

*A*s 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 socked 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

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

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



ing in various board capacities for the board of visitors of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law; St. Alexis School; TechWrite Inc.; the Pittsburgh Chapter of the ATHENA Foundation; the Zoar Home; Watchful Shepherd of Western PA; Parental Stress Center Inc.; and ARCH, a nonprofit theater group dedicated to social change. Her multiple bar activities include serving as past chair of the Commission on Women in the Profession of the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the University of Pittsburgh Law Alumni Association's board of governors. She was elected to the Judiciary Committee of the Allegheny County Bar and is a council member of its Women in the Law Division.

Judge Pupo Lenihan has been appointed to serve on several high-profile task forces and committees, including the Governor's Task Force on Medical Malpractice, the Advisory Committee for the Study of Rules of Practice for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's committee studying racial and gender bias in the justice system. In addition, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court appointed her to a six-year term on the state's Board of Law Examiners, on which she served as board chair for two of those years. She has received numerous honors and awards; she was named a Woman of Spirit by Carlow College and Woman of the Year by the Women's Association of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Law and received the Susan B. Anthony Award from the Women's Bar Association of Western Pennsylvania.

Recognized as an effective mediator on the bench,

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 impartial-



Judge Pupo Lenihan with former Judge Robert Cindrich (left) of the Western District of Pennsylvania and currently general counsel of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and Chief Justice Ralph J. Cappy (right) of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

ly." Watchful words for a daring woman. **TFL**

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