



A Legal Primer for Journalists
United States District Court and the Federal Bar Association
Western District of Washington
September 12, 2018
12-1:15 pm – 19th Floor Conference Room
Seattle United States Courthouse

1. Introduction

Honorable Robert S. Lasnik – Senior District Judge

2. Tools for Journalists

William M. McCool – District Court Executive/Clerk of Court

Eric L. Smits – Management Analyst

Western Washington Website

PACER

Contact DCE/Clerk

USCOURTS.GOV Website

3. Tips for Interpreting Court Docket Information

Karen Orehoski, Partner, Breneman Grube Orehoski, PLLC

Mohammad Ali Hamoudi, Assistant Federal Public Defender

Events in criminal cases

Events in civil cases

Cases progressing until final disposition

Relevant legal terms

4. Questions from Journalists



BIOGRAPHY OF JUDGE ROBERT S. LASNIK

Judge Robert S. Lasnik has been a leader in the state and federal judiciary in his 28 years on the bench. He was appointed to the United States District Court by President Bill Clinton in 1998 and served as Chief Judge of the Western District of Washington from 2004-2011. From 2010 -2015 he served on the Judicial Conference of the United States as the district judge representative from the Ninth Circuit. The Judicial Conference is the governing body of the federal courts chaired by Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. In 2011 Chief Justice Roberts appointed Judge Lasnik to the seven-person Executive Committee which sets policy for the federal judiciary.

Judge Lasnik graduated from Brandeis University with a degree in psychology and sociology and later obtained two master's degrees from Northwestern University in journalism and counseling. He is a graduate of the University of Washington School of Law and was an instructor there in Interviewing and Counseling for Lawyers. He was named Outstanding Alumnus of the Law School in 2012 and the Washington Law Review awarded him its Inspiration Through Service Award in 2015. He has won several awards from Washington Women Lawyers, the King County Bar, the American Board of Trial attorneys and the Washington Trial Lawyers. He also chaired the Washington State Rhodes Scholar Selection Committee from 2002-2007.



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Speakers

United States District Court Clerk's Office

William M. McCool
District Court Executive/Clerk of Court

Bill was appointed district court executive and clerk of court for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington in September, 2010. Bill was the clerk of court for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida from June, 2002 until August, 2010. Bill was the chief deputy clerk in Tucson, Arizona, for the District of Arizona from January, 1996 until June, 2002. Bill received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Oregon and his Master of Science Degree in Judicial Administration from the University of Denver College of Law. Bill is currently the clerk advisor to the Judicial Conference Committee on Court Administration and Case Management.

Eric L. Smits
Management Analyst

Eric has been the management analyst for the District Court Clerk's Office since 2011. Prior to that he was an intake clerk, and an ECF analyst for the Clerk's Office. Eric worked for 17 years for ABC Legal Services, including several years as a supervisor. Eric has a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Washington.



Federal Bar Association for Western Washington

Karen Orehoski, Partner
Breneman Grube Orehoski, PLLC

Karen Orehoski is a partner at the law firm of Breneman Grube Orehoski, PLLC. Karen received her law degree in 2004 from Gonzaga University School of Law and her practice focuses on personal injury, wrongful death and commercial litigation. Karen actively practices law in Washington, Montana and Idaho. Karen is the co-chair of the Federal Bar Association of the Western District of Washington's Membership Committee and also actively volunteers with the King County Bar Association where she just finished a four-year term on the KCBA's Board of Trustees.

Mohammad Ali Hamoudi
Assistant Federal Defender

Mohammad Ali Hamoudi is an assistant federal defender at Federal Public Defenders office in the Western District of Washington. Mohammad, who is half-Iranian and half-Iraqi, immigrated to the United States in 1987 from Iran. He attended New School university in New York where he obtained a bachelor's and master's degree. He subsequently graduated from law school from John F. Kennedy university in northern California. In California, he represented individuals charged with capital crimes in multiple jurisdictions. He was a contributing editor to Forum magazine. In addition, he was a member of the board of governors for the California Attorneys for Criminal Justice. He currently works on a variety criminal matters in state and federal district and appellate courts at the Federal Defender's office in Seattle. Mohammad is the co-chair of the Federal Bar Association of the Western District of Washington's Membership Committee