



For Immediate Release

NEW PRESIDING, CO-PRESIDING JUDGES ELECTED TO REPRESENT HARRIS COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTS AT LAW

June 13, 2022 — Two Harris County Criminal Court at Law judges have been elected by their peers to serve in key judicial leadership roles representing the county's 16 Criminal Courts at Law.

Judge Genesis Draper, who sits on the bench of Harris County Criminal Court at Law No. 12, was elected presiding judge for the criminal misdemeanor courts. She will take over for Judge Toria Finch, who sits on the bench of Harris County Court at Law No. 9.

Harris County Criminal Court at Law No. 1 Judge Alex Salgado was elected to serve as co-presiding judge. He will take over for Judge Draper, who is wrapping up her second term as co-presiding judge.

The pair will assume their new roles on July 1, 2022. The six-month terms run through the end of December.

"It's been an honor to serve you all," said Judge Finch, who is concluding her second term in the judicial leadership role. "We've accomplished so much, and I know we will continue to do great."

An essential role, the presiding judge is tasked with providing administrative oversight and serving as a liaison between the judiciary and county departments, officials, and projects. The presiding judge also convenes and presides over judicial meetings and appoints substitute judges when needed.

The co-presiding judge carries out these duties when the presiding judge is not available.

Judge Draper was elected judge in January 2020 after being appointed to fill a vacancy on the bench the previous year. She presides over both Court No. 12 as well as one of Harris County's SOBER courts, a treatment and intervention program focused on helping people overcome substance abuse.

She also teaches advanced trial advocacy as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston Law Center and was selected as a 2022 Fellow for the American Leadership Forum.

Before assuming the bench, she spent 12 years as an assistant public defender at both the state and federal level. She holds a B.A. in English from Spelman College and J.D. from University of Texas School of Law.

"I am honored to receive this vote of confidence from my colleagues," Judge Draper said. "When we took office, I don't think any of us could have appreciated what a heavy lift the administrative side of being a judge is, but that's where there has been some of the greatest opportunity to make the concepts of equal protection under the law and due process a reality."

Judge Salgado was elected to the Court No. 1 bench in 2018. In addition to presiding over Court No. 1, he also presides over one of Harris County's SOBER courts.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Salgado spent nine years as an assistant district attorney in Walker and Fort Bend counties. During that time, he prosecuted a wide range of criminal cases, including misdemeanor, felony, and juvenile offenses.

Born and raised in West Texas, Judge Salgado earned an English degree from Texas Tech University and a J.D. from Texas Southern University's Thurgood Marshall School of Law. While in law school, he worked with the Harris County District Attorney's Office and served as a student attorney with the Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy at Texas Southern University's Thurgood Marshall School of Law.

"I am excited to take on this new responsibility and honored to have been nominated by my fellow judges," Judge Salgado said. "I look forward to working with all the different agencies and offices in making sure the Courts work as efficiently and effective as possible."

MEDIA CONTACT

Holly Huffman, Communications Director, Office of Court Management
Email: Holly_Huffman@ccl.hctx.net

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS | WWW.CCL.HCTX.NET