Ambassadors

A growing number of judges in our network have agreed to be available as ambassadors for sharing knowledge and experience related to climate litigation topics.

Hon. Manuel I. Arrieta

Las Cruces, New Mexico

Chief Judge, Third Judicial District Court of New Mexico

Contact Request

Manuel I. Arrieta is the Chief Judge for the Third Judicial District Court, located in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and focuses on a docket of administrative law, contracts, governmental liability, and personal injury. He is also the designated Water Judge for the busiest water district in the State of New Mexico, the Lower Rio Grande District, which is at the center of current US Supreme Court litigation, Texas v. New Mexico, Original No. 141, before the Office of the Special Master, a federal district judge from the Eighth Circuit. The case will determine how much water, if any, the State of Texas should receive from the surface water allocation in the Lower Rio Grande in accordance with a Compact involving these two states. In addition, Judge Arrieta is an attendee of the Los Alamos National Laboratory Judge's Science School, a seminar designed to introduce judges to the process of modern science and technology, discovery, validation, and peer review.

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Hon. Charlie Cunningham

Contact Request

Louisville, Kentucky

Judge (ret.), Jefferson County of Kentucky

Charlie Cunningham is a Louisville, Kentucky native. He graduated in 1979 from the University of Louisville with a degree in environmental engineering. During this time, he worked for the U.S. Geological Survey as an assistant field hydrologist doing stream-gaging, flood monitoring and modeling, and water quality work. He graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1982. He was a practicing litigator for some 25+ years. He specialized on pollution cases including multi-month toxic tort trials involving scores of clients, hundreds of exhibits, and dozens of witnesses. He litigated and tried cases throughout Kentucky and in other states. In 2008 Charlie was appointed to the circuit court bench and held the seat by elections in 2008 and 2014. He did not seek reelection in 2022. During his tenure on the bench, he served as president of the Kentucky Circuit Judges Association and as the chief judge of the Metro Region. Charlie has been married to Vicki for over 32 years and they have three children.

Hon. J. Travis Laster

Delaware

Vice Chancellor, Delaware Court of Chancery

J. Travis Laster is Vice-Chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery. Prior to his appointment, he was one of the founding partners of a corporate law

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Hon. J. Travis Laster

Delaware

Vice Chancellor, Delaware Court of Chancery

J. Travis Laster is Vice-Chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery. Prior to his appointment, he was one of the founding partners of a corporate law boutique specializing in high stakes litigation involving Delaware corporations and other business entities and advising on transactional matters carrying a significant risk of litigation. After graduating from the University of Virginia Law School, he was a law clerk to Hon. Jane R. Roth of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and practiced corporate law with Richards, Layton & Finger P.A. He is active in the American Inns of Court.

Contact Request

Hon. Lissette Toro Vélez

Puerto Rico

Judge, Superior Court of Puerto Rico

Lissette Toro Vélez is a Superior Court judge in Puerto Rico and also serves as Judge Administrator of the Ponce Judicial Region. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Toro worked as a city attorney and in private practice. She is one of a group of judges specially designated by the Chief Justice of Puerto Rico to preside over the insurance claims arising out of the damages caused in 2017 by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. She has taught at the law school of the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico in Ponce and is currently a lecturer at the Judicial Academy.

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