



The Scales of Justice - Inspiration for a Balanced Life

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Judge Deborah L. Boardman was born in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was raised in Frederick. Growing up, she loved playing sports, particularly soccer and tennis. She almost pursued a soccer career at Villanova University, but when she had to choose between soccer and her Arabic courses, she decided to dedicate herself fully to her studies. Being of Palestinian descent on her mother's side, Judge Boardman was fascinated with issues related to the Middle East. She pursued a double major in Economics and History, with a concentration in Arab and Islamic Studies, and during her junior year, she traveled with her classmates to Cairo to participate in the International Model Arab League. Following her graduation, Judge Boardman spent one year living in Amman, Jordan, on a Fulbright Scholarship, where she studied trade relations between Jordan, Israel and Palestine. It was during this period that

Judge Boardman developed a deep passion for exploring other cultures. When she reflected on this time in her life, she discovered that the most rewarding aspect of her time in Jordan was her interaction with people from different cultures, and not the research she conducted. As a Fulbright Scholar, Judge Boardman visited countries across the Middle East, including Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Israel. Her love for travel continues to this day. Most recently, Judge Boardman spent two weeks in France, where she celebrated the Fourth of July in Normandy. Judge Boardman's enthusiasm for travel and curiosity about other cultures is more than a hobby; it has a profound impact on her outlook as an attorney and a judge, and has encouraged her to empathize with parties from all different backgrounds.

Despite her wanderlust, Judge Boardman has always known that the DMV area, where she has a large extended family, would be her home. And although she was drawn to Middle Eastern studies, and even considered a career in academia, Judge Boardman ultimately decided to pursue a career in law. She attended the University of Virginia School of Law. To Judge Boardman, law provided an avenue not only to challenge herself intellectually, but also to use her talents to solve real world problems and fight for social justice.

Judge Boardman's goal was to be a trial attorney, so she accepted a clerkship following law school with the Honorable James C. Cacheris of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia—the "rocket docket." During her clerkship, Judge Boardman developed an appreciation for the independence of the judiciary and the importance of public service. She is still in close contact with now retired Judge Cacheris, who attended her investiture service earlier this year. Before taking the bench, Judge

Cacheris advised Judge Boardman, "Be true to who you are."

After her clerkship, Judge Boardman went on to pursue her dream of becoming a litigator by going to work for Hogan & Hartson LLP (now Hogan Lovells) in Washington, D.C., where she represented large clients such as universities, Fortune 500 companies, and public institutions. However, what really drew Judge Boardman to Hogan was its competitive *pro bono* department and, before long, she was selected to work *pro bono* full time as the department's senior associate. This opportunity provided Judge Boardman with the perfect avenue to pursue her two greatest passions in the law: correcting injustices and fighting for civil rights.

When asked about her most memorable experience at Hogan, Judge Boardman did not hesitate to name her involvement in the highly publicized "Norfolk Four" case, in which her client was one of four US Navy veterans who had been wrongfully convicted of rape and murder. Even after her involvement in the case had ended, and she was no longer working at Hogan, Judge Boardman returned in 2009 to personally escort her client out of prison where he had served 12 years of his sentence. While at Hogan, Judge Boardman also represented African American Secret Service Agents who were systematically denied promotions in *Reginald Moore, et al. v. Johnson*, which remains the largest Title VII class action in history. Reflecting on her time at Hogan, Judge Boardman admired that they "put their money where their mouth is" and fully stood behind their *pro bono* cases. To this day, Judge Boardman remains deeply impressed by the amount of good that can be done when attorneys are given the proper resources to do the best possible job for their clients.

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In 2008, Judge Boardman decided that she wanted to pursue public service full-time representing underprivileged individuals. After getting a taste for criminal defense in the *pro bono* department, she decided to take her talents to the Federal Public Defender's Office for the District of Maryland. Among her more high-profile clients was Thomas Drake, a former NSA senior executive charged with mishandling classified documents under the Espionage Act. With Judge Boardman's help, all 10 of his original charges were ultimately dropped. However, when she reflects on her time as a Federal Public Defender's Office, it is not the high-profile cases that stand out to Judge Boardman. Rather, the cases she remembers most are the ones that didn't make the headlines—the cases in which she had the opportunity to connect

with ordinary citizens and interact with their families. These experiences with everyday people, as opposed to large corporations or public figures, have had a tremendous influence on Judge Boardman's outlook as a judge. She knows firsthand that being a part of the courtroom process was not always the easiest experience for her clients, their friends, and families. As a result of her insights, Judge Boardman brings a uniquely empathetic and human approach to the bench.

While I talked with Judge Boardman, I could clearly see a common thread that runs through the tapestry of her career. Although her interests have spanned a wide variety of subject areas—Middle East studies, commercial litigation, criminal defense, employment law, etc.—the one common feature is an abiding commitment to justice and a deep

respect for all people, no matter their backgrounds or circumstances.

In her free time, Judge Boardman stays active, and although she no longer plays soccer or tennis, she is an avid hiker and has trekked all over the world. She especially enjoyed hikes in Machu Picchu and throughout the Middle East. In January, Judge Boardman traveled to Grenada to scuba dive for the first time. When she is not traveling the world, Judge Boardman reads fiction and cooks Middle Eastern food—especially stuffed grape leaves.

After Judge Boardman described all that she has been able to accomplish at this early stage in her career, I asked her if she had any advice for a young lawyer. She responded simply and confidently, "Find an area of law that motivates you to get up in the morning."

Meet Our Newest District Judge - The Honorable Stephanie A. Gallagher

By Megan McGinnis

As those who attended her November 8, 2019 investiture can attest, both the bench and the bar view Judge Gallagher as a welcome, long-overdue addition to the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, and a worthy occupant of the Court's oldest seat.



And as Senators Cardin and Van Hollen made clear, the long road from her first nomination in September 2015 to her confirmation four years later was a poor reflection of the widespread support Judge Gallagher enjoyed along the way.

Judge Gallagher has a long and impressive history with the Court, having served for two years as a law clerk to then Chief-Judge Frederick Motz upon graduating from Harvard Law School in 1997.

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