



Senior Judge

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Senior Judge Tanya M. Bransford

Appointed/Elected:

Appointed on July 1, 1994.

Elected in 1996, 2002, 2008, 2014 and 2020.

Retired on Nov. 6, 2023.

Appointed and assigned to serve statewide as Senior Judge from April 8, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

Tanya M. Bransford worked as the Presiding Juvenile Court Judge from 2006-2008. As the Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, she led the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, which dramatically reduced the numbers of young people in detention, while preserving public safety. Prior to her appointment, she was the first black woman to serve as a District Court Referee for Hennepin County's Juvenile Division, and the first black female Workers' Compensation Judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings. Judge Bransford began her legal career in private practice working in the areas of personal injury, criminal defense and workers' compensation.

Judge Bransford is the recipient of several honors and awards including the 2017 Hennepin Lawyer Diversity and Inclusion Award, the Hennepin County Administrator's Award, the Champions of Change Award, the Annie E. Casey Foundation Award, the Distinguished Alumni Award from North St. Paul High School, and a Distinguished Alumna Award from Hamline University School of Law.

Judge Bransford participates in the improvement of the criminal justice system through her work as Chair of the Hennepin County District Court's Equal Justice Committee, as a founding member of the Minnesota Judicial Council's Equality and Justice Committee and as a Board Member of the National Consortium of Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts. She is the Conference Chair of the 2018 National Consortium of Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts Conference.

Judge Bransford is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law and a cum laude graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College. Judge Bransford is involved in her community through her participation in the Mass Choir at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, as a member of The Links, Incorporated and by speaking at various schools and groups.

Assignment History

- Criminal, 2014-Nov. 6, 2023
- Civil & Criminal, 2009-2013
- Juvenile, 2003-2009
- Civil & Criminal, 2000-2003
- Criminal, 1998-1999
- Civil & Criminal, 1997-1998
- Criminal, 1997
- Juvenile, 1995-1996
- Criminal, 1994-1995

Judicial Activities

- Chair of the Hennepin County Equal Justice Committee, 2016-Present, 1995-2009
- Executive Committee Member
- New Judge Orientation Faculty, 2014-present
- Presiding Judge, Juvenile Division, 2006-2008
- Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, Hennepin County, Co-Chair 2005-2010
- Minnesota District Judges Association, Board of Directors
- Lead Judge – Brookdale Team, 2010-2011

Community Activities

- The Links, Incorporated, Minneapolis-St. Paul Chapter
- Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, 2005-present

Former Community Involvement

- Jack and Jill of America, Minneapolis Chapter, 2000-2016
- Youthprise, Founding Board Member (an organization designed to accelerate youth leadership beyond the classroom), 2010-2015
- Minneapolis YWCA, Board of Directors, Member
- Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board

Employment

Referee Hennepin County District Court, Juvenile Division, 1990

Workers' Compensation Judge, Office of Administrative Hearings, 1987

Associate Attorney, Spicer, Watson & Carp law firm, 1983

Awards

- Minnesota Lawyer Diversity and Inclusion Award
- Hennepin County Administrator's Award, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)
- Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation, Champions of Change Award
- Annie E. Casey Foundation Award
- North St. Paul High School, Distinguished Alumni
- Hamline University School of Law, Outstanding Alumni Award
- Hennepin County Star Performer Award
- Minnesota Minority Lawyer's Association (MMLA), Service to the MMLA Award

Education

J.D., Hamline University School of Law, 1983

B.A., Gustavus Adolphus College, 1980

Professional Memberships

- Minnesota Judicial Branch's Committee for Equality and Justice, Founding Member, 2011-present, Co-Chair, 2011-2016
- National Consortium of Racial and Ethnic Bias Task Force, Board of Directors, 2011-present
- Minnesota District Judges Association, Board of Directors
- Minnesota Supreme Court Racial Fairness Committee, Vice Chair 2006-2011, Member 1993-2009
- Minnesota State Bar Association, 1983-present, Civil Litigation Section Council, 2010-2015

- Minnesota Women Lawyers, Advisory Board
- Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers, 1995-present
- Minnesota Black Women Lawyers Network, 2001-present
- Hennepin County Bar Association, 1983-present
- Hamline University School of Law – Dean’s Advisory Board, 1999-2005
- National Association of Women Judges
- American Bar Association

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