

it is also one of the largest districts, encompassing seven counties.

During her tenure on the circuit court, Judge Aycock has had the opportunity to hear numerous criminal and civil cases, covering a broad range of subjects. She has expedited the work of the court, both on the civil and criminal dockets. She led the court in disposing of civil cases and the collection of fines and criminal cases.

She has contributed substantially to the improvement of the administration of justice in our State and in the betterment of her community.

She has been an active member of local and State bar associations. She served as First Judicial District secretary and president and was the first woman to serve as president of the Mississippi Bar Foundation, an organization dedicated to the improvement of the administration of justice in our State. She is also a fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation.

She served as president of the Itawamba County Development Council, as a member of the Itawamba County Hospital Foundation, and as cochair of the Itawamba County March of Dimes.

Senator LOTT and I recommended the nomination of Judge Aycock in December of 2006. I am pleased that the President nominated Judge Aycock and that the Senate Judiciary Committee has recommended the approval of her nomination.

I urge Senators to vote to confirm this well-deserved nomination.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of Judge Sharion Aycock in advance of her confirmation vote. Judge Aycock is the first female jurist from Mississippi to be nominated to a position on the Federal bench, and I am delighted that the President has chosen her to serve on the United States District Court for North Mississippi.

Judge Aycock was born and raised in Tremont, MS. After graduating with honors from Tremont High School, she went on to attend Mississippi State University where she graduated with a degree in political science. Judge Aycock then earned her law degree from the Mississippi College School of Law, where she served as Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Mississippi College Law Review and finished 2nd in her class.

Following law school, Judge Aycock was employed by the A.T. Cleveland Law Office in Fulton, MS, and later opened her own practice. While in private practice, she represented the Itawamba County Board of Supervisors, Itawamba County Board of Education, Town of Tremont, City of Fulton, and the Northeast Mississippi Natural Gas District. She also served as the Itawamba County Prosecuting Attorney from 1984 to 1992.

Judge Aycock has been extremely active in her local community serving as Past President of the Itawamba County Development Council, a Member of the

Itawamba County Hospital Foundation, a Member of the Three Rivers Area Health Services, Inc., Co-Chairman of the Itawamba County March of Dimes, and Chairman of the Prairie Girl Scouts Capital Fund Drive for Itawamba County. She was chosen as the "Itawamba County Good Citizen of 2000" and selected as one of the Mississippi Business Journal's "Top 40 Under 40."

In addition to being heavily involved in her local community, Judge Aycock has been an active member in the Mississippi Bar Association. She served as First Judicial District President and Secretary, and was honored as a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation.

During her professional career, she has also received several gubernatorial appointments, including appointments to the Board of the Mississippi Home Corporation; Board Member and Past Chairman of the Mississippi State Personnel Board; and a Member of the Governor's Commission on Youth and Children.

Judge Aycock is currently Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit Court District of Mississippi, a position she was elected to in November of 2002. During her tenure, Judge Aycock has had the opportunity to hear numerous criminal and civil cases covering a broad range of subject matter and complexity. She has presided over countless criminal cases, including capital murder, murder, manslaughter, and numerous drug offenses. Civil cases have included medical malpractice, contracts, fraud and misrepresentation, personal injury, and other suits for monetary damages.

I believe that Judge Aycock will serve as a credit to both the Federal bench and to the State of Mississippi. I look forward to her confirmation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE JENNIFER WALKER
ELROD

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am reminded of a quote from Daniel Webster when he said that "justice is the greatest aspiration of man on earth." I think the reason we take these judicial nominations so seriously is because the judiciary—the people who wear the black robe—is the personification of that aspiration for justice.

Today, it gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the nomination of Judge Jennifer Elrod of Houston to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. In a few moments, the Senate will vote on her nomination.

As Judge Elrod's career makes clear, she is well qualified for a seat on the Federal appellate bench. She has demonstrated the legal acumen, the judicial temperament, and dedication to public service which the Senate wisely requires of all judicial nominees.

Since 2002, Judge Elrod has been a State district court judge, serving on the 190th District Court in Harris County, TX. As a trial judge, she has presided over more than 200 jury and

nonjury trials. Before that, Judge Elrod practiced law in Houston, TX, in the trial department of Baker Botts, a top national law firm.

Judge Elrod is known for her outstanding intellect, her strong work ethic, her integrity, and her courteous demeanor. She has an outstanding record as a practicing attorney and as an active State court judge. She has demonstrated an impressive commitment to public service and pro bono work throughout her career.

Both while in private practice and while serving the people of Texas as a trial judge, Judge Elrod has dedicated much of her free time to improving the lives of those less fortunate in the community.

Even with the demands of a career in the law, she also found time to serve as a board member and chairwoman of the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation, now called Lone Star Legal Aid. This organization serves more than 1 million low-income Texans, making it the fourth largest legal aid program in the Nation. She also served as general counsel to Communities in Schools in Houston and as the cochair of the Houston Volunteer Association's Legal Hotline.

As a judge, she assisted the Houston Bar Association with numerous fundraising activities aimed at providing scholarships for diversity and equal access to justice. Judge Elrod dedicated her time to hosting and mentoring legal interns from less-privileged backgrounds, opening her courtroom to them and teaching these young men and women valuable oral advocacy skills. She has been an active participant in the Texas Access to Justice Commission, helping young lawyers to provide legal services to indigent clients.

Mr. President, I know of few lawyers, much less judicial nominees, with such an outstanding record of consistent commitment to pro bono services and public service.

While my colleagues undoubtedly will acknowledge the importance of Judge Elrod's career achievements and dedication to her community, we also recognize that the most important attributes of a judicial nominee are their temperament and commitment to the rule of law. Above all else, a judge must faithfully interpret and apply the law as written and not as they wish we in Congress should have written it. I am confident Judge Elrod has demonstrated her ability to fairly and impartially resolve cases before her.

Her demonstrated fairness and respect for all is a key reason why her nomination is supported across the Houston legal community. She has the personal endorsement of the past and current presidents of the Houston Bar Association, the Hispanic Bar Association of Houston, and the Mexican American Bar Association of Houston, which are just a sampling of the broad base of her support. By all accounts, Judge Elrod has exercised her judicial

duties with nothing but neutrality and a commitment to fundamental fairness for every litigant before her.

In sum, Judge Elrod is an accomplished lawyer and judge of high character and uncommon integrity. I am honored to enthusiastically recommend to the Senate that it vote to confirm her to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. I am confident she will serve this Nation with honor and distinction.

Let me say in closing how much I appreciate the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY, for giving Judge Elrod a timely hearing and for putting it on the markup on the Judiciary Committee schedule. I appreciate the majority leader, Senator REID, for allowing this nomination to come forward to the floor so we can give this good judge a vote very soon, I hope.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I serve on the Judiciary Committee, and Chairman LEAHY asked that I chair the nomination hearings, the confirmation hearings on the three judges whom we are considering today.

I agree completely with our colleagues from the State of Washington and the State of Mississippi. I think Richard Jones is well qualified and should be confirmed for the U.S. District Court in the Western District of Washington.

I think Sharion Aycock is well qualified, and I strongly support her confirmation to the District Court in Mississippi.

In regard to Jennifer Walker Elrod, for the U.S. Circuit Court for the Fifth Circuit, I opposed her nomination in the Judiciary Committee, and I take this time to explain to my colleagues why I believe she should not be confirmed.

Let me begin by saying that I agree with my friend from Texas about Judge Elrod's commitment to pro bono legal services. She served as chair of the board of the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation, now known as Loan Star Legal Aid, the largest provider of pro bono services in southeast Texas. That is important to me because I think all lawyers have a responsibility to help out to make sure our system is available to all.

After serving 8 years in private practice as an associate of Baker Botts in Houston, TX, she was appointed to the bench by the Governor in 2002 as a judge, the 190th District Court in Houston, TX. She was reelected to the bench in 2006.

However, no one is entitled to a circuit court judgeship. In the vast majority of cases, these courts are the final law of the land for the States in their circuit when it comes to interpreting complex Federal statutes and our Constitution. These judges have lifetime appointments and are second only to the Supreme Court Justices in terms of their power and authority.

I think we need to exercise a higher standard when we look at the confirmation of our appellate court judges. In many cases, they will be the final arbitrators of disputes among the people of our States.

In meeting with Judge Elrod, chairing her nomination hearings, and reviewing her written responses to additional questions I posed to her, I am not convinced Judge Elrod has the experience for this position.

I start with the undisputed fact about Judge Elrod's record. By her own admission, Judge Elrod has never written a single judicial opinion. In response to the Judiciary Committee's questionnaire asking for her opinions as a judge, she stated: "I do not write opinions, I sign orders." She provided over 6,000 orders to the committee, but most are one-page documents that do not contain any discussion of substantive law. Indeed, Judge Elrod said that most questions in our committee questionnaire about her judicial opinions were not applicable to her because certiorari was not granted in any of her cases; appellate opinions or orders rarely reviewed her orders and decisions; she had no list of unpublished opinions; and she never sat on a judicial panel with other colleagues deciding cases. In short, we have no record of her ability to write opinions or the rationale for her decisions.

A nominee for circuit court judge should have experience in writing substantive judicial opinions. Judge Elrod does not have this requisite experience.

Judge Elrod, by her own admission, has very little experience in criminal cases. When she litigated at Baker Botts for 5 years, she responded that her practice involved "100 percent civil proceedings" and "0 percent criminal proceedings." Her current job as a judge on the 190th District Court of Houston, TX, involves almost exclusively civil cases.

A nominee for circuit court judge should have broad experience in both criminal and civil cases. Her work in a handful of pro bono cases does not give me confidence that she has sufficient understanding of the criminal justice system and the rights of defendants. In fact, her major initiative in criminal issues involved the amicus brief in the case of *Texas v. Cobb* before the Supreme Court, in which she argued that the sixth amendment only applies to "charged offenses" and therefore a police interrogation without counsel about a subsequent offense was admissible. She did not further explain her views about this case in her written responses to our committee.

Judge Elrod, by her own admission, has very little experience in Federal court. In response to the committee questionnaire, she stated that her private practice involved "80 percent state court" cases and "20 percent federal" cases. Her current job as a State district court judge involves almost exclusively State issues.

A nominee for circuit court judge should have broad experience on Fed-

eral court issues and in the complex questions, often of first impression, of Federal law, statutory law, and constitutional interpretation that are routinely raised.

Judge Elrod, by her own admission, has very little experience in appellate litigation, with exception of the Cobb case noted above. Her current job as a State district court judge involves exclusively trial level proceedings.

A nominee for the circuit court—this is our appellate court, our second highest court—who handles these types of cases should have significant experience in appellate work.

Judge Elrod, by her own admission, does not "write opinions." She "signs orders." Given that circuit court judges are often the final say on law of the land in a given circuit—due to the low rate of granting certiorari by the Supreme Court—a circuit court judge has an unusual amount of authority and decisionmaking power.

We do not have any track record by which to weigh Judge Elrod's views on substantive legal issues, such as civil rights, civil liberties, workers' rights, reproductive freedom, environmental protection, consumers' rights, or employees' rights.

The speeches Judge Elrod provided for the record did not shed any more light on her opinions on substantive legal issues. She stated she did not have notes for many of her speeches. She also has not written any substantive legal or journal articles on complex legal or policy issues. Judge Elrod does not meet my test for Federal judicial nominees since she does not have the requisite experience for an appellate judge.

I want to talk about a separate issue. I talked about experience, which I think is important for a nominee who wants to serve on our appellate courts. I also think the issue of diversity is an important issue that needs to be talked about in this Chamber.

I wish to talk about the issue of diversity in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which includes Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, presides over the largest percentage of minority residents, 44 percent, which includes African Americans and Latino citizens, of any regional circuit courts of appeal in this country outside of Washington, DC.

Mississippi has the highest African-American population, 36 percent, of any State in the country. Louisiana has the second largest African-American population, at 32 percent, of any State in this country. It is disappointing that none of President Bush's 10 nominations to the Federal bench in this circuit were African American. Of the 19 Federal judges who now sit on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, only one is African American.

We all agree that diversity at all levels of our judicial system is important. Most recently, we have seen mass protests over double standards in our

criminal justice system used to treat African American and White youths in Jena, LA. Surely, in 2007 we can do better.

I take this time to point out that when the President submits a nominee for the appellate court, our second highest court, I expect that nominee will have the type of experience that is appropriate for a judge to be on the appellate court. I certainly am disappointed by the President's nominations on this circuit as it relates to diversity. I wanted to make sure that was included in the RECORD.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The Senator from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished ranking member.

I certainly respect the right of the Senator from Maryland to express his views. I do want to put this in some context.

I don't know if it is a unique experience currently in the Senate, but perhaps it is currently that I am the only Member of the Senate who actually served for 13 years as a State judge, both on our State trial bench and the supreme court. That does not give me any particular qualifications other than to say what it means to have served in those capacities, as Judge Elrod has for 5 years. She worked also as a clerk for a U.S. district judge, Judge Sim Lake, for 2 years.

I hope we are not saying that it is a prerequisite for confirmation to the job of an appellate judge that one actually has to have served as an appellate judge. Of course, rarely do any of us have experience in the jobs to which we are assigned or to which we are elected or to which we are hired until we have actually had a chance to perform that job. What we look at is not whether they have actually done that job before, but whether they have done a good job of everything they have taken on previously.

By that standard, Judge Elrod not only has an impressive resume for a lawyer of her age, but she has demonstrated her competence, indeed, her excellence as a State district court judge.

I have some sensitivity to the suggestion that she does not have lengthy enough experience, alluding to her relative youth. I remember when I became a State district judge, I was 32 years old. But, more importantly, of the 19 judges currently serving on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, 10 were in their forties or younger when appointed; three were 41—Judge Elrod's age—or younger. Judge Edith Jones, the chief judge of the Fifth Circuit, was 36 when confirmed by the Senate.

Judge Higginbotham, to whose vacancy Judge Elrod is nominated, was 44, and Judge Sim Lake, with whom Judge Elrod clerked, was 44 when he was appointed.

I also think of the members of the Judiciary Committee in the Senate who have been elected to important positions of responsibility. My recollection is—and I have to rely on the distinguished Senator from Maryland to remind me—but I think he was one of the youngest, if I am not mistaken, speakers of the Maryland House ever elected. He was elected at a young age, and that is to his great credit.

The fact is, age alone should not determine competence for these jobs. I think the demonstrated public service and record of excellence is sufficient.

I appreciate the Senator from Maryland acknowledging her tremendous record of pro bono service. That is a record of service above and beyond the call of duty which I think demonstrates Judge Elrod's commitment.

Finally, on the issue of diversity, I note that Judge Higginbotham, who currently occupies the seat to which Judge Elrod has been nominated and will serve, is somebody who looks like me. He is a White male. I think we ought to celebrate the fact that a woman of Judge Elrod's capability and experience has been deemed qualified by the President of the United States and by the Senate Judiciary Committee to serve in this important position. I think that counts for some diversity.

I do share the concerns of the Senator from Maryland that too few African Americans are attending law school. It reduces the pool of potential applicants for people to serve in positions on the judiciary, and we need to do more to try to encourage and facilitate that situation. But I certainly would not hold it against Judge Elrod that she is not an African American. I think she is qualified on the merits.

I appreciate the Senator from Pennsylvania, the distinguished ranking member, giving me a few minutes to explain, perhaps, another side of the story.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CORNYN. I will.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I know the distinguished Senator from Texas was also an attorney general of his State. I wonder if in that capacity the staff who served the appellate function in the attorney general's office, a solicitor general, are separate and he recognizes appellate practice, in many ways, is a specialized skill in that context, and I wonder what appellate argument experience the candidate for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the distinguished questioner, the Senator from Rhode Island, is himself a distinguished lawyer and a former attorney general with whom I served as a State attorney general. He knows as well as I do that a trial judge and a trial lawyer have to craft written and legal arguments the same way as an appellate lawyer does. Those are the same basic skills that Judge Elrod brings to her job.

It is true, when I became attorney general of my State, I created an Office of Solicitor General, recognizing the increasingly specialized nature of appellate practice.

Again, I believe Judge Elrod, by virtue of her extensive trial experience, the fact she graduated at the top of her class from law school and undergraduate school, served with one of the premier law firms in the Nation and with distinction as a trial judge, more than adequately qualifies her for this new responsibility.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the nomination of Judge Jennifer Elrod to serve on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Back in July, I was proud to introduce Judge Elrod, a fellow Texan, at her Senate Judiciary Committee hearing.

Judge Elrod is a highly accomplished judicial nominee, with a distinguished record as a state court judge and as a practicing attorney. I am confident she will capably serve as a federal appellate judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Judge Elrod has shown her judicial capability in the 190th District Court in Houston, TX, where she currently presides. At present, she manages a docket of over 1,000 cases, and leads all Harris County civil district judges in the number of jury cases tried to verdict since 2005.

Prior to serving on the bench, Judge Elrod practiced at Baker Botts LLP, a top national firm, where she worked for 8 years on litigation matters including antitrust, employment law, commercial litigation, toxic tort, general civil litigation, and personal injury defense. She also served as a law clerk to the Honorable Sim Lake in the Southern District of Texas.

Judge Elrod's outstanding intellect is evidenced by her exceptional academic credentials, graduating cum laude from Harvard Law School, and magna cum laude with distinction from Baylor University in Texas.

Judge Elrod has long been dedicated to pro bono service and charitable causes, and she is the former chair of the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation, the largest provider of pro bono legal assistance to indigent people in the Texas gulf coast region. She was recently commended by the Texas Access to Justice Commission for her service in facilitating the advocacy skills of lawyers who represent poor and low income Texans.

Judge Elrod has also been an active member in both the Texas State Bar and the Houston Bar Association, with particular service in the areas of Continuing Legal Education and the Administration of Justice.

She is two-time recipient of the President's Award for Outstanding Service to the Houston Bar Association, and she was awarded the outstanding Young Lawyer of Houston in 2004 by the Houston Young Lawyers Association.

I am honored to support the confirmation of Judge Jennifer Elrod because she meets the high standards to which we hold all judicial nominees.

She has an impressive record of public service, work ethic, integrity, and she will bring great honor to the Federal bench.

I encourage my colleagues to approve her nomination.

We must also fill the other two vacancies on the Fifth Circuit.

The President has nominated two highly accomplished individuals, Catharina Haynes, and Leslie Southwick, to fill those vacancies—and they deserve a fair and speedy confirmation process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 22 minutes 40 seconds.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I support the nomination of Jennifer Walker Elrod for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. She has an excellent academic record: magna cum laude from Baylor, where she was Phi Beta Kappa and cum laude from Harvard Law School. She has served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Houston Law Center. She has been in the practice of law for some 15 years, spending 8 years at the law firm Baker Botts. She has done extensive pro bono work including as general counsel for the Communities in Schools in Houston. She has extensive participation in the bar association. She's a member of the Mexican-American Bar Association of Houston and the Houston Bar Association. I believe her record qualifies her for the circuit court, notwithstanding the considerations of age and experience.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, will my colleague yield for one clarification on that point?

Mr. SPECTER. I do.

Mr. CARDIN. I want to make it clear for the record that I have never at all challenged this nominee for the appellate court on age. I have never raised the issue of age, and I would never raise the issue of age.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Senator from Maryland for that statement.

Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod was nominated to a seat on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on March 29, 2007, and a hearing was held on her nomination on July 19, 2007. Her nomination was reported favorably to the full Senate on September 20, 2007.

Judge Elrod received her B.A., magna cum laude, in economics from Baylor University in 1988, where she was Phi Beta Kappa and was named the "Outstanding Graduating Senior in the Honors Program."

In 1992, she received her J.D., cum laude, from Harvard Law School. At Harvard, she was a senior editor and the assistant business manager for the Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, and she was a finalist in the James Barr Ames Moot Court Competition.

After law school, Judge Elrod served as a law clerk to Judge Sim Lake of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas.

Following her clerkship, Judge Elrod practiced law in the litigation department of Baker Botts in Houston, TX.

In 2002, Governor Rick Perry appointed Judge Elrod to the 190th District Court in Harris County, TX, a State trial court. She was subsequently elected to the position in the 2002 general election and was reelected unopposed in 2006.

During her time on the bench, Judge Elrod presided over more than 200 jury and nonjury trials.

Judge Elrod has been dedicated to pro bono service and charitable causes her entire career. While working at Baker Botts, the firm gave her the Thomas Gibbs Gee Award for outstanding pro bono work. She also received the President's Award from the Houston Bar Association for Outstanding Service to the Bar.

While in private practice, Judge Elrod served as a board member and the chair of the board of the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation, now Lone Star Legal Aid, which is one of the largest providers of legal aid services to the poor in Texas.

The vacancy to which she is nominated is considered a "judicial emergency" by the nonpartisan Administrative Office of the Courts.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Judge Elrod "qualified."

NOMINATION OF RICHARD A. JONES

Richard Jones comes to the Senate with an extraordinary record. He has been in the active practice of law since graduating from the University of Washington Law School in 1975; has been a prosecuting attorney for King County, WA; staff attorney for the Port of Seattle legal department. He has extensive community service activities with the board of directors of the YMCA in greater Seattle, and was president of that organization; and has been recommended by the American Bar Association as unanimously "well qualified."

President Bush nominated Judge Richard A. Jones to be a U.S. District Court Judge for the Western District of Washington on March 19, 2007. A hearing was held on his nomination on July 19, and the Judiciary Committee reported his nomination favorably on September 6.

He is an experienced litigator and jurist with an extensive record of public service.

Judge Jones graduated from Seattle University in 1972. He graduated from the University of Washington School of Law in 1975.

After law school, he worked as a deputy prosecuting attorney for the King County Prosecuting Attorney's office. There he prosecuted a wide variety of cases in matters ranging from DWI to murder prosecutions.

In 1978, he became a staff attorney with the Port of Seattle Legal Depart-

ment. There he served as one of two in-house counsel providing legal advice and management services to all legal departments, with primary responsibility for the human resources, police, and fire departments.

In 1983, Judge Jones joined Bogle and Gates, one of the oldest and largest firms in Seattle, as an associate. There he managed cases in the firm's litigation and labor departments, primarily in the area of corporate commercial litigation.

From 1988 to 1994, Judge Jones served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District of Washington. His work there entailed investigating and prosecuting major crimes such as bank robberies and fraud, as well as several years of work with the Drug Prosecution Division of the U.S. attorney's office.

In 1994, he was appointed King County Superior Court Judge to fill the term of a deceased judge. He was elected to that position in 1996 and re-elected in 2000 and 2004. His caseload has involved an extensive variety of civil, criminal, and juvenile matters. He also briefly served as Acting U.S. Magistrate for the court to which he is nominated in 1995 and 1997.

In 2004, Judge Jones was the recipient of both the King County Bar Association's Judge of the Year Award and the Washington State Bar Association's Outstanding Judge of the Year Award.

Throughout his legal career, Judge Jones has shown a strong commitment to the community. He served not only as president of the Loren Miller Bar Association, but also as president of the YMCA of Greater Seattle.

The American Bar Association has unanimously rated Judge Jones "Well Qualified."

NOMINATION OF SHARION AYCOCK

I further recommend Sharion Aycock for the United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi. Again, a fine academic record, with 27 years of law practice, with her bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University and a member of two honor societies, and Co-Editor in Chief of the Mississippi College Law Review. She has been a judge on the First Circuit Court for the District of Mississippi for the last 4 years, was the board attorney for the town of Tremont, and prosecuting attorney for Itawamba County. Judge Aycock brings substantial qualifications and the American Bar Association rated her unanimously "well qualified."

Judge Sharion Aycock was nominated to be a U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of Mississippi on March 19, 2007. A hearing was held on her nomination on July 19, 2007. Her nomination was reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee on September 6, 2007. If confirmed, she will be the first woman to be appointed to the Federal district court in Mississippi.

Judge Aycock received her B.A. from Mississippi State University in 1977