

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
News from the Michigan Association for Justice

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Contact: Nate Pilon, 517-321-3073, npilon@michiganjustice.org

MAJ Announces Endorsements for Michigan Supreme Court, Court of Appeals

LANSING—The Michigan Association for Justice (MAJ) today announced its first round of judicial endorsements for 2020. The endorsed candidates are:

- **Chief Justice Bridget Mary McCormack** - Michigan Supreme Court;
- **Attorney Elizabeth Welch** - Michigan Supreme Court; and,
- **Judge Michelle M. Rick** - Michigan Court of Appeals - Fourth District.

McCormack and Welch are each seeking one of two eight-year Supreme Court seats on the statewide ballot this November. Rick is seeking one of three six-year seats on the Michigan Court of Appeals - Fourth District, which will be selected by voters in Mid-Michigan, the Thumb, Northern Michigan, and the U.P.

Statement from MAJ President Robert J. MacDonald

“MAJ is proud to endorse three accomplished jurists for the Michigan Supreme Court and state Court of Appeals. Throughout their careers, each has demonstrated a commitment to a fair and open civil justice system that protects people and allows those who have been harmed or wronged to seek justice.

During her time on the bench, Chief Justice McCormack has proven to be a fair and independent arbiter of the law and a dedicated public servant who represents the highest standards of the legal profession. We commend her for her work to increase access to our courts, improve their efficiency, and make them independent of political pressure.

Elizabeth Welch is an experienced and well-respected attorney with a reputation as a bridge builder and fierce advocate for her clients and her community. We know Elizabeth will be a Justice who listens and who will be committed to a civil justice system that treats everyone equally. She will be an excellent addition to our state’s highest court.

Judge Rick has a distinguished record of service on the 29th Circuit Court. She knows the law and has extensive experience hearing complex family, criminal, and civil cases. The people of Michigan and legal community will benefit from having Judge Rick on the Michigan Court of Appeals.”

About the Candidates

Chief Justice McCormack was elected to the Supreme Court in 2012 and became Chief Justice in 2019. As the Chief Justice, McCormack has promoted statewide initiatives devoted to improving the courts’ service to the public. Together with the Attorney General, she launched an Elder Abuse Taskforce, which is actively working on improvements to the service to seniors in courts. Additional successful initiatives include the Michigan Access for all Taskforce, Online Dispute Resolution

throughout Michigan's courts, the first expungement clinics in the state, and Michigan's participation in the Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative. Prior to joining the Court, she was a law professor and dean at the University of Michigan Law School, where she continues to teach. Chief Justice McCormack spent the first five years of her legal career in New York, first with the Legal Aid Society and then at the Office of the Appellate Defender. Chief Justice McCormack is a graduate of the New York University Law School. She and her husband have four adult children.

Attorney Elizabeth Welch is the founder of Welch Law in Grand Rapids. Her firm assists small- to mid-size companies and nonprofit organizations with issues related to employment law. Welch began her legal practice in 1995 at Greenebaum Doll & McDonald in Louisville, KY. She then returned to Grand Rapids and joined Miller Johnson. At Miller Johnson, Welch began a lifelong commitment to securing safe and fair working conditions. In 2004, she opened her own practice, allowing her to broaden her legal career to include pro bono work on abuse and neglect matters, assisting a criminal defense law practice, and supporting local litigation related to the opioid epidemic. Welch devotes an extensive amount of time serving the non-profit community in West Michigan and the state. She currently serves as a trustee for the Steelcase Foundation, is a board member of the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, and is vice president of the Board of Education for East Grand Rapids Public Schools. Welch graduated from Penn State University and received her law degree from Ohio State University, where she served as a top editor for the Law Journal. Welch and her husband have four children – three currently attending college and one having recently graduated.

Judge Michelle Rick was appointed by Governor Granholm to the 29th Circuit Court in Clinton and Gratiot counties in 2007 and was re-elected in 2010 and 2016. Prior to taking the bench, and following a brief time in private practice, Judge Rick worked as a public employee, first as an assistant prosecutor in Livingston County, followed by service to the state of Michigan as an assistant attorney general and then as deputy legal counsel to Governor Granholm. Judge Rick is a former district director and current Michigan chair for the National Association of Women Judges. She is also treasurer of the Michigan Judges Association, where she previously chaired the outreach and conference planning committee. In 2015, Judge Rick was appointed by Governor Snyder to the Human Trafficking Commission. Judge Rick is a Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation and American Bar Foundation. She teaches "Access to Justice" at the University of Detroit Mercy Law School and previously served as an adjunct law professor at MSU Law and Cooley Law School. Judge Rick earned her law degree from the University of Detroit and her bachelor's degree from Michigan State University.

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*The **Michigan Association for Justice**, formerly the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association (MTLA), is a trade association of over 1,500 plaintiff's attorneys and staff, with offices in Lansing, Michigan.*