

BIOGRAPHY AND COURT PRACTICE FOR JUDGE CATHY BISSOON

Judge Cathy Bissoon was born in 1968 in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated *summa cum laude* from Alfred University in 1990 and received her law degree from Harvard Law School in 1993.

Following law school, Judge Bissoon joined Reed Smith's Pittsburgh office as an associate. In 1994, she took a year-long "sabbatical" from private practice, during which she clerked for the Honorable Gary L. Lancaster of this Court. In 1995, Judge Bissoon returned to Reed Smith where she ultimately became a partner and the firm-wide head of the Employment Group.

Judge Bissoon also served as Reed Smith's Director of Diversity for six years, earning various accolades for her efforts to increase diversity within the legal profession. Most notably, Judge Bissoon was recognized for her many efforts in the area of diversity with the Honorable Thurgood Marshall award from Minorities in Business Magazine during its 2006 Multicultural Prism Awards ceremony.

In 2007, Judge Bissoon joined the Pittsburgh law firm of Cohen & Grigsby, where she was a director and served as the head of the Labor & Employment Group.

Shortly thereafter, Judge Bissoon was selected by the Board of Judges of this Court to serve as a United States Magistrate Judge. She was sworn in on August 1, 2008. Judge Bissoon, who is both Hispanic and Indian, became the first woman of color to sit on the federal bench in Pittsburgh, and the first woman of South Asian descent to sit on a federal bench in the United States.

On November 17, 2010, Judge Bissoon was nominated to the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania by President Barack Obama, and was confirmed by the Senate on October 17, 2011. She received her commission on October 19, 2011, and was sworn in as a district judge on October 20, 2011. With her appointment, Judge Bissoon became the first Hispanic female Article III judge in Pennsylvania and the first Asian American Article III judge in Pennsylvania.

Judge Bissoon also sits as one of the Court's designated patent judges and is one of the founding members of the Q. Todd Dickinson Intellectual Property American Inn of Court. The Dickinson Inn provides a unique opportunity for members to hone their legal skills in a social setting with no agenda other than collegiality and with a shared interest in professionalism and excellence. It also provides an opportunity for younger lawyer and student members to gain experience and insight from member judges and experienced lawyers from among the best of the Pittsburgh IP community. In 2012, Judge Bissoon was elected the first president of Dickinson Inn.

Over the course of her years in private practice, Judge Bissoon was named a Fellow of the Litigation Council of America; listed multiple years in the *Best Lawyers in America*; named a "Pennsylvania Super Lawyer" by *Philadelphia Magazine*; listed in *Chambers USA America's*

Leading Lawyers; and was recognized as one of the top 50 lawyers in Pennsylvania under the age of 40 by *Pennsylvania Law Weekly*. Additionally, she served on both the Lawyers Advisory Committee for the Third Judicial Circuit as well as the Local Rules Advisory Committee for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

During her time in private practice, Judge Bissoon also had the honor of serving, upon appointment by the Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, as an original member of Pennsylvania's Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness. The Commission is charged with promoting the equal application of the law for all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and increasing public confidence in the fairness of all three branches of state government. The Commission evaluates and recommends measures to reduce or eliminate bias or invidious discrimination within all branches of government and within the legal profession.

Judge Bissoon was honored as one of five finalists for the 2010 Athena Award. The award honors female leaders in the region who demonstrate excellence, creativity and initiative in business, who provide time and energy to improve the quality of life of others and who actively assist other women in realizing their full leadership potential.

In 2010, Judge Bissoon also was honored by Pittsburgh Professional Women as one of their 2010 Women of Integrity. The award is given to women who have distinguished themselves as leaders who balance career and civic responsibilities, while sharing their success by mentoring others and supporting their communities.

Judge Bissoon has served on the boards of the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, the Girl Scouts and Mt. Lebanon Teen Center. She is a Girl Scout troop leader and a Black Belt in the Korean martial art of Tang Soo Do.