

# Marion County Bar Association

*Professionalism, Civility and the Rule of Law*



## 2024 JUDICIAL CANDIDATE FORUM

Please join us and meet the candidates for  
Judge of the Circuit Court, 3<sup>rd</sup> District, Position 11

DAVID L. CARLSON  
MARTIN C. HABEKOST  
MATTHEW L. TRACEY  
MICHELLE VLACH-ING

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2024, 12-1pm  
MARION COUNTY CIRCUIT COURTHOUSE  
Courtroom 2A



David L. Carlson

I got into the practice of law to help everyday people and I've done that now for nearly 30 years. I enjoy the focus of my practice, which is civil litigation with a focus on probate, trust and protective proceedings. I also serve as a professional fiduciary. During that nearly 30 years I've come to the conclusion that although I love what I do right now I can help more people and be a more active contributor to people's welfare as a judge rather than an advocate.

I can do that because I bring something to the bench that we will need in the coming two decades. Starting in 2020 and continuing for the next twenty years the baby boomer generation is going to be passing away. That means the largest generational transfer of wealth that the world has ever seen will occur during that time. According to one estimate this will be approximately \$68 *trillion*. And as many people know, where there's money there's people fighting over money. As a result, we are going to need civil litigation experience, especially regarding probate matters, trust matters and protective proceedings. For the last twenty years plus years that has been my practice's focus.



Martin C. Habekost

In 1987, I attended Willamette University College of Law and graduated in 1990 with a JD degree.

During my second year of law school, I was hired as a law clerk at O'Neill, Evans, Swogger & Cowan which was a general-practice law firm. When I graduated, I was offered an associate position which I accepted. I worked for that law firm for seven years. The following two years, I worked for myself with my wife, Jill Foster, in an office where she was an associate attorney. In 2000, I returned to join the law firm as a partner of O'Neill, Evans, Cowan & Habekost. In 2002, I joined one of my partners and formed a new law firm of Rockwell, Cowan & Habekost where I worked until returning to solo practice in late 2006. I have since continued to practice criminal defense.

I represent both adults and juveniles; court-appointed and retained. I thoroughly enjoy my practice.

I have been married to my wife, Jill Foster, since 1994 and we have two daughters, Zoë and Ziá.

I like to ride bicycles and grow dahlias.



**Matthew L. Tracey**

For nearly three years, I have served the county as a full time Hearings Referee and Judge Pro Tem. I have heard thousands of routine hearings in that time. For much of 2023, I was stationed at the Criminal Annex, where I handled arraignments, release hearings, contempt trials, probation violations, and sentencing. Prior to that, I spent nearly a year on the miscellaneous civil docket, presiding over protective orders, landlord tenant matters, small claims, civil commitments, child support enforcement, and many other matters. I've also spent considerable time at the Marion County Juvenile Court, where I have heard juvenile delinquencies and family dependencies. I have heard a full criminal jury trial to verdict, a number of divorce trials, and sworn in a grand jury. I have loved every minute of my time as a Hearings Referee and am eager to further expand my responsibilities as a future Circuit Court Judge to better serve our community.

Prior to becoming a Hearings Referee, I was the Assistant Executive Director of the Marion County Public Defender. Aside from a decade-long career in indigent representation, I also briefly maintained a mixed family law, criminal, and probate practice in Eugene.



**Michelle Vlach-Ing**

I have almost 20 years experience in the legal profession and over nineteen years experience as an attorney in the private practice of law in Oregon. My legal career began in 1995 as a volunteer in the Circuit Court in the State of Hawaii. As an undergraduate, I interned for Fujiyama, Duffy and Fujiyama in Honolulu, Hawaii. During law school, I honed my legal skills as a law clerk for a private attorney and later for the Oregon Department of Justice. As a lawyer, I have made many appearances in State and Federal Courts in Oregon, court annexed arbitration and arbitration before the International Center for Dispute Resolution.

I serve as an arbitrator in Marion and Multnomah counties and FINRA. I am also on the court appointed panels for domestic relations mediator in Marion and Polk counties. I am a Parenting Time Coordinator serving the Willamette Valley Area. My practice consists of litigation in state and federal courts, as well as international arbitration. My areas of practice include creditors' rights, contract disputes, family law, criminal law, copyrights, trademarks, patent litigation and unlawful trade practices litigation.