# 2026 First District Appellate Seminar

**4.5 Hours of General CLE Credit and 1 Hour of Professionalism Credit**

## A. Agenda:

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| 8:00 – 8:25 | Registration and Check-In |
| 8:25 – 8:40 | Welcome Announcements |
| 8:40 – 9:40 | **First District Case Law Update: Key Rulings from the First District Court of Appeals in 2026**<br>*Matthew Doktor/Griff Bludworth* |
| 9:40 – 9:50 | Break |
| 9:50 – 10:50 | **Brief Writing in the Age of AI**<br>*Pierre Bergeron* |
| 10:50 – 11:00 | Break |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | **From Mandamus to Habeas: Navigating Original Actions in the First District Court of Appeals**<br>*Magistrate Angela Hayden* |
| 11:30 – 11:35 | Break |
| 11:35 – 12:35 | **Maintaining Professionalism (Even When It's Tough)**<br>*Judge Ginger S. Bock* |
| 12:35 – 1:35 | Lunch Break |
| 1:35 – 2:35 | **Ohio Supreme Court Year in Review: An Interactive Presentation**<br>*Magistrate Mike Walsh* |
| 2:35 – 2:45 | Break |
| 2:45 – 3:45 | **View from the Bench: Mastering Motion Practice in the First District Court of Appeals**<br>*Featuring the Judges of the First District Court of Appeals & Moderated by Magistrate Julie Kahrs Nessler* |
| 3:45 – 4:00 | Closing and Evaluations |

**B. Description of Courses:**

**1. First District Case Law Update: Key Rulings from the First District Court of Appeals in 2026, Matthew Doktor and Griff Bludworth**

First District Staff Attorney Matthew Doktor, and former First District Staff Attorney Griff Bludworth, will provide attendees with an overview of the most significant decisions released from the First District Court of Appeals in the last year. First District Staff Attorney Heather Heineman will also assist in compiling materials for the case law update presentation.

**2. *Brief Writing in the Age of AI*, Pierre Bergeron**

Pierre Bergeron, former Judge for the First District Court of Appeals will present this court which explores the evolving landscape of appellate brief writing as AI becomes a popular tool utilized in legal practice. The course will discuss how to utilize AI in research, drafting, and analysis, while maintaining the critical thinking and persuasive skills needed for effective advocacy.

***3. From Mandamus to Habeas: Navigating Original Actions in the First District Court of Appeals*, Magistrate Angela Hayden**

This course provides an overview of both statutory and common law writs, focusing on procedural and statutory requirements for filings, as well as reviewing the First District's local rules and new original action docketing statement. The course will discuss writs of mandamus, prohibition, procedendo, quo warranto, and habeas corpus.

***4. Maintaining Professionalism (Even When It's Tough)*, Judge Ginger S. Bock**

This professionalism training course is designed to provide participants with essential skills and knowledge to maintain and promote professionalism. The curriculum provides attorneys with professionalism tools and addresses identifying and addressing mental-health and substance-abuse concerns.

**5. *Ohio Supreme Court Law Update*, Michael Walsh**

This session offers an interactive, and sometimes fun, review of important decisions from the Ohio Supreme Court over the last year. The discussion will focus on decisions important to appellate practitioners.

**6. View from the Bench: Mastering Motion Practice in the First District Court of Appeals Featured Speakers**: Judge Marilyn Zayas; Judge Candace C. Crouse; Judge Ginger S. Bock; Judge Jennifer Kinsley; Judge Terry Nestor; Judge Richard L. Moore

**Moderator**: Magistrate Julie Kahrs Nessler, Court Administrator for the First District Court of Appeals

This session offers a practical and insightful overview of motion practice before the First District Court of Appeals. Attendees will gain a clear understanding of procedural motions and strategic considerations that drive successful advocacy. This will be followed by answers to questions submitted by attendees regarding motion practice at the time of registration.

## C. Faculty Names

- Judge Marilyn Zayas
- Judge Candace C. Crouse
- Judge Ginger S. Bock
- Judge Jennifer Kinsley
- Judge Terry Nestor
- Judge Richard L. Moore
- Magistrate Julie Kahrs Nessler
- Magistrate Angela Hayden
- Matthew Doktor
- Griff Bludworth
- Pierre Bergeron
- Magistrate Mike Walsh

## D. Faculty Biographies

**Judge Marilyn Zayas**
**Judge | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Judge Marilyn Zayas grew up in a sister neighborhood of Harlem, New York, to Puerto Rican parents. Her distinguished career is marked by significant achievements in law and community service. Judge Zayas's early life in a working-class neighborhood, shaped by her parents' professions – her father worked in a printing shop and her mother worked as a seamstress – influences her commitment to fairness and hard work, values she carries into her judicial career. In 2022 she earned an "Excellent" rating, the highest rating from the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and the Norman S. Minor Bar Association.

Judge Zayas made history in 2016 by becoming the first person of Latino heritage elected to a Court of Appeals in the tri-state. She is now amongst the most experienced appellate judges in Ohio. Judge Zayas was selected by the Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court to serve by special assignment at the Supreme Court for a criminal case in June 2018, and complex civil cases on March 13, April 2, and April 22, 2025.

Judge Zayas led initiatives to enhance court efficiency and accessibility, including creating a user-friendly guide to assist self-represented litigants. The guide offers clear, step-by-step instructions for navigating the court process. She also

promoted new court policies that increased the page limit for appellate briefs and established a default right to file an appellant's reply brief.

Judge Zayas is deeply committed to community service, serving on several boards. In 2017, she created the "Educating Tomorrow's Leaders Program," aimed at teaching high school and university students about the judicial system and inspiring them to dream big and never give up.

Her judicial excellence and contributions are widely recognized, both nationally and locally. She was celebrated in Washington, D.C., upon her selection as the 2024 Judge of the Year by the preeminent National Hispanic Bar Association. Judge Zayas was also recognized locally in 2024 by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners, proclaiming October 11, 2024, as Judge Marilyn Zayas day. ABC's Good Morning America celebrated her distinguished contributions on the GMA 2021 Inspiration List: Who's Making Hispanic Latino History Right Now. She is also a 2019 YWCA Career Women of Achievement award recipient.

Her family includes three adult children and rescue grand-fur-babies, Sparkle Lou and Kiwi.

**Judge Candace C. Crouse**
**Judge | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Judge Candace C. Crouse was elected to the First District Court of Appeals in November 2018 and took the bench on February 11, 2019.

Judge Crouse earned a B.A. in International Studies and German from West Virginia University and a J.D. from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, where she was a managing editor of *The Ohio State Law Journal*. Following law school, Judge Crouse spent two years clerking for Federal Judge Frederick P. Stamp in the Northern District of West Virginia.

Before being elected to the bench, Judge Crouse was a partner in her own law firm and represented clients in state and federal court at both the trial and appellate levels. She has litigated cases in many areas of the law including immigration law, domestic relations law, First Amendment law, constitutional law, personal injury law, contract law, and criminal defense.

Throughout her career, Judge Crouse made it a priority to use her law degree to help people who were lost or without a voice in our legal system. She often took court appointments and volunteered her legal services to protect the rights of those who could not afford counsel.

Judge Crouse has served as an Adjunct Professor of Law and a Trial Team Coach at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. She is a member of The Ohio Judicial Conference Jury Instructions Committee and The Ohio Board of Professional Conduct.

**Judge Ginger S. Bock**
**Judge | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Judge Ginger S. Bock was elected to the First District Court of Appeals in November 2020.

Following graduation from Miami University, Judge Bock worked for 10 years at nonprofit organizations, including a residential home for abused children and a treatment center for women. Judge Bock then attended law school, graduating Summa Cum Laude from the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

Judge Bock's first job after law school was at the First District Court of Appeals as a staff attorney for Judge Mark P. Painter.

Before being elected, Judge Bock worked at private law firms, including her own practice where her focus was appellate advocacy. She has argued before the Supreme Court of Ohio, the United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and Ohio Courts of Appeals throughout the State of Ohio. Judge Bock also served as a staff attorney at the Court of Common Pleas for two years before beginning her term.

Judge Bock is an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Law, where she teaches legal research and writing.

Eliminating disparities in the justice system, increasing transparency in the courts, and removing barriers to justice are priorities for Judge Bock. She is dedicated to ensuring that every person who appears before the Court is treated fairly and respectfully.

Judge Bock and her spouse live in a northwest suburb and enjoy the company of their two Pyrenees-Labrador rescue dogs.

**Judge Jennifer Kinsley**
**Judge | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Judge Jennifer Kinsley joined the Court in February 2023 after a long career practicing and teaching in the areas of constitutional law, civil rights, and criminal legal reform.

A graduate of the Duke University School of Law and the University of Florida, she began her career as a juvenile public defender at the Hamilton County Public Defender's Office. She then entered private practice, where she developed a national reputation as a First Amendment and civil rights attorney, often providing free legal services to underserved clients in cases that drove systemic change. Judge Kinsley's work on behalf of incarcerated and wrongfully silenced people has been highlighted in major news outlets across the country, including the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *NBC Nightly News*, and Kim Kardashian's *The Justice Project* documentary on the Oxygen Network.

For a decade, Judge Kinsley taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Law before joining the Northern Kentucky University Chase College of Law full-time faculty. She earned early tenure there, teaching classes in

constitutional law, criminal law, and practical lawyering skills and publishing research in leading law journals on the intersection of speech, psychology, and crime. Her teaching has literally spanned the globe, as she has trained judges in Turkey and lawyers in Russia and Poland on the American right of free speech and related constitutional traditions. She continues to serve as a member of the NKU Chase College of Law faculty and to teach law school courses there.

Judge Kinsley is a proponent of the community and regularly commits her time in service to others. She has previously served on the boards of local arts and social services agencies and frequently serves meals to those experiencing food insecurity. Before becoming a judge, she held leadership positions in national legal organizations, including the First Amendment Lawyers Association and the National Association for Public Defense.

In her free time, Judge Kinsley enjoys running, music, word games, college sports (Go Gators!), and the Cincinnati culinary scene. She welcomes the opportunity to speak to community and school-based groups about the work of the court.

**Judge Terry Nestor**
**Judge | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Terry Nestor was elected to the First District Court of Appeals in 2024 after his first term as a Hamilton County Common Pleas Judge. While on the Court of Common Pleas, Judge Nestor served as the Veteran's Court judge from 2020-2024. In 2021, Judge Nestor was named Trial Judge of the Year by the Southwest Ohio Trial Lawyers Association. Judge Nestor serves as an adjunct professor at University of Cincinnati College of Law and is a member of the Ohio Supreme Court's case management advisory committee.

Before becoming a judge, Terry served as an assistant City Solicitor for the City of Cincinnati. In that role, Terry represented the City as Chief Trial Counsel and was eventually the Acting City Solicitor in 2014. Terry represented the City in multiple jurisdictions, including the Ohio Supreme Court, the First District Court of Appeals, and the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. He was the designated advisor for multiple agencies, including the Board of Health, the Citizen's Complaint Authority, and the City's utilities. Before joining the City, Terry was in private practice representing doctors, engineers, lawyers and other entities in tort litigation.

A proud graduate of Moeller High School, Miami University, and the University of Cincinnati College of Law, Judge Nestor lives in Clifton with his wife, Brigid, who owns a small business in Cincinnati. They have two adult children, both Ohio State graduates, who they hope will someday produce more Buckeyes.

**Judge Richard L. Moore**
**Judge | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Judge Moore was elected to the First District Court of Appeals in November 2024. A first-time candidate, Judge Moore made history as the first African American elected to a seat on the First District.

Prior to joining the bench, Judge Moore was a trial attorney in private practice at two of the largest law firms in Cincinnati.

During his over 30 years in private practice, Judge Moore was a frequent lecturer and author on topics related to employment law and previously served as an adjunct professor of legal ethics at the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

The youngest child of Richard and Jeanne Moore, Judge Moore grew up in Kennedy Heights and attended Walnut Hills High School and Calvary United Methodist Church.

After graduating from Walnut, Judge Moore went on to Bowling Green State University. While at Bowling Green, Judge Moore joined Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Epsilon Theta Chapter, and went on to serve as chapter president. While at BGSU, Judge Moore also served in leadership roles in many other campus organizations and was awarded the Presidential Service Award his senior year. Judge Moore graduated from Bowling Green in 1987 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration.

After working in the private sector for three years, Judge Moore enrolled at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. While in law school, Judge Moore was invited to join the Law Review and served as president of the Black Law Student Association. Judge Moore received his J.D. from U.C. in 1993 and was admitted to the Ohio Bar that same year.

As an attorney, Judge Moore was selected for inclusion in the Ohio Super Lawyers since 2018, Cincy Magazine Leading Lawyers in 2021, and Best Lawyers in America since 2020. Judge Moore was also previously named as one of the Cincinnati Business Courier's Forty Under 40.

Judge Moore has served on the boards of the Taft Museum of Art, La Soupe, and The Bowling Green State University Foundation. Judge Moore has also previously served as President of the Mercantile Library Association, Board Chair of the Cancer Support Community of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, Board Chair of the Urban League of Greater Cincinnati, and Co-Chair of the Greater Cincinnati Minority Counsel Program. Judge Moore is also a former trustee of the Cincinnati Bar Association and the Cincinnati Bar Foundation.

**Julie Kahrs Nessler**
**Magistrate | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Julie Kahrs Nessler has served as the Court Administrator for the First District Court of Appeals in Hamilton County, Ohio, since February 2021. She brings more than 10 years of appellate legal experience and several years of administrative leadership to the role. In her current position, Ms. Nessler is responsible for overseeing the operations of the six-judge appellate court.

Ms. Nessler began her appellate career in 2011 as a Judicial Law Clerk for the Twelfth District Court of Appeals, a position she held until 2015. She then joined the Hamilton County Public Defender's Office, serving as the appellate attorney for the Juvenile Division. In that role, she represented youth charged with

criminal offenses in both Hamilton County Juvenile Court and on appeal before the First District Court of Appeals. During her tenure, Ms. Nessler also argued several cases before the Ohio Supreme Court.

A recognized leader in juvenile justice, Ms. Nessler conducted trainings throughout the state on appellate and juvenile law. She also contributed to policy reform efforts through her participation in legislative and working groups focused on systemic change for Ohio's youth. In 2018, she was honored with the Noel E. Kaech Juvenile Defender Award by the Ohio Public Defender's Office for her impact and contribution to juvenile defense in Ohio. Prior to focusing on appellate work, Ms. Nessler worked as an associate attorney in a small civil litigation firm in Columbus, Ohio.

Ms. Nessler earned her Juris Doctor from Capital University Law School in 2009, where she served as an Associate Editor of *The Capital University Law Review*. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Western Kentucky University (WKU). During her time at WKU, she completed an internship at the National Legal Aid and Defender Association in Washington, D.C.

In September 2024, Ms. Nessler received her Court Manager's certification through the Court Management Program of the Institute for Court Management, part of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). In 2025, she was accepted into the Certified Court Executive program (CCE), Class of 2027. The CCE credential is the second-level certificate in NCSC's court-management program. Ms. Nessler is also an active participant in several working groups, including one related to the Ohio courts of appeals' case management system and the Appellate Workgroup for the Advisory Committee on Case Management. She also continues to deliver trainings on a wide range of appellate practice topics for diverse audiences.

Ms. Nessler has been active in numerous professional and civic organizations during her career. Currently, she is a volunteer for Hamilton County Youth Court. She serves as a repeat volunteer for local law school's moot court competitions. Ms. Nessler is also a member of Cincinnati Bar Association (CBA) and the Ohio Association of Court Administrators (OACA). Finally, Ms. Nessler volunteers at her children's school, coaches her son's soccer team, and coaches her daughter's volleyball team.

**Angela Hayden**
**Magistrate | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Angela Hayden became the Assistant Court Administrator in March 2021. She brings more than 20 years of legal practice experience and several years of administrative experience to the position. She assists Ms. Nessler in the overall operation of the Court.

Ms. Hayden's legal experience includes criminal defense work and civil litigation. In the early part of her career, she worked as a Judicial Law Clerk in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations and Juvenile Division. From there, she went into private practice at a large national law firm, eventually moving to a regional law firm. Immediately prior to coming to the Court, Ms.

Hayden worked as the Administrative Director for a local nonprofit healthcare organization.

Ms. Hayden's career highlights include several high-profile victories as a criminal defense attorney, along with numerous successes in the civil arena.

Ms. Hayden is a proud Cincinnati native and grew up on the West Side of the city. She obtained her B.A. in Communications from the College of Mount St. Joseph (now Mount St. Joseph University) and her J.D. from the University of Akron School of Law.

**Matthew Doktor**
**Staff Attorney | Ohio First District Court of Appeals**

Matthew Doktor is a staff attorney for Judge Ginger S. Bock of the First District Court of Appeals. Matthew graduated from Rutgers University with a B.A. in history and from Rutgers University Graduate School of Education with an M.ED. in social studies education. He taught history, finance, and civics in Jersey City and Perth Amboy, New Jersey, for eight years before starting law school. During law school, he published scholarly articles for the University of Cincinnati Law Review and the Jones Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice Journal, and received the Ohio Innocence Project Louis Rosenthal Award. Matthew earned his J.D. from the University of Cincinnati College of Law in 2021.

**Griff Bludworth**
**Attorney | Marktovits, Stock & Demarco**

Griff Bludworth is an attorney at Markovits, Stock & Demarco. Prior to entering private practice, he spent two years as a staff attorney for the Hon. Candace C. Crouse on Ohio's First District Court of Appeals. Griff received his J.D. summa cum laude from the University Cincinnati College of Law in 2024, where he served as managing editor of the University of Cincinnati Law Review and as a teaching assistant in courses on constitutional and property law. During that same period, he received the Lois Rosenthal Award for his work with the Ohio Innocence Project, clerked at local civil-rights firm Friedman, Gilbert + Gerhardstein, and argued before the federal Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit as part of the Sixth Circuit Clinic. Prior to law school, Griff received degrees in classics and theatre from Xavier University and worked as a theatre artist, a singer, a casting assistant, a pool-care expert, and a one-time translator/adaptor of Attic tragedy.

**Pierre Bergeron**
**Prof. of Government and Law | Centre College**
**Attorney | Marktovits, Stock & Demarco**

Pierre Bergeron served as a Judge on the First District Court of Appeals from 2019-2025. He is now the Lively Professor of Government and Law at Centre College, and practices at Markovits Stock & DeMarco, where he focuses on arbitration, mediation, and appellate litigation. Bergeron is a co-author (with Shannon Price) of the book, *The Jury's Out: The Fight to Save the American Legal System* (published by Cornell Univ. Press).

**Magistrate C. Michael Walsh**
**Court Administrator | Ohio Ninth District Court of Appeals**

C. Michael Walsh has been the court administrator of the Ninth District Court of Appeals since January 2005 and was appointed the court's first magistrate in October 2005. Previously, he served as assistant to the dean at the University of Akron School of Law and completed a one-year clerkship with the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Prior to the clerkship, he spent over 10 years at the University of Akron School of Law as assistant director of the Appellate Review Office, the Law School's Legal Clinic. He also took a sabbatical and spent a year at Case Western Reserve University School of Law as a visiting assistant professor. He currently serves as a member of the Supreme Court's Board of Bar Examiners and previously served on the Supreme Court's Board on the Unauthorized Practice of Law. He also serves on the Summit County Law Library Legal Resources Board, and is a member of the Akron, Lorain, Medina, and Wayne County Bar Associations, and the Ohio State Bar Association. He received his accounting degree from the University of Akron and his law degree from the University of Akron School of Law.