



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE CHIEF JUDGE OF THE NYC OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIALS AND HEARINGS (OATH) ANNOUNCES THE EXPANSION OF THE TRIALS DIVISION AND APPOINTS SIX NEW ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

The extraordinarily qualified and diverse group of new Judges reaffirms OATH's Trials Division as the premier municipal administrative tribunal in the Country.

New York, NY – For the first time in decades, OATH has significantly expanded its Trials Division with the appointment of six new Administrative Law Judges this year, growing the number of ALJs serving the City by 50%. As part of the expansion, the OATH Trials Division has also increased its support staff and hired new law clerks to assist the judges in their work.

The OATH Trials Division adjudicates a wide range of complex administrative law matters that can be referred by any City agency, board, or commission. Its caseload includes employee discipline and disability hearings for the City's 325,000 civil servant workforce, Conflicts of Interest Board cases, proceedings related to the retention of seized vehicles by the police, City-issued license revocations, certain real estate matters, City contract disputes, and alleged violations of the City's fair workweek, paid sick leave, and human rights laws. Many trials involve multiple witnesses and can span several days to several weeks. The Trials Division holds about 1,500 settlement conferences between parties each year and conducts approximately 500 full bench trials.

As a result of several recent changes in local law and policy, the OATH Trials Division has recently seen an increase in cases filed. For example, the Trials Division adjudicates disciplinary proceedings filed by the New York City Department of Correction against officers charged with excessive or unnecessary use of force and false reporting regarding use of force. Under the direction of the federal court and the court-appointed monitor in the *Nunez v. City of New York* lawsuit, the Department of Correction has increased the volume of use-of-force cases filed with the Trials Division. Other recent changes in local law have expanded the Trials Division's jurisdiction to include more cases involving consumer and worker protections, mandated safe driving course and vehicle seizures, and the issuance, suspension, or revocation of press credentials. These changes have increased the workload of the ALJs in OATH's Trials Division.

"OATH's judges are true professionals who consistently deliver well-reasoned and timely decisions on complex cases with nuanced issues," said **OATH Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge Joni Kletter**. "I am excited by the new judges' breadth of experience and know that they will fit right in with our stellar team, helping to ensure that all cases continue to be handled professionally and promptly, keeping OATH the preeminent municipal administrative tribunal in the country."

“OATH’s team of dedicated, highly qualified, and deeply devoted public servants will be strengthened by the appointment of these six exceptional judges,” said **Kapil Longani, Counsel to the Mayor**. “The diverse perspectives of these decorated legal professionals will serve as a critical asset in OATH’s mission to provide fair and just decisions for all New Yorkers.”

The expansion of the OATH Trials Division will include four Trials Division support staff responsible for scheduling cases and appearances, making sure case files are current and up to date and updating the electronic case-tracking system. The expansion also includes three new law clerk positions. Law clerks are attorneys who assist the Administrative Law Judges with legal research and editing decisions. Six new Administrative Law Judges have been appointed this year; ALJs are the independent decision makers who oversee pre-trial settlement conferences between parties, hold trials, make findings of fact and conclusions of law in its written decisions. Per the City Charter, ALJs are appointed to five-year terms which ensures their independence and neutrality.

About the newly appointed Administrative Law Judges:

Julia Lee was appointed as an OATH ALJ in March 2021. She most recently served as director of annual disclosure and special counsel at the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board. She previously worked in the Attorney General’s office for over a decade, and with the Kings County District Attorney’s Office.

Michael Turilli was appointed as an OATH ALJ in October 2021. He most recently served as supervising attorney in the Comptroller’s Bureau of Labor Law, prosecuting state Labor Law prevailing wage cases before the OATH Trials Division.

Christine Stecura was appointed as an OATH ALJ in October 2021. She most recently served as senior counsel in the Law Department’s Commercial and Real Estate Litigation division, and in that role she frequently appeared before the OATH Trials Division defending City agencies in Contract Dispute Resolution Board cases. She previously worked at the Attorney General’s Office and the law firm Hughes Hubbard & Reed.

Orlando Rodriguez was appointed as an OATH ALJ in October 2021. He most recently served as an attorney in the Department of Buildings administrative enforcement unit, prosecuting cases and appeals before the OATH Hearings Division. He was previously an urban planner in the Manhattan Borough President’s Office and a public defender at the Bronx Defenders.

Julia Davis was appointed as an OATH ALJ in November 2021. She most recently served as the director of research and investigations at the NYC Comptroller’s office. She was previously special counsel and director of annual disclosure at the Conflicts of Interest Board, and before that she worked at the New York City Business Integrity Commission, Department of Investigation, the Kings County District Attorney’s Office, and as a state law clerk.

Jonathan Fogel was appointed as an OATH ALJ in November 2021. He most recently served as a senior prosecutor at the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board and has served as counsel in high-profile cases at the NYPD disciplinary tribunal including the prosecutions against NYPD officers in the Eric Garner and James Blake cases. He previously worked at the Richmond County District Attorney’s Office.

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