



Judge Newman, his wife Rachel, and triplets Anna, Brigid and Clare in 2011 when he was sworn in as a United States Magistrate Judge.

Hon. Michael J. Newman

U.S. Magistrate
Judge for the
Southern District
of Ohio

*A Federal Judge Dedicated to Fairness
and Justice, His Family, the FBA,
and the Community*

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All of us who practice in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio know the Hon. Michael J. Newman as an eminently fair and reasonable judge who is smart, cares deeply about his cases and his docket, and makes sound rulings. When asked to describe his judicial philosophy, Judge Newman—who will be sworn in as the national president of the FBA on Sept. 17—explains his views on a judge’s role in the courtroom with haltingly simple wisdom: “Be fair. Let lawyers speak. Follow the law. Strive every day to use good judgment and common sense.” To Judge Newman, though, a good judge is one who is also always mindful that there is a world outside of the courtroom:



Triplets Brigid, Clare, and Anna Newman—now age nine.

Realize that, as a federal judge, your decisions impact real people’s lives, and you must be cognizant of that fact. Also recognize that, out of the courtroom, you are at all times a representative of the federal courts and the important, stabilizing role they play in our society. Know that, as a judge, you have an obligation to give back—via volunteer work, dedication to the work of the bar association, and mentoring of those that follow. Finally, be inclusive in everything you do, sensitive to diversity concerns, and always mindful of the less fortunate.

As shown by Judge Newman’s record of service, including more than 20 years of service to the FBA, the above is more than a judicial philosophy. It is a lifestyle.

Judge Newman’s contributions to the FBA alone speak volumes about his long-standing dedication to service. In fact, when Hon. Susan Dlott, then the chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, spoke at Judge Newman’s investiture in 2011, she quipped that, “at times, it seems like there are at least five [Michael Newmans] because [he does] so much for the federal bar, for the practice, and for the court.”

Prior to becoming national FBA president, Judge Newman, while in private practice at the Cincinnati office of Dinsmore & Shohl LLP, served as president of the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Chapter from 2004 to 2005. After taking the federal bench in Dayton in 2011, Judge Newman and his family relocated to Cincinnati’s northern neighbor, but he stayed as active in the FBA as ever and served as president of the Dayton Chapter from 2013 to 2014. Additionally, Judge Newman served two terms as a Sixth Circuit vice president, as FBA treasurer, and on the national board of directors. He was appointed, by presidents DeSousa and Gelpi, to chair the FBA’s task force on nominations and elections reform for two successive years. For more than 10 years, Judge Newman served on the editorial board of *The Federal Lawyer* magazine, contributing while in private practice to a monthly labor and employment law column and also as judicial profiles editor of the magazine. Judge Newman’s other FBA activities include service on the Chapter Activity Fund Committee;

co-chair of the Conference Leadership Training & Agenda Committee; and co-chair of the Professional Ethics Committee.

The value of Judge Newman’s contributions to the FBA can be objectively measured through the tangible results he has achieved. During his tenure as chapter president, Dayton was named Chapter of the Year. Judge Newman also co-authored *The Bench-Bar Handbook for the Southern District of Ohio*, published by the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Chapter, which won the FBA’s Shaw Award for public service. Judge Newman also chaired the FBA’s Magistrate Judge Task Force, which was responsible for the special issue of *The Federal Lawyer* devoted to U.S. magistrate judges and the FBA’s white paper on the history and role of magistrate judges. He wrote the introductions to both and was recognized thereafter by the Federal Magistrate Judges Association for “valuable and dedicated service to all magistrate judges.” In 2014, Judge Newman chaired a national essay contest sponsored by the FBA and the Federal Judges Association.

Needless to say, based on that record, Judge Newman gets things done. He is planning on two significant initiatives as national president: (1) to expand upon the FBA’s existing community service efforts by creating a national civics program in conjunction with FBA chapters around the country, and working with the Administrative Office (AO) of the U.S. Courts; and (2) to take the SOLACE program, which helps those in the legal community with dire needs, to a national audience. Regarding the civics initiative, Judge Newman credits Seventh Circuit Vice President Sheri Mecklenburg for her leadership in this area, and he looks forward to working with her along with AO Director Jim Duff and many others. With respect to SOLACE, a program created by U.S. District Judge Jay Zainey in New Orleans, Judge Newman was asked by Judge Zainey to help make this important volunteer effort nationwide in scope. In addition to these two efforts, Judge Newman also plans to create a task force to review ways in which the FBA can assist with access-to-justice concerns in the federal courts.

With a reputation for bringing energy to all new projects, Judge Newman’s national initiatives are in good hands. According to Jeff Cox of the Dayton office of Faruki Ireland & Cox P.L.L., who is also

the immediate past-president of the FBA Dayton Chapter, the Dayton Chapter is thriving thanks in no small part to Judge Newman:

The lifeblood of any professional organization is member engagement, and no one is more engaged and committed to the Federal Bar Association than Judge Michael Newman. I have had the good fortune to work with Judge Newman on FBA projects and we co-moderate Dayton's Bench Bar Media Forum, one of many organizations that benefit from Mike's leadership. Be it in his role as a national officer, a chapter leader, or a dedicated volunteer, Judge Newman is committed to, and passionate about, our profession and the practice of law in our federal courts; he is creative and thoughtful, full of ideas and energy; and no one is a stranger when they are around Mike.

With that kind of dedication and attitude, it is not surprising that Judge Newman has been honored by the FBA on three occasions: in 2007, he was given an Outstanding Service and Recognition Award for leadership within the Sixth Circuit and nationwide; in 2010, he was awarded the Elaine R. "Boots" Fisher National Public Service Award "in recognition of exemplary community, public, and charitable service;" and, in 2014, he received a President's Award for "extraordinary service, commitment, and guidance."

Through the FBA, Judge Newman has been able to work on projects that are near and dear to his heart, such as initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. In 2015, he co-chaired the FBA's Diversity Task Force charged with drafting the FBA's diversity statement. Judge Newman is also committed to diversity initiatives within his local bar associations. For example, Judge Newman served as secretary of the Roundtable, a joint effort by the Cincinnati Bar Association and the Black Lawyer's Association of Cincinnati. He was honored by the Summer Work Experience in Law, a program that gives minority high school and college students an opportunity to intern with law firms and judges, and he serves on the statewide board of directors of the Law and Leadership Institute, a program that encourages minority high school students to attend college and law school.

While dedicated to initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in the bar, Judge Newman also recognizes that the longevity of any initiative or organization is dependent upon the willingness of its existing leadership to mentor. Having served as an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Law, the University of Dayton School of Law, and the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University, Judge Newman is more than a professor to young and prospective lawyers—he is a true teacher. When describing his dedication to mentorship at Judge Newman's investiture, George Vincent, Dinsmore's managing partner, said that "associates sought him out—[they] loved spending time with him." To this day, it is not unusual for Judge Newman to meet with law students and young lawyers to discuss their goals and professional development. According to former law clerk Liz Favret, now with the San Diego office of Duane Morris LLP, Judge Newman's mentorship was key to her development as a lawyer: "Judge Newman has been my mentor since the first day of my clerkship. He has never hesitated to carve time out of his busy schedule to advise and guide me." Ultimately, Judge Newman was always there to help her navigate significant transitions in her life, including a transition that took her from Ohio to California three years ago with her husband. "Judge Newman was

traveling to San Diego for the FBA Annual Convention," she said. "As I did not know anyone in San Diego, he graciously offered to connect me with any San Diego attorneys whom he met during this trip." Favret expected to receive perhaps a few business cards, at most, but was overwhelmed when she received much, much more:

Judge Newman returned with a long, detailed list of contacts for me, including a U.S. district judge and several prominent local attorneys. I later learned that he had devoted a significant part of his trip establishing connections on my behalf. Every single one of those contacts was eager to meet with me and guide me in my transition to San Diego. Because of Judge Newman, I moved to California with a better network in the legal community than many local law school graduates. Not surprisingly, my first job in San Diego was a direct result of those contacts. It is impossible to fully express my gratitude to Judge Newman for all of his kindness over the past five years. I am very grateful that Judge Newman continues to be a mentor to this day.

Mentorship, of course, takes time, but Judge Newman knows that investment in individuals pays dividends to the bar and to the greater community. He learned this lesson early in life, from his parents. His father, Jay, grew up poor during the Great Depression and had assumed that higher education was out of reach until a teacher at school pulled him aside and told him that he should consider going to college. Through that teacher, Jay learned about a program at the University of Cincinnati that allowed students to work their way through school. Ultimately, Jay's engineering degree made it possible, after his World War II service in the Navy, to attend law school on the GI Bill. Jay graduated from Harvard Law School with honors in 1951. Judge Newman often reflects on the much different trajectory his father's life would have taken, absent mentorship: "Had a teacher not made that comment to my father, and taken an interest in him as an individual, my father's entire life would have been different. That's a simple and practical example of the importance of mentoring and caring for other people."

In addition to learning the value of mentorship from his family, Judge Newman also learned the value of pursuing academic and professional endeavors that are personally meaningful. A graduate of New York University's Film School, Judge Newman made numerous short films while in college and co-hosted a popular radio program on the campus radio station—which was broadcast all over New York City—while completing his studies. The films and radio show were successful and helped him secure a writing agent at the ICM talent agency in Los Angeles. However, despite being drawn to creative endeavors, Judge Newman was also passionate about social justice and fairness. He found those interests—creativity, justice, fairness—all intersected in the law. Rather than pursue a career writing for the movies, Judge Newman followed in his father's footsteps and enrolled in law school.

After graduating with honors from the Washington College of Law at American University in 1989, Judge Newman accepted a clerkship with Magistrate Judge Jack Sherman Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio. It was Judge Sherman, along with former FBA national president Tom Schuck, who introduced Judge Newman to the FBA, which Judge Newman credits as being the organization that has most influenced his career. Judge Sherman himself was also a major influence on Judge Newman:

He kindly took me under his wing and trained me. It was an honor to work with him and for him. I was very moved by his dedication to his civil and criminal docket and the care with which he made every decision—in hundreds of cases, for example, he was never appealed. He told me he hoped I would be a judge someday, and that meant a great deal to me. We share the same passion for justice and for getting a decision right the first time.

After working side-by-side with Judge Sherman for years, Judge Newman was given the opportunity to clerk for Judge Nathaniel R. Jones of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Newman considers both Judge Sherman and Judge Jones two of his greatest mentors, teaching him valuable lessons that he would carry into private practice and later to the bench. In fact, when Judge Newman entered private practice at Dinsmore in 2003, he became a partner within three years—a feat matched by few in the 100-year history of the firm. While at Dinsmore, he was named both an “Ohio Super Lawyer” and one of the “Best Lawyers in America in Labor & Employment Law.” He also created and ran a *pro bono* program for firm attorneys who handled habeas corpus, § 1983, and criminal cases in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. According to George Vincent, Judge Newman “brought a work ethic and intensity to every matter and project, no matter how large or small, that was unparalleled.” It was no surprise to Vincent when Judge Newman joined the federal bench: “His passion for justice, inclusion, and results made him a difference maker at Dinsmore and in our community. Those attributes made him a natural to serve in the judiciary.”

Judge Newman’s colleagues on the federal bench could not agree more. U.S. District Judge Thomas M. Rose says that, “to describe Judge Newman as ‘tireless’ is a gross understatement.” According to Judge Rose, Judge Newman brings energy to every new challenge:

Judge Michael Newman is an individual that does not know the meaning of the words ‘tired,’ ‘hopeless,’ or ‘defeat.’ During his tenure here at the Dayton seat of court, Judge Newman, whether it is a project for the FBA, an outreach program for the Dayton community, or a complex legal issue in a case before him, runs at it—not away from it. He does not shy from a challenge, no matter how difficult.

That he does not shy from difficult issues makes Judge Newman highly regarded by members of the federal bench and bar. For example, Charlie Faruki, the founding partner of the Dayton-based Faruki Ireland & Cox, which is known for its active practice in federal courts in Ohio and throughout the country, observes that “Judge Newman loves the law, likes lawyers, and appreciates good lawyering. He is analytical, thorough, and fair.” Carter Stewart, who served as the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Ohio during the bulk of the Obama administration, could not agree more: “Judge Newman is the ultimate jurist: extremely knowledgeable of the law [and] unflinchingly fair in how he treats everyone who appears in front of him.”

Judge Newman’s approach to community service is also highly regarded by members of the federal bench and bar. “Regardless of how busy he may be, he always has time for those in need, the legal community, the FBA, litigants and the citizens of the Miami Valley,” observes Judge Rose, describing Judge Newman’s volunteer efforts throughout Southwestern Ohio. For example, Judge Newman is

actively involved with the Southern District of Ohio’s Re-Entry Court, a program that aims to minimize barriers to effective reentry, and to promote reduction in recidivism. According to U.S. District Judge Walter H. Rice, Judge Newman’s colleague in the Dayton federal courthouse, Judge Newman’s role in Re-Entry Court is key: “Judge Newman is active in its preparation and execution. [H]e firmly believes that we have a responsibility to help people coming home from prison, who many would say have paid their debt to society.” Judge Rice also lauds Judge Newman’s efforts in establishing and presiding over the first Federal Veterans Court in the Southern District of Ohio:

With the Dayton VA in our jurisdiction, we see a lot of veterans with addiction problems here. Many of the addiction problems, quite frankly, are caused by an attempt to self-medicate pain and mental illness as a result of service. Veterans Court is the same concept as Re-Entry Court, and is nonpunitive and devoted to misdemeanants. Judge Newman helps these veterans and tries to get them treatment.

As demonstrated by his involvement in these programs, Judge Newman believes that the judiciary should be accessible. This belief is further evidenced by his commitment to offering alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services to litigants in federal court. Indeed, Judge Newman has gained a reputation as a skilled mediator of cases filed in the Southern District of Ohio, having attended the Advanced Mediation Program at Harvard Law School and served as a neutral mediator and arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association while in private practice. Judge Newman takes great pride in helping litigants achieve results through ADR, recognizing that parties are frequently desperate for closure and are grateful when a neutral third-party can help get them there by agreement.

Ultimately, to use the words of Judge Rice, “Judge Newman is a superstar.” He has worn a lot of hats in his day: law firm partner; judge; mediator; arbitrator; mentor; adjunct professor; bar leader; and, yes, legal superstar. However, his yet-to-be-mentioned but most important hat renders his long-standing commitment to the FBA and the legal community even more impressive: father of triplets. Judge Newman and his wife, Rachel, are the proud parents of three 9-year-old daughters now in the third grade—Anna, Brigid, and Clare (affectionately known as “A, B, and C”). So, when Judge Rose said that describing Judge Newman as tireless would be a “gross understatement,” we know he was not kidding!

Despite all of his distinguished accomplishments, Judge Newman remains quite modest and humble. When asked about being national president of the FBA, he responds simply that he is honored to have been selected as FBA president and grateful for the opportunity to serve. ☺



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