Garza

Born in Blue Island, Illinois, Katherine Garza graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Arts in 2002. During that time, she was a member of the Sigma Tau Delta and Lambda Alpha Honors Societies. In 2002, she won the Michel Prize, Essay Award in Medieval Literature. She then stayed in South Bend and graduated from the Notre Dame Law School in 2005. While in law school, she was a teaching assistant as well as an ambassador for the Admissions Office.

In 2002 and 2003, she was a summer associate at the Law Office of Raymond P. Garza. Upon graduating from law school, she worked as a litigation associate from 2005 to 2007 at Barnes & Thornburg in South Bend, litigating civil and criminal matters for clients in state and federal courts.

From 2007 to 2010, she served as a referee in the juvenile division of the Lake County Superior Court, with jurisdiction over adoption, guardianship, protection orders, CHINS proceedings, delinquency and paternity matters. During that time, she also taught the Pre-Trial Skills seminar at the Valparaiso Law School as an adjunct professor. While a referee, she was appointed to be a member of the Indiana Protection Order Benchbook Committee by then Chief Justice Shepard, serving from 2007 to 2010.

In 2010, she became a magistrate in the juvenile court of the Lake County Superior Court, a position she still holds. In her role as a magistrate, she has jurisdiction over family law matters. Magistrate Garza took on the responsibility for drafting all the form paternity orders to be used by the Lake County Juvenile Court. She also updated the Quest case management system for e-filing. In 2014, she graduated the Indiana Judicial College. From 2010 to 2016, again by appointment of the Chief Justice, she was a member of the Indiana Civil Benchbook Committee. She has presided over thousands of bench trials during her 18 years as a judicial officer. A fellow judge has described Magistrate Garza as "fair-minded, patient, respectful, and has proved herself judicious."

During her time as a magistrate, she has presented several times to the Lake County Bar Association. She also judges “We the People” competitions held at local elementary schools and has presented to local high school students regarding their First Amendment rights. She is a long-time member of the Indiana State Bar Association and Lake County Bar Association, and has been a member of the National Association of Juvenile & Family Court Judges since 2007. She is a board member of the Geminus Community Partners and has served on the boards of local schools during her time in Lake County.

Natasha Ivancevich

Natasha Ivancevich was born in Munster, IN. She received an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Paralegal Studies from Ivy Tech Community College in 2012 and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Paralegal Studies from Saint Mary of the Woods College in May 2014. She earned her Juris Master and Juris Doctorate degrees from Appalachian School of Law in 2020, and her L.L.M. from University of Dayton Law School in 2022.

After graduating from Saint Mary of the Woods College, she worked as a judicial intern in Lake County in 2014 and as a court clerk from 2014 to 2016. She then worked as support staff for the Lake County Prosecutor’s Office from 2014 to 2016. Following that, she worked as a paralegal at the Law Office of Paul A. Rossi from 2016 to 2018. The following year she was a judicial intern for Judges Robert Lung and Jeffrey Holmes in Colorado’s 18th Judicial District in the summer of 2019. After graduating from law school, she worked as a law clerk at ROK Legal and the Law Office of Cristin Just in 2021.

From October 2021 to October 2022, she was a solo practitioner at Ivancevich Legal, representing criminal defendants, drafting wills and pre-nuptial agreements and engaging in general civil practice. She represented primarily low-income individuals and often provided services pro bono or at a discounted rate. A long tenured magistrate of Lake Superior Court endorses her as having “the highest ethical standards.”

Since October 2022 she has been employed by the Indiana Board of Tax Review as an administrative law judge, presiding over property tax appeals, including hearing testimony, ruling on objections and making factual and legal determinations. She is also the State Employee Community Campaign Co-Coordinator at the Indiana Board of Tax Review, and has taught at Chicago’s Olive Harvey College.

In her free time, she participates in fundraising efforts for orphanages through her church, and volunteers for national athletic events hosted by the Serbian National Federation.

Angela Marie Jones

Angela Marie Jones was born in Munster, Indiana. She graduated in 2006 from the University of Central Florida, with Bachelor of Science degrees in Business Management and Criminal Justice. After graduating, she was a bodily injury adjuster for Liberty Mutual Group before attending law

school. In 2011, she earned her Juris Doctor and Master of Business Administration from Stetson University. During her time at Stetson, she was the Regional Arbitration Champion in 2010 and president of the Phi Delta Phi International Honors Fraternity.

After law school, she worked as an associate at Cassiday Schade LLP from 2012 to 2014, Hinshaw & Culbertson, LLP from 2014 to 2015, and O’Neil, McFadden & Willet, LLP from 2015 to 2017. During this time, she worked primarily in insurance defense as a civil litigator. She also served as of-counsel for Smith Sersic, LLC from 2017 to 2021.

Since 2017, she has run the Law Office of Angela M. Jones, LLC as a solo practitioner. She primarily focuses on civil litigation, transactional work for small businesses, and representation of units of local government. She has tried 8 cases to jury, including a case that concluded with her final argument just moments before she interviewed for this vacancy and resulted in an \$8.1 million verdict for her client. In 2024, she was named Trial Lawyer of the Year by the Indiana Trial Lawyers Association, for her work in a personal injury case where she prevailed after arguing in the Indiana Supreme Court.

In addition to her work for private clients, she has been litigation counsel and an independent contractor for the Lake County Board of Commissioners since 2016. She has also been corporation counsel and an independent contractor for the School Town of Munster and the City of East Chicago Common Council.

She has served as a judge pro tempore for numerous judges in Lake County, including the vacating Judge Stephen Scheele, hearing matters including civil litigation, family law and protective orders. She is a member of the Supreme Court Commission on Indiana’s Legal Future and the Business and Licensure subcommittee. She has been a member, Secretary, President and Counsel to the President for the Lake County Bar Association. She serves on the executive board of the Indiana State Bar Association. A Lake County judge describes her as “smart, well organized, ethical and a dynamic trial attorney.”

She was founder and President of the Northwest Indiana PitBull coalition, assisting local animal rescues in placing dogs in suitable homes. She also coaches in the Northwest Indiana Youth Soccer League and participates in the Northwest Indiana Women’s Soccer League in her spare time.

Magistrate Shaun Olsen

Born in Joliet, Illinois, Shaun Olsen graduated from Illinois State University in 1999 with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science. He then earned his Juris Doctorate from the Valparaiso University School of Law in 2002, graduating *cum laude*. While in law school, he was an associate editor for the Valparaiso University Law Review, and a federal judicial extern for the Honorable Robert L. Miller, Jr. of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana. He later received his technical certificate in business administration from Ivy Tech Community College in 2004.

He began his law career as an intern at the Office of the Illinois Attorney General in the summer of 2001. He then worked as an associate attorney at the Law Office of Garry A. Weiss, P.C. from 2002 until 2013. From 2013 to 2015, he was a member of OlsenCampbell, Ltd., before starting the Olsen Legal Group, Ltd., which he ran as a sole practitioner from 2015 to 2020. He operated a general practice, representing clients in bankruptcies, estate planning, debt collection and mortgage foreclosures, domestic relations, juvenile proceedings, personal injury, probate, real estate litigation and civil rights claims. He has been the first chair for five civil jury trials involving personal injury claims.

In 2020, he became a magistrate in Lake Superior Court Civil Division. Magistrate Olsen hears domestic relations matters, protective order petitions, civil torts, civil plenary and civil collection matters. He has presided over more than 80 bench trials lasting more than half a day since becoming a magistrate. Since becoming a magistrate, he has become a member of the Indiana Judicial Administration Committee, working on, amongst other things, revisions to Indiana's Judicial Weighted Caseload System that helps measure efficiency and guides the judiciary and legislature in the deployment and funding of judicial resources. In 2024, he graduated from the Indiana Judicial College.

Prior to taking the bench, he participated in Northwest Indiana Volunteer Attorneys, Inc., accepting clients on a pro bono basis. Since 2020, he has participated in the Indiana Bar Foundation's Mock Trial competition as a participating judge. He is a member of the Indiana Judges Association. A Lake County judge noted that "Olsen's knowledge of the law and procedure is second to none."

In his free time, he is a licensed soccer referee and holds a national coaching license from the United States Soccer Federation. He is also a member of the Youth Soccer Referee Abuse Prevention group.

* * *

It should be noted that while state law requires this Commission to send you five candidates to consider from among the applicants, only five people applied and thus all five are being forwarded to you. I would be pleased to discuss any of these nominees with you in greater detail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Massa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Massa" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Massa
Justice, Indiana Supreme Court
Chairman, LCJNC