



Seven Questions

BY MARIA E. BERKENKOTTER

This month's Seven Questions series features interviews with Colorado Court of Appeals Judge Christina Gomez, Boulder District Court Judge Dea Lindsey, and Pitkin County Court Judge Ashley Andrews. I am grateful to these and all of the other interviewees to date for their willingness to share something of themselves with you—their journeys, their experiences, their challenges, and a few of the insights they gained along the way.

Christina Finzel Gomez



Christina Gomez is a graduate of Millsaps College and Harvard Law School. After law school, she clerked for the Honorable Charles A. Pannell Jr. of the US District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. Following her clerkship, Judge Gomez joined

Holland & Hart's Denver office, where she spent hundreds of hours on a variety of pro bono matters. After her 15 years at the firm, where she ultimately became administrative partner for the Denver office and chaired the appellate practice group, she was appointed to the Colorado Court of Appeals in 2019 and assumed the bench in early 2020. Judge Gomez served on the committee that helped form the CBA Appellate Pro Bono Program and helped form the committee that created the CBA Civil Appeals Clinic. She volunteers with Meals on Wheels, the Capitol Hill Community Services Soup Kitchen, the Boy Scouts of America, and the Girl Scouts of America. Judge Gomez enjoys camping, hiking, and playing board games with her husband and three children.

What feature of your job are you most excited about when you wake up in the morning?

I love all of it. I love the challenge of keeping up

with the pace. I love researching, analyzing, and figuring out complicated legal questions—and we get a lot of those. I love working with my colleagues, my law clerks, and other staff at the court. And I love working toward justice, trying to find the “right” answer to the questions that come before us, and trying to make sure people feel they’ve been heard.

Advice to young lawyers you wish someone had told you:

There’s so much pressure on young lawyers to know exactly what area they want to practice in and what their long-term career goals are, even before they get out of law school. But most of our careers are more fluid, and you don’t have to know early on exactly where you’re headed decades from now. You can take whatever job seems like the best fit at this time in your life, find some good mentors, and see where your career takes you.

What is the most useful critique or piece of feedback that you have received from a mentor?

Don’t take yourself too seriously.

Favorite type of music:

I’ve recently started listening to a lot of 80s music, and my kids hate it.

Best vacation:

I had a sabbatical in 2019, which was the year after my mother died, and went on a month-long road trip with my husband, our three kids, and my dad in our camper. My oldest wanted to see Niagara Falls, and so we did. And we had so many amazing adventures along the way. We visited national parks. We rode horses in South Dakota. We spent a day on a motorboat in Wisconsin. We saw all the Great Lakes. We swam in a cold stream in Vermont. We visited an amusement park in Connecticut. We caught fireflies in Iowa. I’ll never forget it.

Two truths and a lie:

I met my husband in the Amazon. I once helped deliver a baby on a hiking trail. I once ate only pork products for an entire week, just for fun.

What was the last thing that made you laugh out loud?

My colleagues. We work hard but we have a lot of fun together, too. I started at the same time, at the start of the pandemic, with Judges Sueanna Johnson and David Yun, and we've grown close. They make me laugh every single day.

Dea M. Lindsey



Dea Lindsey was appointed to the Boulder District Court bench in April 2021. Before her appointment, she was a senior county attorney in the Boulder County Attor-

ney's office, representing the Boulder County Sheriff's Office, Community Justice Services, the District Attorney, and the Office of Emergency Management. She practiced in both federal and state court in that capacity. Prior to that work, Judge Lindsey practiced in the area of dependency and neglect for the Boulder County Attorney's Office for several years. She also worked in the area of criminal defense in her own practice and for the Colorado State Public Defender's Greeley Office for several years after completing law school at the University of Denver in 1999. Judge Lindsey has an MA in exercise physiology and a BA in Kinesiology, both from the University of Northern Colorado.

Most challenging thing about the job:

The most challenging, but also the most motivating, thing about the job is having to learn and apply the law in so many different ways. As lawyers, we typically practice and get good at one area of the law. As judges, we are required to learn the law and apply it to many different types of cases and fact situations.

Advice to young lawyers:

How you practice law becomes your reputation. Whether it is in court, in pleadings, or during negotiations, no one forgets how you treat people—and every one of these scenarios is an opportunity to let people know who you are as a person and as an attorney.

Favorite type of music:

Hip hop/classical (tie).

Your wellness non-negotiables:

Mountain biking and strength training.

What are you most proud of in life?

The more I learn about how my father grew up, what he went through and how hard things were for him as a Black man, the more proud I am of him. He is an incredibly powerful example of a true survivor and someone who never backed down from any challenge or any person, no matter how difficult.

What makes you smile?

My grandkid.

What do you want your legacy on this court to be?

I want the conversation about racial equity to be as common as any other conversation being held by and in the judicial system, in every aspect of the administration of the judicial system. This requires all of us to make every effort to normalize and operationalize the prioritization of equity in ALL areas.

Ashley Andrews

Judge Andrews was appointed to the Pitkin County Court bench in September of 2021. She received her bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University in 2007 and her JD from the University of Colorado Law School in 2012. Judge Andrews worked as a contract attorney at Reilly Pozner, LLP from 2012 to 2013. She was then a lead attorney for the Colorado State Public Defender's Office in the Second Judicial District from 2013 to 2019. From 2019 up to her appointment, she was a lead attorney at the Colorado State Public Defender's Office in the Ninth Judicial District.

Advice to young lawyers you wish someone had told you:

Be open to different career paths. If you had told me when I graduated law school that in 10 years I was going to be a judge in Pitkin County, I would never have believed you. This was never the career path I was expecting, but I could not be happier as a judge. The takeaway for me is, when new and wonderful opportunities present themselves, be open and accept the challenge.

Most surprising thing about the job:

The number of temporary protection orders requested for neighbor disputes. While some are certainly serious and merit a temporary protection order, I've been surprised by how many people think the court should grant temporary protection orders to stop a neighbor's dog from barking or going to the bathroom in their yard.

Class you wish you had taken in law school:

Not a class, but I wish I had clerked for a judge. I was under the mistaken belief that clerking was only for those who wanted to go into "big law" or eventually become a judge. Now I see it as an invaluable experience that provides insight into all facets of how the bench and judicial system function.

Class you wish you paid more attention to in law school:

Torts class. I met my husband during torts class, so I think I was a bit distracted.


Biggest differences between your last job and your new job:

As a public defender, I was used to knowing everything about the case and my client. As a judicial officer, I generally know less about the case than everyone else in the room. I also still have a strong impulse to want to directly speak to and engage with the defendant, which is not always appropriate in my new role.

Favorite museum:

Aspen Art Museum, because it's a two-minute walk from the courthouse.

What do you like to do for health and wellness?

I stopped playing tennis after high school but picked it up again during the pandemic. Now it's one of my favorite things to do—at least when the ski lifts aren't running! 

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.