The Honorable Michelle L. Peterson received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Seattle Pacific University in 1997 and is a 2000 University of Minnesota Law School graduate.

Prior to her appointment to the bench as a United States Magistrate Judge, Judge Peterson was Of Counsel at DLA Piper LLP, a Partner in the Seattle firm of Lane Powell, P.C., and a Partner at Yarmuth Wilsdon Calfo, PLLC. Her practice focused in white collar criminal defense, government investigations, False Claims Act litigation, and commercial litigation.

Judge Peterson has long been an active member of the federal bar. She served as a Western District of Washington United States District Court Lawyer Representative. She co-chaired the Local Rules Committee for the Western District of Washington Federal Bar Association. In that capacity, she also co-chaired a subcommittee on electronically stored information ("ESI") that created the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington's Model Agreement Regarding Discovery of Electronically Stored Information. Additionally, Judge Peterson was a member of the Federal Pro Bono Panel, a Criminal Justice Act panel attorney for the Federal Public Defenders Office, and the Federal Bar Association Liaison for the Western District of Washington's Drug Reentry Alternative Model (DREAM).

Judge Peterson has participated in a number of publications and speaking events, covering broad topics such as roving wiretaps, e-Discovery, and health care fraud.