

# 12 Nominated for Judgeship

## Lawyers Vie to Replace Md.'s Oldest Judge

By Angela Miller  
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Twelve lawyers have made the list of finalists for the Baltimore City District Court seat slated to be vacated by Judge Blanche Wahl, Maryland's oldest active judge, who retires next month.

The Baltimore County Judicial Nominating Commission sent its recommendation to Governor William Donald Schaefer earlier this week that six of the 17 new applicants were "fully qualified" for the judicial post.

The remaining six "pool candidates" included on the list of finalists already have been found qualified for judicial openings during the past year.

Among those to make the cut for Wahl's seat are city juvenile masters Yvonne Holt-Stone and Tealette Shelton Price and Glenn M. Grossman, assistant bar council for the Maryland Attorney Grievance Commission.

In addition, city Assistant State's Attorneys Barbara Baer Waxman, Ilene Jacquelyn Nathan and George McQuade Lipman, an assistant public defender, also were found qualified to replace Wahl.

The pool candidates include Gale Rasin Caplan, chief of medicaid fraud control unit at the Maryland Attorney General's Office; city Assistant State's Attorney Edwin Oliver Wenck; and Baltimore attorneys Gilbert Rosenthal, Edward Bernard Rybczynski, Lee N. Sachs and Stephen James Sfekas.

### No clear favorite to replace Wahl

Lawyers familiar with judicial politics told *The Daily Record* yesterday that there was no "clear-cut favorite" to replace Wahl in the pack that has been nominated.

A Baltimore lawyer who is familiar with the workings of the judicial nominating committee suggested that city Administrative Judge Joseph A. Ciotola is backing Waxman and may recommend her to the governor.

Waxman is the chief of the city State's Attorney Office's district court division and is a seven-year veteran of the office. This is the first time she has made a list of finalists for judicial positions.

"Judge Ciotola likes Waxman very much," the source said. "She knows the District Court better than anybody on the list."

Ciotola failed to return several phone calls yesterday to comment on whether he would support Waxman's bid for the district court seat.

Eight of the nominees — Price, Holt-Stone, Caplan, Rosenthal, Rybczynski, Sachs, Sfekas and Wenck — have been passed over by the governor in the past for judicial openings in the past.

But some observers of the judicial appointment process said yesterday that Holt-Stone, the only black finalist, may have an advantage because of grumbling among black members of the bar about Schaefer's recent appointments to the bench.

Curt Anderson, a Baltimore city lawyer and member of the Maryland House of Delegates, told *The Daily Record* yesterday that some members of the black community are upset that the last five city circuit judges Schaefer has named have been white.

"All five appointments involved good people," said Anderson, head of the Legislative Black Caucus. "Yet, the community I represent feels that out of that five, at least two should have been black, given that the community is half black."

One Baltimore city lawyer familiar with both Schaefer and the judicial selection process said that Schaefer may try to quiet some of the grumbling by naming a black to Wahl's seat.

"But I don't know if that would pacify the black community or not. There already is a lot of black representation on the district bench," said the lawyer, who spoke on the condition he not be named. "They want more black faces on the circuit bench."

### Wahl announced retirement this summer

Wahl, the state's oldest active judge, announced her decision to step down from the bench after 12 years as a district judge.

The 71-year-old Wahl took advantage of a change in federal law to stay on the bench after reaching the age of 70 — the mandatory retirement age for judges under the Maryland Constitution.

In 1987, Congress outlawed employment rules that force non-elected, state and federal public attorneys to leave their jobs at age 70.

Consequently, Maryland district judges — who are appointed to set terms and are not required to face contested elections as their circuit court counterparts — can now stay on the bench as long as they are physically able.