

Hon. Nannette Jolivette Brown

by Jennifer McDonald Papa

Jennifer McDonald Papa serves as Judge Nannette Jolivette Brown's administrative law clerk. Prior to working for Judge Jolivette Brown, Papa served as a law clerk for an administrative law judge for the U.S. Department of Labor.

Judge Nannette Jolivette Brown was born and reared in the small town of Lafayette, La. The youngest of five children, she excelled in school from an early age. In high school, she received local, state and national honors in public speaking and debate, was the editor of her school newspaper, and was on the editorial staff of the yearbook. It is no surprise she was voted most likely to succeed by her classmates and teachers. She graduated with honors from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) with a B.A. in English-Journalism. She was active in student government, landed starring roles in college plays, and was a writer for both her undergraduate and city newspaper. Judge Jolivette Brown's work in journalism influenced her decision to attend law school. While in undergraduate school, her instructor, the editor of the local newspaper, had her cover local civil organizations' meetings—in particular the siting of a local landfill in her community.

Judge Jolivette Brown received her J.D. from Tulane Law School in 1988. While in law school, she served as editor of the *National Black Law Journal*, which is usually published by UCLA Law School, but visited Tulane for a year. She was also editor of *The Bench*, a law school news magazine, and as a member of the *Environmental Law Journal*. She later continued her legal education, earning an LL.M in Energy and Environmental Law from Tulane Law School in 1998 and mediation and negotiation training from Harvard Law School in 2008.

Upon graduating from Tulane, Judge Jolivette Brown began her legal career in New Orleans as an associate at Adams and Reese LLP. She continued her practice in several New Orleans firms and was a partner with Chaffe McCall LLP for several years, where she had a varied practice in commercial and environmental litigation, real estate law, and other transactional matters.

In addition to practicing law, Judge Jolivette Brown has taught at three law schools in Louisiana. She taught at Tulane Law School's Environmental Law Clinic where, through a clinical teaching program, she taught students while representing environmental organizations as well as disadvantaged communities



in litigation initiated throughout the State of Louisiana and in permitting matters before the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. She was an assistant professor of law at Southern University Law Center, where she taught federal civil procedure, professional responsibility, legal research and writing, and environmental and toxic tort law. As a visiting professor of law, she helped establish the Mediation Section of the Loyola College of Law Clinic & Center for Social Justice, where she provided free mediation services to those unable to pursue traditional legal avenues to resolve their disputes. She previously served as an adjunct professor at Loyola Law School, where she taught evidence for trial. Judge Jolivette Brown has a passion for teaching because she truly believes she was directly impacted—and placed on a course for success—by teachers who embraced her, encouraged her, and supported her throughout her academic and professional career.

Judge Jolivette Brown served as a hearing officer and committee chair for the Louisiana Disciplinary Board for nearly 10 years before her appointment to the bench. She has lectured and published in the areas of professional responsibility, mediation and negotiation, and environmental law. Judge Jolivette Brown holds the principles of ethics and professionalism in high regard; she runs a timely, well-orga-

nized courtroom and chambers, and professionalism, candor, and courtesy are expected—she makes a point to set the tone.

Prior to her appointment to the court, Judge Jolivet Brown was deputy mayor and city attorney for the City of New Orleans. There, she was the city's chief legal officer, managing and directing 75 staff attorneys and a number of outside law firms in addressing a wide variety of matters—in areas ranging from local business permitting to negotiating with federal agencies in consent decrees and managing high-profile civil litigation—impacting the city of New Orleans.

Judge Jolivet Brown was nominated to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana by President Barack Obama, and after the Senate confirmed her nomination by unanimous consent, she began active service on Oct. 5, 2011. Judge Jolivet Brown is the first African-American woman appointed to the federal bench in the State of Louisiana in the district court's 200-year history.

As a judge, she remains active in the legal community by participating in legal organizations and hosting CLEs throughout the year. Judge Jolivet Brown is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Judges Association, a member of the Fifth Circuit District Judges Association, and the editor in chief of the *District Judges' Newsletter*. She is co-chair of the Judicial Function Committee of the Criminal Law Section of the American Bar Association and a member of the Board of Directors for the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. She is also a member of the Tulane Inn of Court, the A.P. Tureaud Inn of Court, the Louis A. Martinet Society, and the National Bar Association.

Judge Jolivet Brown believes the leadership role of a judge is different from other public officials. She believes a judge leads by showing an unwavering commitment to the rule of law, commanding respect for the position by being inclusive and open in the decision-making process, and by not maintaining associations

that create the appearance of impropriety. Moreover, she is extremely conscientious of her role as a district court judge—a finder of fact and applier of the rule of law. She writes an order explaining every decision she makes in hopes it will give guidance to everyone equally as to her analysis and authority for the conclusion. She is also cognizant of the importance of everyone being treated equally—regardless of their station in life, years and experience practicing law, whether they are a sole practitioner or big law practice lawyer, rich, poor, or anything in between. Accuracy in your knowledge of the law and particularly controlling precedent, clarity in writing, candor, and preciseness in oral advocacy is what drives her decision-making process, and so you will be successful if the law and facts are on your side—no matter who you are and who is arguing your case for you. Whether you agree with her decision, philosophy, and courtroom practices or not, one thing is clear, as evidenced in her numerous, thorough opinions, Judge Jolivet Brown is consistent, even-tempered and limits herself to the issues before her.

Those who work closely with Judge Jolivet Brown, her law clerks and externs, are motivated by the judge's genuine and thoughtful approach to each decision she makes. When asked to describe the judge, her staff says she is fair and thorough; they earn valuable insight into her philosophy of treating every party equally and thoroughly addressing each argument raised. They also make time for some fun, as Judge Jolivet Brown enjoys giving her staff a taste of New Orleans culture during their term.

Judge Jolivet Brown married her husband, Marcus, 25 years ago. They have two wonderful adult children, Dylan and Rachel. Judge Jolivet Brown loves to share stories about the antics of her children who are both beautiful and popular—neither quality Judge Jolivet Brown claims to possess—as well as the many adventures with her 18-year-old Pomeranian, Pepsi, and her 7-year-old Yorkie, Hercules, a frequent visitor to chambers. ☺

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