As we ascend the mountain that is Gorham trail in Acadia National Park in Maine, we are overcome with the beauty of our surroundings. I am hiking with the newest magistrate judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania; she is lecturing me about not having the proper shoes. We approach the bottom of the trail, and she announces that, because she so enjoyed the hike, she is going to repeat the adventure. I go to meet my husband and our collective kids. The fog begins to roll in as the judge bounds upward. By the time I reach the beach, the entire area is soaked in by fog. Too much time elapses as I anxiously try to call her on her cell phone. No answer. No need to worry, though, because she emerges through the fog, pumped up by the experience of getting lost and having to find her own way back.

And so it goes with Magistrate Judge Lisa Pupo Lenihan — appointed by the court through a merit-selection process to serve an eight-year term commencing April 2, 2004 — an ongoing willingness to forge new paths.

Judge Pupo Lenihan came to the bench from a career marked by advances. After graduating with honors from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law (where she served on Law Review and interned as a law clerk for Judge Joseph Weis of the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals), she worked as an associate for a law firm in Pittsburgh until 1987, when she became a founding partner of Burns, White and Hickton and the youngest female partner of a Pittsburgh law firm. Lisa Pupo Lenihan became the first female managing partner of a Pittsburgh firm in 1997 and was responsible for managing four offices, hiring and retaining attorneys, supervising the summer clerk program, addressing human relations issues, and dealing with financial management matters.

From 2000 until her appointment to the bench, she served as corporate secretary and assistant counsel at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, where she created several new initiatives, including a governance review committee, a systemwide ethics policy committee, and a Web site for the board of directors.

Judge Pupo Lenihan appreciates the freedom to think about, conduct research into, and contemplate the law as a magistrate judge. She is supported by a competent staff that includes several mothers who job-share. She refers to raising her own three children — 14-year-old Patrick, 13-year-old Alexandra, and 11-year-old Christopher — as the most important job she holds and a “work in progress.”

An only child from Kulpmont, Pa., Judge Pupo Lenihan comments that her own mother wanted her to be perfect but was never overly critical. The judge got used to finding her own way early in life. It wasn’t that she grew up too fast, it was just that life was so interesting that she had to find out what was possible next.

Always dedicated to public service, Judge Pupo Lenihan’s community activities over the decade includes serv-

**Hon. Lisa Pupo Lenihan**

**U.S. Magistrate Judge, Western District of Pennsylvania**

By Karen Engro
Judge Pupo Lenihan is a member of the court’s Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee and will help implement new local rules mandating the use of ADR in most civil cases.

Prior to applying for the position of magistrate judge, she consulted her mentor and friend, Judge Robert Cindrich (former judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania and now general counsel for the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center), who advised her: “What could be better than a position where you get up every day and your job is to do the right thing?” And according to those who have appeared before her, Pupo Lenihan “does the right thing.” For example, the federal public defender’s office considers Judge Pupo Lenihan “a welcome addition to the bench.” As first assistant federal public defender Michael Novara says, “Although she came to the bench without prior criminal law experience, she has thus far given the issues facing indigent criminal defendants careful consideration, and we expect she will continue to do so in the future.”

Her “boss,” Chief Judge Donetta Ambrose, has this to say about the court’s newest appointment: “Lisa is truly a ‘star.’ From the moment she joined the court, she hit the ground running and hasn’t stopped yet. She is an extremely competent, energetic, and affable judge. I am thrilled to be her colleague and her friend.”

Judge Pupo Lenihan keeps the following quote from Socrates visible on her computer, because she believes it applies as well today as it did more than 2,000 years ago: “Four things belong to a judge: to hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and to decide impartially.” Watchful words for a daring woman.

Karen Engro is currently the executive director of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Judicial Council, the ADR coordinator for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, a mediator, and a mediation trainer and consultant. She was an associate clinical professor of law at the University of Pittsburgh from 1993 to 2003.