

heading appearing in the Google search for my name states “Attorney Katrina Hull successfully lies in defending ridiculous goat . . .” and the “article” on the website is titled, “Milwaukee Lawyer Protects Restaurant’s Ridiculous Trademark by Lying to United States Patent and Trademark Office and to Federal Appeals Court.”

To be honest, this website hurts. (My kids, though, have had “fun” with this website. They love to Google my name at school, and brag to their friends that their mom is a “successful liar.”) I encourage all of you, though, to be kind and not to be like Opposing Counsel.

Whenever you can: Have fun. Be kind. Give back.

Perhaps the most important advice I can offer is to give back. You have impressive intelligence, and I encourage you to find a way to share that with the community where you practice law. If you practice in Milwaukee, you can volunteer as an attorney at the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic (MVLIC). Many of you may have already volunteered as law students, and I thank you for that service.

For almost as long as I’ve been practicing law in Milwaukee, I’ve been volunteering at the House of Peace location for the MVLIC. I may be an “IP attorney,” but the MVLIC provides an opportunity to encounter other areas of law—those you’ve been studying the past two or three years—and to connect with the local legal community while giving back.

I would not be here tonight if I had not been volunteering as a lawyer at the House of Peace a decade ago. I was paired one evening with an excellent Marquette law student, Xheneta Ademi. At the end of our shift, I asked her what area of law she wanted to practice, and she said intellectual property. Xheneta introduced me to Professor Kali Murray, and Professor Murray invited me to guest lecture on trademark prosecution for her trademarks course. The next year, at Professor Murray’s encouragement, the Law School invited me to teach the trademarks course. Teaching is a true honor. I have learned more from the students over the years than I have taught them, and I’m truly grateful for the experience of being an adjunct professor.

Whenever you can: Have fun. Be kind. Give back.

In closing, I am giving back to you a David Letterman-inspired Top Five list. So, from the home office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, here are the “Top Five Things I Wish I Had Known as a Brand-New IP Attorney.”

5. Pat Pend is not a person.
 4. Copyright does not mean “I can copy—right?”
 3. The *TM* next to a word stands for “Trademark” and not “The Man.”
 2. The fact that the Green Bay Packers own the Chicago Bears does not mean that the Green Bay Packers own the Bears’ trademarks.
 1. It’s a trade secret. I will never tell you.
- Thank you. Cheers to IP! ■



HON. JAMES A. WYNN

Judging in a Polarized World

The Hon. James A. Wynn, L’79, is a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Judge Wynn delivered the following remarks at a dinner of the Federal Bar Association in Charlotte, N.C., on June 4, 2025.

Good evening. It is an honor and privilege to address this distinguished gathering of the Federal Bar Association.

This year marks my 35th year as an appellate judge—20 years on the state courts and now 15 years on the federal bench. That journey has been one of change and learning. The legal world in which I began my judicial career is not the same one that we practice in today. And neither are we the same judges. To paraphrase a saying of my mentor, former North Carolina Chief Justice Henry Frye, “The world has turned many times over the past 35 years, and we have turned with it.”

I was first elected to the North Carolina Court of Appeals in 1990, a time when the judicial selection process—and the judiciary itself—operated quite differently. Back then, judicial elections in states such as North Carolina were partisan and, in various other states, nonpartisan. Today, while the method

of selection in most states remains unchanged, the legal and political landscape around them has evolved, often in unpredictable ways.

Some of you may know that I was first nominated to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit by President Bill Clinton in 1999, but the Senate never held a hearing. It wasn't until more than a decade later, under a new administration, that the opportunity returned—and the outcome of that process stands before you this evening.

When I reflect on the past 35 years, the most visible shift is generational. A third of all lawyers today are 35 or younger. Many of you weren't yet born when I first put on a robe. And with that generational shift comes a shift in values, expectations, and the rhythm of professional life.

In 1990, there were 12 judges on the North Carolina Court of Appeals—five of whom are now deceased, and none of whom still serve in a judicial capacity. On the state Supreme Court, where I briefly served in 1998, not one of my colleagues remains on the bench. The players have changed. Look at it this way: In 1990, Hubert Davis was a star player on the University of North Carolina men's basketball team; today, he is the team's coach—times have changed his role and the makeup of the Tar Heels basketball team.

Even in the federal judiciary, the transformation has been significant. When I joined the Fourth Circuit in 2010, only a handful of the judges from 1990 remained active. Today, the most junior judge of that era—Albert Diaz—is now our chief judge who may serve until the year 2030. And if it continues that a chief judge serves in that capacity for seven years, Chief Judge Diaz's successors until the year 2051 will be in this order: Judge Stephanie Thacker, Judge Jay Richardson, and then Judge Allison Rushing. That, of course, assumes that none of them gets elevated to the Supreme Court.

But while the generational, societal, and political changes are great influencers on our judiciary, the one constant that we

[T]rue judicial judgment . . . is a moral and intellectual task, one shaped not only by precedent and principle but also by character.

judges maintain is the responsibility we carry—one that transcends partisanship and demands something deeper of us as judges and legal professionals.

That brings me to a recent work that has helped frame my thinking in this chapter of my judicial life. *Judges, Judging, and Judgment: Character, Wisdom, and Humility in a Polarized World* is a book by Professor Chad Oldfather of Marquette University Law School.

As Professor Oldfather reminds us, “Judges are humans, and human motivations are varied and complex.” He points out that over a century ago, Justice Benjamin Cardozo wrote: “There is in each of us a stream of tendency, whether you choose to call it a philosophy or not, which gives coherence and direction to thought and action. Judges cannot escape that current any more than other mortals.”

While there is much to consider and learn from Professor Oldfather's book, one takeaway that I got is that judgment—true judicial judgment—is more than simply applying rules to facts. It is a moral and intellectual task, one shaped not only by precedent and principle but also by character.

In a time when there are serious threats to the public's confidence and trust in the integrity of our judicial institutions, Professor Oldfather's insights are timely. He writes that the legal system, in its design, assumes human fallibility. It builds in mechanisms—such as the adversarial process, written opinions, and appellate review—not to mask our imperfections but to confront them.

Yet these mechanisms are under stress. Caseloads grow. Time shortens. The space

for deep reflection shrinks. And more troubling, the legal profession itself is fragmenting into ideological camps. We now risk losing the shared professional norms that once bound us together. As Professor Oldfather notes, when a judge identifies with a particular side, the accountability to the broader profession erodes.

What then sustains us? Oldfather offers a path grounded not in procedure alone but also in character.

Character. Wisdom. Humility.

These are not just aspirations—they are prerequisites. In the words of Professor Anthony Kronman, whose 1993 book, *The Lost Lawyer*, Oldfather echoes, we must revive the ideal of the lawyer-statesman. That is, we must return to the concept of a professional committed not simply to technical mastery but to being “a person of . . . practical wisdom as well.”

For the judiciary, this means nurturing the habit of reflection. It means selecting judges not just for their credentials, but for their judgment. It means designing systems that support thoughtful deliberation, not just efficiency throughput.

I share these reflections not as someone who claims to have mastered them, but as someone who strives toward them every day.

Let us commit—amidst our changing profession, our evolving judiciary, and our polarized society—to uphold the virtues that remain constant. Character. Wisdom. Humility.

May we pursue justice not only with sharp minds but with full hearts.

Thank you. ■