



Supreme Court of Kentucky

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For Immediate Release

Judicial Nominating Commission announces judicial nominees for Fayette County Circuit Court

FRANKFORT, Ky., Jan. 12, 2017 – The Judicial Nominating Commission, led by Chief Justice of Kentucky John D. Minton Jr., today announced nominees to fill the vacant Fayette Circuit Court judgeship. Fayette County is the 22nd Judicial Circuit and the vacancy is in the circuit's 8th Division.

The three nominees for the judgeship are attorneys Carl Norman Frazier, Megan Lake Thornton and Thomas Lee Travis, all of Lexington. Each earned their juris doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law.

Frazier has been in private law practice since 2007 and serves as an attorney with the firm of Stoll Keenon Ogden. Thornton has served as a Fayette County District Court judge since 1997 and as chief regional district judge since 2003. Travis has been in private law practice for 29 years and serves as an attorney with the firm of Ward, Hocker & Thornton.

The Circuit Court judicial seat became vacant when Judge Thomas L. Clark resigned in November 2016.

Circuit Court

Circuit Court is the court of general jurisdiction that hears civil matters involving more than \$5,000, capital offenses and felonies, divorces, adoptions, termination of parental rights, land dispute title cases and contested probate cases.

Judicial Nominating Commission

The [Judicial Nominating Commission](#) helps fill judicial vacancies by appointment when a vacancy occurs outside of the election cycle. The Kentucky Constitution established the JNC. Ky. Const. § 118; SCR 6.000, et seq.

Judicial Nominating Process

When a judicial vacancy occurs, the executive secretary of the JNC publishes a notice of vacancy in the judicial circuit or the judicial district affected. Attorneys may recommend someone or nominate themselves. The names of the applicants are not released. Once

nominations occur, the individuals interested in the position return a questionnaire to the Office of the Chief Justice. Chief Justice Minton then meets with the Judicial Nominating Commission to choose three nominees. Because the Kentucky Constitution requires that three names be submitted to the governor, in some cases the commission submits an attorney's name even though the attorney did not apply. A letter naming the three nominees is sent to the governor for review. The governor has 60 days to appoint a replacement and his office makes the announcement.

Makeup of the Judicial Nominating Commission

The commission has seven members. The membership is comprised of the chief justice of Kentucky (who also serves as chair), two lawyers elected by all the lawyers in their circuit/district and four Kentucky citizens who are appointed by the governor. The four citizens appointed by the governor must equally represent the two major political parties, so two must be Democrats and two must be Republicans. It is the responsibility of the commission to submit a list of three names to the governor and the governor must appoint a judge from this list of three.

Administrative Office of the Courts

The [Administrative Office of the Courts](#) in Frankfort is the operations arm for the state court system. The AOC supports the activities of nearly 3,400 court system employees and 404 elected justices, judges and circuit court clerks. As the fiscal agent for the state court system, the AOC executes the Judicial Branch budget.

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