

# Anne Arundel Bench Filled

## First African-American, Woman Named Circuit Judges by Glendening

BY RACHEL SCHOWALTER

*Special to the Daily Record*

Gov. Parris Glendening made Anne Arundel County the first beneficiary of his directive to increase diversity among state judges, appointing to the county circuit bench its first African-American and female judges.

Clayton R. Greene Jr., a University of Maryland Law School graduate, started out as a janitor but later went on to become the first African-American District Court judge in Anne Arundel County in 1988. He will succeed Judge H. Chester Goudy Jr., who retired last August.

Pamela Lee North, replacing Circuit Court Judge Warren B. Duckett, Jr. is the first woman to sit on Anne Arundel's circuit bench.

As the first African-American to even be considered for that court, Greene said that by appointing him to the bench, the governor would "write history with the stroke of his hand."

North is a University of Baltimore Law School graduate and has been a sole practitioner for the last 12 years, practicing primarily in criminal litigation. She practices in domestic relations and personal injury matters.

"I hope my trial experience will give me a head start on doing a good job," North said. She noted her happiness and excitement about getting started.

### Howard Co. nominations

The Trial Courts Judicial Nominating Commission for Commission District Nine — representing Howard County — met Tuesday to select qualified candidates for a Howard County Circuit Court vacancy. Judge Cornelius F. Syber Jr. retired last May, creating an opening.

The Commission approved for the governor's selection Linda Sorge Ostovitz, Donna Carol Sanger, Jonathan Scott Smith, and Donna Hill Staton.

Neil Edward Axel, Judge Louis A. Becker, Judge Lenore R. Gelfman, Diane O. Leasure, Bernard Anthony Raum and Louis P. Willemin were past nominees for an earlier vacancy, and will be considered for Syber's spot.

Ostovitz, a University of Baltimore Law School graduate, is a sole practitioner in Ellicott City, specializing in domestic and criminal defense litigation. She is a past senior assistant state's

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attorney and a past director for the Victim Witness Program, a Howard County organization.

Sanger is currently an assistant U.S. attorney working in the civil division. She has previous experience working for a private law firm in Baltimore and Columbia, and specialized in civil trial work. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland Law School, and is a member of the

Howard County Leadership Program.

Sanger also serves as the vice president and the past chair of the board of governors for the Federal Bar.

Smith is a University of Baltimore Law School graduate and currently works as a criminal defense and personal injury trial lawyer. He worked in the State's Attorney office for Baltimore County, and has written two books on how to handle criminal cases in Maryland.

He has served as a mentor for the Gifted and Talented Program for the Howard County School System, and is a past member of the district's Trial Courts Judicial Nominating Commission.

Staton currently practices as a partner with Piper & Marbury, specializing in commercial litigation. She joined the firm as an associate in 1983. Prior to that, she clerked for Judge Joseph Howard of the Maryland U.S. District Court and received her law degree from George Washington University.

Axel is a graduate of American University School of Law and has maintained a private practice for the past 20 years, specializing in personal injury litigation and family law. He is a past chair to the Maryland Special Olympics Board of Directors.

Becker currently sits on the Howard County District Court bench. Prior to attaining that position, he spent 18 years in private practice and served as a public defender. He is an Army veteran with two years active, and 26 years reserve duty. He graduated from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

Gelfman is also a Howard County District Court judge and a University of Baltimore School of Law graduate. She worked in private practice for many years prior to taking the bench, and has worked with the State's Attorney's office in Baltimore City. She is active in a variety of civic and community organizations, including Hadassah and United Cerebral Palsy of Central Maryland.