



Left: Judge Jaci Brown with husband Loren.

### Judge Jaclyn Casey Brown



Jaclyn Casey Brown was appointed to the Colorado Court of Appeals in June 2019. From 2016 to 2019, she served as a district court judge in the 17th Judicial District, handling domestic

relations and civil matters. Previously, Judge Brown was a litigation partner at Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie LLP, where she practiced complex commercial litigation, appeals, real estate and construction litigation, and eminent domain. She obtained her law degree from Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, Order of the Coif, and her bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder, summa cum laude.

## Seven Questions

BY MARIA E. BERKENKOTTER

One of the wonderful things about being a judge is having the opportunity to meet the wide range of attorneys who practice before us. One thing that we have all lost during the pandemic (though admittedly far, far less serious than the loss of loved ones, health, and employment that many have faced) has been the opportunity to actually get to know each other. Opportunities for attorneys to get to know our judges—particularly our new judges—and vice versa, have been significantly curtailed.

While we have all made do with virtual trainings and functions, many folks have virtual-platform fatigue, and few would say you can get to know someone over a 60-minute

Zoom session the way you can in person. And, even with the gradual return of some in-person events, we have still lost almost two years' worth of opportunities to connect. Attorneys and judges have missed many of those quick conversations during CLE breaks and at bar functions when we discover that we share a love of mountain biking or travel, or that we too get up at 6 a.m. every Saturday in the summer because our children participate in summer swim league.

This new series can't make up for 22 months of lost time, but it can give you a quick glimpse into the lives of some of the newest members of the Colorado bench. So, without further ado, here are Seven Questions with Judges Jaci Brown, Marie Moses, and Madoche Jean.

### What do you think will change most within the judicial branch in the next decade?

My hope is that the face of the judicial system will change the most in the next decade. And I mean that literally! I hope that more people of color, more LGBTQ+ folks, more women, and more people from different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences join us on the bench. Our work only benefits from having diverse viewpoints represented.

### What are the biggest differences between your last job and your new job?

Even though both were judicial positions, there are so many differences between serving as a district court judge and serving as an appellate judge. Trial court judges truly are in the trenches. They make hundreds of consequential decisions each day, look litigants in the eyes while delivering the worst news, and bear witness to some of the most devastating of human events. But they can also make a real and meaningful difference in the lives of the individuals who appear before them. (Let me shout from the rooftops to my trial judge colleagues. You do amazing work!) I miss seeing the direct, human impact of the decisions I make. And, because I am a litigator at heart, I miss trial. But I love

my work at the Court of Appeals. It is more consistently cerebral and collaborative. I take pride in error correction because it ensures that our imperfect justice system operates as best it can, and I enjoy untangling knotty legal puzzles. In my current position, I have the power, opportunity, and responsibility to make a much broader impact by clarifying and shaping Colorado law.

**What is the biggest challenge you have faced?**

In August 2017, I started the most intense trial of my life. I had just celebrated one year on the district court bench. My son had just turned 2. I was 36 years old. And I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer that had metastasized to my lymph nodes. I had been misdiagnosed eight months earlier when my doctor dismissed my concerns about a lump. After all, I was young and had only recently stopped breastfeeding. I ignored my nagging intuition and did not ask her to run the tests anyway. And then life and work got busy. Thankfully, a lengthy trial settled at the eleventh hour. So, I made another appointment. This time, the tests confirmed the worst.

I had every treatment and underwent every procedure imaginable—chemotherapy, surgery, radiation, more chemotherapy. Although I received enormous support from my colleagues, I still worked full time—taking off only chemo days—because the work gave me purpose. I

was so grateful for my job. It allowed me to focus on something bigger and more important than myself.

I am now three years cancer free and look forward to many more trips around the sun. And I chose to share my story now as a cautionary tale. In this profession, our physical and mental health are often a low priority. I hope we can change that. Take time to care for yourself. Trust your instincts. And advocate for yourself as you would for your client.

**What books are you currently reading?**

*The Rose Code: A Novel* by Kate Quinn (I am loving World War II, lady espionage, historical fiction by this author), and *The Conversation* by Dr. Robert Livingston (inspired by this year's judicial conference).

**Favorite show to binge watch:**

My favorite pandemic binge watch was *Schitt's Creek*. I am currently addicted to *Ted Lasso*.

**Secret (maybe not so secret?) artistic talent:**

I can tap dance.

**If you could magically (i.e., without any effort since I know you don't really have any spare time) learn one new skill, what would it be and why?**

To learn a new language. Or seven.

**Judge Marie Avery Moses**



Marie Avery Moses was appointed to the 2nd Judicial District Court in May 2021. She is currently seated in Courtroom 409, where she presides over a civil docket. Prior to her appointment, she was a partner at Lass Moses Ramp & Cooper, LLC where her practice focused primarily on family law. Judge Moses clerked for the Honorable Edwin G. Ruland of the Colorado Court of Appeals (1995–97). She earned her BA from the University of Virginia in 1992 and her JD from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 1995.

**What inspired you to want to be a judge?**

I was a domestic relations practitioner for 24 years before joining the Denver District Court. I loved the process of guiding and supporting distressed, anxious clients through one of the hardest times of their lives. I was inspired to bring my experience and passion for family law to the state court trial bench. It is critically important that families involved in domestic relations cases feel that their individual concerns are recognized by the judiciary and that our courts help put litigants and children on the path to safe and secure futures.

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#### What do you do to stay in shape/maintain your health and wellness?

I start and end my day by walking the family dog. I have always enjoyed this “alone” time when I can listen to music and podcasts, organize my thoughts for the upcoming day, and shake off any built-up stress. The dog walks are a great antidote to long days sitting on the bench or in front of a computer screen. And, should I ever be tempted to skip a walk, the dog gently reminds me that the walks are non-negotiable.

#### Favorite movie of all time:

*Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope*. I just really wanted to be Princess Leia.

#### Favorite museum or exhibit:

My sister is a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC—so I want to see whatever exhibit she is curating. Through her thought-provoking exhibits, she brilliantly draws parallels between the societal and political movements of the early 20th century and the present to provide perspective on and understanding of many of the issues we face today.

#### Favorite type of music:

Live concerts. Some of my favorite/most memorable shows were Sun Ra at the Mineshaft in

Charlottesville (1989); The Replacements in London (1991); Oasis at the Bluebird (1995); Houndmouth at the Gothic (2015); and The National at the Mission Ballroom (2019). The last live music I saw was Camper Van Beethoven (my favorite college band) at the 9:30 Club in January 2020.

#### Greatest inspiration or influence and why:

Please pardon the cliché answer, but my mother has been my greatest inspiration and influence. She was diagnosed with a rare, incurable cancer 11 years ago. Although her life expectancy at the time of diagnosis was only two years, she has outlived all expectations through her fortitude in personally investigating cutting-edge scientific advancements (she started attending medical conferences), fearlessly facing risky surgeries, and advocating to get herself enrolled in several clinical trials. She has taught me the value of doing your research, being willing to step outside of your comfort zone, and doggedly pursuing your hopes and dreams.

#### What is a challenge you think the judicial system will face in the next decade?

I am concerned about the judicial department’s ability to attract and retain dedicated support staff in the upcoming decade. The work of court clerks is incredibly demanding because of the volume of cases and the vast amount of legal information that each clerk is required to master. These individuals are not well compensated, and they must manage the demands of disgruntled attorneys, litigants, and the public. The judicial system will need to find a way to honor and value the work of court clerks or it will face a huge challenge, in the upcoming decade, finding the necessary staff to process cases in a timely manner.

#### Judge Madoche Jean

Madoche Jean was appointed to the county court bench in the 17th Judicial District in December 2020. Prior to his appointment, Judge Jean was a senior litigation associate at Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker, LLP, and before that he was a litigation associate at Caplan & Ernest, LLC. He was a deputy district attorney in the Boulder District Attorney’s Office from

2012 to 2015, after he spent a year clerking for the Honorable D.D. Mallard in the 20th Judicial District. Judge Jean is a 2010 graduate of the University of Denver Sturm College of Law.

#### Best thing about the job:

Interacting with people from all walks of life in our community.

#### Favorite type of music:

Good music. My musical taste is eclectic. I listen to hip-hop, country, Latin, R&B, K-pop, rock, and more. If I feel it, I feel it.

#### If you had a walk-up song, what would it be?

I’m so ready for this one. My walk-up song would be the “Chicago Bulls Theme Song,” and I would need a hype man/woman introducing me. Do yourself a favor and look up the ’96 Bulls.

#### What is your superpower and why?

I never forget who I am and where I come from. I’m still the same Haitian kid from Immokalee, Florida.

#### If I wasn’t a judge, I would be a . . .

Practicing civil litigator. In another life, I would be a high school head football coach.

#### Greatest inspiration or influence and why:

My mother. She immigrated from Haiti to the United States with no education, but she understood the importance of education and made sure that I did too.

#### What did you do after college?

I worked at a pretzel factory as a pretzel packer while I studied for the LSAT. 

**The Honorable Maria E. Berkenkotter** is an associate justice of the Colorado Supreme Court. She conceived this Seven Question series to acquaint practitioners with some of the newest members of the bench. It will run periodically throughout 2022.

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