

## **HON. MICHELLE M. SLAUGHTER** **(Former Judge)**

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### **PROFILE**

Judge Michelle Slaughter has over twenty years of legal experience and twelve years of judicial experience, serving as both a trial and appellate judge at the highest state level. In 2012, Judge Slaughter was elected to the 405th Judicial District Court of Galveston County, Texas. She was re-elected by a landslide in 2016.

In 2018, Judge Slaughter was elected statewide to Place 8 on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the state's highest court for criminal cases. In the November 2018 general election, she received over 4.7 million votes—the highest number of votes in Texas and the second highest in the nation for a contested race for that election date. Her term concluded on December 31, 2024, after which she returned to private practice as a civil and appellate litigator.

Currently, in addition to her law practice, Judge Slaughter serves as a council member for the Appellate Section of the State Bar of Texas and on the recruiting committee for the Texas Bar Foundation.

### **JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE**

Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals — Jan. 2019-Dec. 2024

Judge Slaughter was one of nine judges on Texas's highest court for criminal cases. She authored over 100 opinions and participated in deciding more than 30,000 criminal law matters. She served as the Court's liaison for the Appellate Section of the State Bar of Texas and delivered numerous presentations statewide on criminal law topics. In May 2024, Judge Slaughter was part of a legal delegation that traveled to Mongolia, where she taught Mongolian judges and attorneys about the Texas and U.S. legal system, ethics, constitutional issues, and plea bargaining.

Judge, 405th District Court — Jan. 2013-Dec. 2018

Serving on this general jurisdiction bench, Judge Slaughter presided over a wide variety of civil, tax, and felony criminal cases and more than 100 bench and jury trials. Before her election, the 405th District Court was the least efficient and had the highest backlog in the county. Through hard work, implementation of various policies and procedures, prompt rulings, and by presiding over more jury trials than any other district court in Galveston County, Judge Slaughter transformed the court into the most efficient and effective district court in the county, with the lowest backlog of cases.

## **LAW PRACTICE EXPERIENCE**

Partner – Business, Civil, Estate and Appellate Litigation,  
Johnson & Associates, Attorneys at Law, PLLC – Jan. 2025 – Present

As a partner in this high-volume business transactional and litigation boutique firm in League City, Texas, Ms. Slaughter represents businesses and individuals in all types of business, estate, civil and appellate litigation in state and federal courts across Texas and beyond.

Founder/Managing Member/Attorney/Mediator,  
The Slaughter Law Firm, PLLC — 2010-Dec. 2012

Ms. Slaughter founded The Slaughter Law Firm, PLLC as a solo practice and quickly grew it into a highly successful multi-lawyer civil litigation practice in the Clear Lake area of Houston. The firm represented businesses and individuals in all types of civil litigation and appellate law. She also served as a mediator in civil (non-family) cases and was a go-to mediator for court appointments.

Attorney, Locke Lord, LLP — 2005-2010

As an attorney for the Houston office of this large international law firm, Ms. Slaughter represented businesses, including several Fortune 500 companies, in labor and employment matters, bankruptcy, business litigation, and complex commercial litigation. Her work earned her the title of “Rising Star” in the *Super Lawyers* edition of *Texas Monthly* magazine.

Attorney, Haynes and Boone, LLP — 2004-2005

At the Houston office of this large international law firm, Ms. Slaughter represented a wide variety of businesses in labor and employment matters. Such representation included litigation in state and federal courts in Texas and in other states.

## **OTHER LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

- Adjunct Professor, Baylor Law School - Assists in teaching the quarterly Criminal Law Boot Camp (2023-Present) and has assisted with the Voir Dire Bootcamp
- Intern, Justice Tim Taft, First Court of Appeals, Houston, Texas - Conducted research and wrote legal opinions/memos on family, civil, and criminal appeals (2004)
- Intern, Judge David Hittner, United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas - Conducted research and wrote legal opinions/orders/memos for federal civil and criminal cases; observed court proceedings (2002)

- Intern, Judge Sim Lake, United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas - Conducted research and wrote legal opinions/orders/memos involving writs of habeas corpus; observed court proceedings (2002)
- Summer Associate, Haynes and Boone, LLP (Houston) (2003)
- Summer Associate, Ware Snow Fogel & Jackson, LLP (Houston) (2003)
- Law Clerk, Nelkin & Nelkin, P.C. (Houston) (2003-2004)
- President, Hispanic Law Students Association (University of Houston Law Center) (2003-2004)

#### **BAR ADMISSIONS**

- Texas (State Courts)
- United States District Court for the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Districts of Texas
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit
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#### **EDUCATION**

University of Houston Law Center — J.D., *cum laude* (top 15%)

A.A. White Dispute Resolution Center, mediation certification

University of Houston — B.A., *magna cum laude*



**Justice John Phillip Devine**  
**Place 4**  
**Supreme Court of Texas**

Justice John Devine was first elected to the Supreme Court of Texas in November 2012. He previously served for seven years as judge of the 190th State District Court in Harris County and for nine years as an appointed special judge for the Harris County justice of the peace courts.

A native of Indiana, Justice Devine attended Ball State University, graduating in 1980 with a B.S. degree in business administration and marketing. Following graduation, Justice Devine became a Texan and entered the corporate world of Shell Oil Co. in Houston as an analyst and later worked in various corporate and project-oriented positions. While at Shell, he was accepted by South Texas College of Law, graduating with a juris doctorate in 1986. Justice Devine remained with Shell until 1987. The next year Devine went to work for Brown & Root Inc., and again contributed to numerous corporate as well as major international and domestic industrial construction projects.

Justice Devine was elected in 1995 and re-elected in 1998 to the district court. During his tenure, he tried nearly 350 jury trials and presided over more than 500 bench trials. In 1998, he was voted well qualified by the Houston Bar Association. Justice Devine reduced his court's case backlog by more than 40 percent during his two terms. He was awarded the title of "Texas Size Hero" by Focus on the Family magazine.

In his private litigation practice since 2002, Justice Devine represented both plaintiffs and defendants in state and federal courts. In 2002, he was appointed as a special judge for the Harris County justice courts and served until 2011. Devine was also a member of the District of Columbia Bar Association, the Board of Civil District Judge Mass Torts Committee, Board of Civil District Judges, the Harris County Juvenile Justice Charter School Board and the Harris County Juvenile Board.

Justice Devine has been married since 1989 to Nubia Piedad Gomez, formerly of Venezuela, and the couple has six children.

He was re-elected in 2024 to a term that expires on December 31, 2031.

## **Justice Scott Field**

### **Fifteenth Court of Appeals**

The Honorable Scott Field currently serves as a justice on the Fifteenth Court of Appeals. Justice Field was previously appointed as the first judge of the 480th District Court of Williamson County, where he presided from 2022 to 2024. Justice Field also served a six-year term on the Third Court of Appeals in Austin. Outside of the judiciary, Justice Field has over 20 years of experience as an appellate and commercial litigation attorney. After clerking for the Honorable Raul Gonzalez at the Texas Supreme Court, he began his private practice career at Baker Botts, L.L.P.. He then co-founded a boutique law firm, York, Keller & Field, L.L.P., before forming The Field Law Firm, PLLC. He most recently spent 3 years as partner in Butler Snow LLP's litigation and appellate groups in Austin.

Judge Field received a Bachelor of Arts summa cum laude in Political Science from Texas A&M University and a Juris Doctor with honors from the University of Texas School of Law. Judge Field is actively involved in many bar associations, including the State Bar of Texas, the Williamson County Bar Association, and the Austin Bar Association. He is President of the Williamson County Inn of Court and is also a member of the Texas Supreme Court Historical Society, the Federalist Society, the Texas Aggie Bar Association, and the Christian Legal Society. He is a Life Fellow of both the Texas Bar Foundation and the Austin Bar Foundation. Additionally, he serves as a Mentor in the University of Texas School of Law Mentoring Program, and on the Board of Advisors of the UT Law Aggie Society.



**Judge Gina G. Parker**

**Place 7, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals**

Judge Gina G. Parker was elected to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in 2024. She received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing and Entrepreneurship from Baylor University and a Law Degree from Baylor School of Law. She has practiced as both a prosecutor and a criminal defense attorney. As a public servant, she has represented Texas citizens as a City Attorney, Assistant County Attorney, and Assistant District Attorney. Also, she has served as a Commissioner and the Chair of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

**JUSTICE NANCY KENNEDY**  
**FIFTH COURT OF APPEALS, DALLAS**

Justice Nancy Kennedy currently serves on the 5<sup>th</sup> Court of Appeals and has since 2023. Prior to becoming a justice, she served as the presiding judge of Criminal District Court #2 in Dallas County from 2017 to 2022. During her time as a district court judge, Justice Kennedy created the felony outpatient competency restoration specialty court and also presided over the STAR court specialty program. Prior to serving on the bench, Justice Kennedy practiced exclusively in criminal law for 15 years, initially as a prosecutor and then as a criminal defense attorney throughout Texas in both state and federal courts, where she handled well over 100 trials as the lead attorney. She also handled appeals in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Courts of Appeal. In 2010, Justice Kennedy became Board Certified in Criminal Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Justice Kennedy graduated from Sam Houston State University with a Bachelor of Arts in political science. She received her Juris Doctorate from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law. During law school, she received the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility fellowship along with the Martin Samuelsohn fellowship. Justice Kennedy taught trial advocacy at the law school as an adjunct professor in both 2007 and 2008. She has been privileged to also serve on the faculty at the Center for American and International Law in their trial skills program.

**Justice Steve Smith**  
**Tenth Court of Appeals**

Justice Smith was appointed to the Tenth Court of Appeals by Governor Greg Abbott effective August 6, 2021. Prior to joining the Court, Justice Smith served as Judge of the 361<sup>st</sup> District Court for Brazos County for more than 22 years, and as Judge of Brazos County Court at Law No. 1 from 1995-1998.

Justice Smith is a graduate of Abilene Christian University and the University of Texas School of Law. Following his law school graduation in 1977, he engaged in private practice in the Bryan/College Station area with Dillon & Giesenschlag; Dillon, Lewis, Elmore & Smith; and Hoelscher, Lipsey, Elmore and Smith. He also served as a Municipal Judge for the City of College Station from 1988 through 1994.

Justice Smith is a Sustaining Life Fellow of both the State Bar of Texas and the American Bar Association. He holds a Certificate in General Jurisdiction Trial Skills from the National Judicial College, where he has served as a faculty member from 2002 until 2024. He has also taught judicial education courses for the Texas Center for the Judiciary and judicial education entities in 13 states. During 2010-2011, Justice Smith was Chair of the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Texas, and received a Presidential Commendation from the Bar. He served as Chair of the Texas Center for the Judiciary in 2023-2024.

Justice Smith has a long record of volunteer service in the Bryan/College Station community. He presently serves on the Board of Directors of Foster's Home for Children in Stephenville; was a Trustee for Abilene Christian University from 2001-2017, and is now a Trustee Emeritus of ACU. He and his late wife, Becky, are the parents of Christopher, president of a technology firm in Abilene and Laura, an attorney in Washington, DC.