

VENETIA HARVEY VELAZQUEZ

Office of the Governor, Office of Legal Counsel

Question # 11 – Government Experience

TYPE OF SERVICE/AGENCY

DATES OF SERVICE

Magistrate Judge

Superior Court of the Virgin Islands
(Employee; Judicial Branch)

Nov. 4, 2024
to present

Duties: Preside over Initial Appearance proceedings in criminal cases; Criminal Bench Trials, Small Claims, Forcible Entry and Detainer cases; Domestic Violence, Civil Stalking and Harassment cases; Probate, Litter and Traffic. Additionally, I review and determine requests for arrest and search warrants and mediate civil and family cases that are pending before trial judges, on request.

Assistant Attorney General

Department of Justice
Criminal and Civil Divisions
(Employee; Executive Branch)

2016-2024

Assigned Duties and Responsibilities:

Civil Division Chief and Acting Chief (April 2023-October 2024);
Civil Litigator (2019 – 2024);
Prosecutor, Criminal Division (2016 – 2019);
Police Legal Advisor;
Served on HIDTA Board and POST Board, on behalf of the Attorney General:
Hearing Officer, Peace Officer Standards and Training

Deputy General Counsel

Office of the Governor
(Employee; Executive Branch)

2015- 2016

Appellate Public Defender

Office of the Territorial Public Defender.
(Employee)

2014- 2015

Duties: Represented indigent clients before the Supreme Court of the V.I. and the Superior Court of the V.I. in criminal appeals, appeals of petitions for writs of habeas corpus, and in criminal cases before the trial court.

Clerk of the Courts,

Supreme Court and Superior Court of the Virgin Islands
(Employee; Judicial Branch)

2007 – 2013

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Question # 11 – Government Experience, Continued

Staff Attorney

2002 – 2007

United States District Court of the Virgin Islands,
Appellate Division (V.I. Judicial Council)
(Employee; Judicial Branch of the Virgin Islands; Judicial Council)

Duties: Employed by the V.I. Judicial Council to work on local appeals pending before the federal District Court; served as a staff attorney for the District of St. Croix with responsibility for ensuring resolution of appeals in criminal and civil cases, from the decisions of the Territorial/Superior Court.

Law Clerk

2000 - 2002

Superior Court of the Virgin Islands
Hon. Maria M. Cabret
(Employee; Judicial Branch)

Legal Intern, United States District Court
of the Virgin Islands, Appellate Division
(Unpaid/Voluntary Service/Externship)

May-August 1999

Legal Intern

May-August 1998

Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands (now Superior Court)
(Employee; Judicial Branch)

Public Information Officer

Aug. 1995 - 1997

VI Police Department
(Contract Employee; Executive Branch)

Secondary Teacher

Aug. 1988 – June 1995

St. Croix Central High School
(Employee; Executive Branch)

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Question # 13 – Qualifications

My legal experience over the course of approximately 25 years reflects a record of committed public service and a varied background in all aspects of the legal profession. As a Magistrate Judge for the past year, I have presided over criminal, civil, domestic violence, traffic and litter hearings and trials. Additionally, I have used my experience as a certified mediator to assist trial judges in moving their dockets, by successfully mediating civil and family cases assigned to those judges. I have, further, served as a public defender, representing defendants charged with crimes in criminal proceedings and competency matters before the Superior Court, as well as challenging their convictions on appeal before the Supreme Court; and as a prosecutor I represented the People of the Virgin Islands in criminal cases. As an assistant attorney general, while assigned to the Criminal Division, I was additionally assigned to serve as the territory wide 24-hour on-call attorney, with responsibility to immediately respond to police officers' calls for assistance while doing their work in the field, in order to ensure Constitutional policing and preserve cases from suppression challenges, and to assist with preparation of search and arrest warrant requests. I further served as a hearing officer for peace officer employment matters. Also as an assistant attorney general assigned to the Civil Division, I represented this Government in civil litigation and later led the Government's civil litigation goals as Chief of the Civil Division. These varied experiences require an understanding and appreciation of all of the faces of "justice". In addition, in all of these roles, I have demonstrated strong work ethic, intellectual rigor, integrity and an ability to remain impartial and to perform calmly and professionally in the face of adversity. I have actively prepared myself to assume this role, by enrolling in, and completing, the Judicial Academy for Aspiring Judges offered by the National Judicial College (NJC) in 2023. In 2025, I additionally attended the National Judicial College's General Jurisdiction training for judges. Finally, and of significant importance, I am committed to this Territory and to its people, and this commitment is reflected in my long record of public service and continued civic involvement.

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Question # 16 – Honors and Awards

Merit Appointment to the Howard Law Journal

CALI Excellence Awards for Law School Achievement in: Legal Research and Writing II;

Advanced Legal Research; Remedies; Corporations; Sales and Secured Transactions.

Recognition for Appellate Advocacy (Howard Law)

Education Administrator's Excellence Award (UVI; Education Administrator's Association)

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Question # 30 – Job Performance

Short term goals & objectives: 1) immediately assessing the state of the case docket assigned to my care; 2) identifying and addressing any potential conflicts of interest therein; 3) developing an organizational plan for addressing the assigned cases effectively and efficiently, within existing differentiated case management time standards; 4) implementing a policy of setting firm trial dates in cases, and setting the tone for attorneys and litigants appearing before me that communicates the seriousness and urgency of moving matters forward as scheduled. Achieving these goals will require self-discipline, an investment of time, hard work and effective communication to encourage a shift in paradigms.

Long-term goals and objectives: 1) model the highest ethical standards, professional and decorum in matters before me, to foster judicial integrity, trust and confidence; 2) hear cases timely and issue decisions promptly, based on the law and evidence before me, to improve access to justice; 3) participate actively in the improvement and growth of the judiciary, by offering solutions to problems, which include engagement with the community (particularly our children), and; 4) aim to leave the Court in general, and the case docket, in particular, in a better place than I found them.