



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT

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**ASSISTANT FEDERAL DEFENDER SELECTED
AS A UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

Sarah A.L. Merriam, an Assistant Federal Defender, has been selected as a United States Magistrate Judge of the District Court for the District of Connecticut. She will be sworn in on April 3, 2015, and will hold court at the New Haven federal courthouse. Merriam fills the magistrate judge vacancy created by the retirement of Magistrate Judge Holly B. Fitzsimmons, effective April 2, 2015.

Merriam, 43, moved to New Haven at an early age and grew up in the City. She is a 1989 graduate of Hopkins School. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree, *cum laude*, from Georgetown University in 1993. Merriam began her legal education at the University of Connecticut School of Law, where she received numerous honors and was ranked number 1 in her class. She transferred to Yale Law School after her first year and received a Juris Doctor from Yale in 2000. Merriam became an Assistant Federal Defender in 2007, and since that time has represented criminal defendants and witnesses in federal court in all aspects of the case, including appeals. Prior to becoming an Assistant Federal Defender, she served as an Associate at the law firm of Cowdery, Ecker & Murphy in Hartford; as a law clerk to Judge Thomas Meskill of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals; and as a law clerk to Judge Alvin W. Thompson of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

The District Judges appointed the Magistrate Judge Selection Committee that screened applications for the vacancy created by Judge Fitzsimmons' retirement. Its Chair was Rowena A. Moffett of Brenner, Saltzman & Wallman in New Haven. Other members of the selection committee were: William M. Bloss of Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder in Bridgeport; John R. Flores of Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company in Hartford; Ross H. Garber of Shipman & Goodwin in Hartford; Carlton Highsmith of CLH Holdings, Inc. of New Haven; Margaret Hiller of the

Bridgeport Public Education Fund in Bridgeport; Moy N. Ogilvie of McCarter & English in Hartford; Krishna R. Patel of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Bridgeport; and Paul F. Thomas of the Office of the Federal Defender in New Haven.

The Selection Committee received 76 applications for the judicial position following wide dissemination of the notice of vacancy. The Committee interviewed 14 applicants and identified a list of five exceptionally capable and distinguished lawyers to forward to the District Judges. In its recommendation, the Committee observed that, "Connecticut is fortunate to have a large number of highly qualified lawyers who applied for the position, with varied legal backgrounds including large, medium and small law firm practitioners, solo practitioners, and state and federal government employees."

The selection of Merriam was made by the District Judges, according to Chief Judge Janet C. Hall. "Sarah Merriam is an exceptionally bright and talented lawyer, and we look forward with great enthusiasm to welcoming her to the ranks of judicial officers in our District," Hall said.

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