

# W O M E N O F T H E Y E A R

Supreme Court Justice Debra M. Todd has become only the second woman and the first Democratic Party female candidate elected to serve on the Supreme Court. She served seven years on the



**TODD**

Superior Court, following an 18-year career as a litigator for major corporations, a midsized firm and her boutique practice. She started her career as an in-house litigator with U.S. Steel, moving on to become a partner practicing complex litigation at Cohen & Grigsby in Pittsburgh. Then Todd started her own plaintiffs firm, Todd & Associates. Todd also earned an LL.M in the judicial process from the University of Virginia School of Law in 2004.

Allen, Donohue and Shogan also joined the Pennsylvania Superior Court last fall, which is led by a woman: President Judge Kate Ford Elliott.

Superior Court Judge Cheryl Allen is now one of two minorities serving on the state's appellate courts. She is the first African-American woman to win election to the Superior Court. It wasn't Allen's first



**ALLEN**

bid for the appellate bench, but she was able to reach the Superior Court when she changed her party registration to become a Republican. She also won election despite a deficit in fund-raising and without a party endorsement.

Allen started her practice of law with a solo practice that she ran contemporaneously while working for Neighborhood Legal Services, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and the Allegheny County Law Department. She joined the Allegheny Common Pleas Court on her third election bid.

Superior Court Judge Christine Donohue, a Democrat from Pittsburgh, and a former shareholder and practice manager in the litigation section of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, practiced for more



**DONOHUE**

than 26 years as a civil litigator. She represented plaintiffs in personal injury cases for the first nine years of her career, before switching to representation of businesses in commercial disputes. Donohue also served on the Pennsylvania Court of Judicial Discipline between 1993 and 1996.

Superior Court Judge Jacqueline O. Shogan, a Republican of Murrysville, Westmoreland County, is a former senior counsel in Thorp Reed & Armstrong's complex civil litigation, health law and commercial litigation practice groups.

Shogan went through two unsuccessful

primaries but was nominated to the ballot when former Judge Michael T. Joyce announced he would not seek retention. Shogan worked as a nurse for six years before entering law school and graduating in 1990 from the University of Pittsburgh Law School.

Shogan spent here first two years of practice as a litigation associate at Thorp Reed in Pittsburgh, then as a member of a small health law firm and then as a solo practitioner serving as counsel to a 30-physician medical practice.

Shogan also served as career law clerk to Judge Maurice B. Cohill Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania from 1997 to 2001. In 2002, she returned to Thorp Reed.

## BARBARA BINIS

Binis is a Reed Smith lifer, having joined the firm's Philadelphia office after she graduated law school in 1991.

In January 2007, the firm announced she would take over as head of the then 139-lawyer products liability group. The official transference of leadership had to be delayed until July, however, as Binis was knee-deep in two trials for a major pharmaceutical client.

Binis, along with lead counsel Michael Scott, represented Wyeth in several hormone-replacement therapy cases brought in Philadelphia by women who claimed the drugs caused their breast cancer.

The pair has been successful in either getting cases against Wyeth thrown out or having verdicts against the company overturned.

Binis is also the vice-chairwoman of the firm's life sciences health industry group, which included the products liability team.

She represents several of the top 10 pharmaceutical and drug and device manufacturers as well as large insurance companies, financial institutions, government agencies and health care providers.

## SUSAN L. BURKE

Burke is a founding partner of Burke O'Neil (then Burke Pyle) and has worked on large litigation matters in jurisdictions from Philadelphia to the Dominican Republic and Iraq.

She represented Mayor Michael Nutter during his run in



**SHOGAN**



**BINIS**



**BURKE**

the Democratic primary in 2007. He sued his opponents in an effort to get them to comply with a city ordinance that limited acceptable campaign contributions. Burke was ultimately successful in arguing before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court that Philadelphia had the power under its Home Rule Charter to create such an ordinance.

Further from home, Burke helped the firm's client, the government of the Dominican Republic, secure a \$6 million settlement from a Fla.-based entrepreneur and a multinational electrical power company over environmental issues.

In October 2007, the firm filed a lawsuit in Washington, D.C., against Blackwater USA on behalf of victims of a Sept. 16 shooting in which innocent Iraqis were believed to have been killed.

Burke spends much of her time traveling across the world for her cases while running her own law firm.

## JOANNE A. EPPS

Epps was recently elevated from her position as associate dean of academic affairs at Temple University Beasley School of Law to the new dean of the law school.

She is the first woman to serve as



**EPPS**

dean of the law school and the second African-American to attain the position.

Epps, a scholar in trial advocacy and criminal procedure, has been with the law school since 1985. She became associate dean of academic affairs in 1989 and has served since that time as the primary liaison between the dean and the law faculty, overseen administrative operations, and assisted the dean in faculty personnel decisions, fundraising and alumni relations. Epps joined the Temple Law faculty in 1985. She teaches courses on evidence, criminal procedure and trial advocacy.

Before joining the faculty, Epps was assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania from 1980 to 1985. From 1976 to 1980, Epps was deputy city attorney for the city of Los Angeles, where she tried more than 50 criminal jury trials.

Epps was the only law professor selected by the American Bar Association to travel to London to train Sudanese lawyers representing victims of the Darfur crisis. She has also taught Chinese legal professionals in Temple Law's rule of law programs in Beijing, jury trial advocacy to members of the Japanese Bar Association and advocacy skills to prosecutors in Tanzania at the United Nations' International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

She said she plans on expanding the law school's presence internationally.

*Women of the Year continues on WIP20*

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