



*District and Municipal Court Judges' Association  
&  
Superior Court Judges' Association*

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Recent local and national events compel Washington's professional associations that represent more than 425 judicial officers to reassert our commitment to eliminate racism, prejudice, and inequality in our courts.

**SCJA President**  
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While individual judicial officers perform our daily work independently, we speak with one voice to condemn racial stereotyping, bias, impartiality, and insensitivity toward persons appearing before us and the communities we serve. We are governed by a Code of Judicial Conduct, which judicial officers must conscientiously strive to uphold. This Code is built on the premise that "[a]n independent, fair and impartial judiciary is indispensable to our system of justice." To realize this objective, we are bound to "maintain the dignity of judicial office ... and ... [to] aspire at all times to conduct that ensures the greatest possible public confidence in [our] independence, impartiality, integrity, and competence." When we fail to meet the baseline requirements of the Code of Judicial Conduct, we diminish public trust in our courts; an outcome we abhor.

This past year has challenged judicial officers, courts, and society at virtually every level. Given this upheaval and the examination and introspection it has generated, Washington's trial courts have doubled down in our efforts to identify and eliminate prejudice, inequality, and inequity throughout our justice system. We actively recruit people of color to consider a career on the bench; educate on all subjects, including judicial ethics, changes in the law and subject area competence, and racial equity; and we work with our justice system partners to develop resources to help community members avoid court involvement, such as the Eviction Resolution Program that assists tenants and landlords agree to and fund payment plans for rent arrearages to avoid eviction actions. As community leaders, judicial officers must at all times model the standards of fairness, impartiality, integrity, and competence. We explicitly denounce words or behavior that violate our professional obligations to the public we serve. And we renew our commitment to eliminate practices and conduct that impede "equal justice under law."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "MK Gehlsen".

Michelle K. Gehlsen  
DMCJA President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judith H Ramseyer".

Judith H. Ramseyer  
SCJA President