



United States District Court

Eastern District of Tennessee
Howard H. Baker Jr. U.S. Courthouse
800 Market Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

Thomas A. Varlan
Chief Judge

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September 13, 2017

PRESS RELEASE

DEBRA C. POPLIN
SELECTED AS U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Thomas A. Varlan, Chief U.S. District Judge, is pleased to announce the selection of Debra C. Poplin to the position of United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee. Ms. Poplin will begin her term of office as U.S. Magistrate Judge on February 13, 2018, upon the retirement of Chief Magistrate Judge C. Clifford Shirley, Jr. Ms. Poplin currently serves as Clerk of Court for the Eastern District, having been appointed to that position on January 1, 2012.

The U.S. District Judges for the Eastern District of Tennessee appointed a seven-member Merit Selection Panel consisting of attorneys and community members to review applications, interview prospective candidates, and recommend to the District Judges the candidates they deemed best qualified for the position.

Ms. Poplin is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and the University of Cincinnati College of Law. Upon graduation from law school in 1990, she joined the City of Knoxville Law Department, and returned to the law department as Deputy Law Director in 2001 following two years of practice with the law firm of Ritchie, Fels & Dillard. In 2008, then-Mayor Bill Haslam appointed Ms. Poplin as City Law Director, making her the first (and only) woman to serve in the post in the city's history. Ms. Poplin served with distinction as Law Director until her appointment as Clerk of Court in 2012.

As Clerk of Court, Ms. Poplin works with the district judges in overseeing the administration of the district court including oversight of a districtwide caseload of more than 2,500 civil and criminal cases and management of a staff of 42 clerk's office employees in Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Greeneville. Ms. Poplin is an active member of the Knoxville Bar Association, having previously served as a member of the Board of Governors and as Co-chair of the Government and Public Service Section. She is a graduate of the Leadership Knoxville Class of 2009.

United States Magistrate Judges are appointed by the U.S. District Judges of the U.S. District Court for a term of eight years and are eligible for reappointment to successive terms. The Eastern District of Tennessee is the largest federal district court in Tennessee, composed of 41 counties and serving 2.5 million people.

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