

This Georgia Lawyer Just Made History

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News

What You Need to Know

- Courtney Veal named new director of Judicial Qualifications Commission of Georgia.
- The former JQC Deputy Director replaces ex-JQC Director **Chuck Boring**, who resigned in January to join **Robbins Alloy Belinfante Littlefield LLC**.
- After serving as JQC's first deputy director, Veal becomes commission's second woman director following Cheryl Custer's 2010 departure.

Georgia's judicial watchdog agency has a new head honcho, but she's no stranger to the Judicial Qualifications Commission. After three years of service, Courtney Veal has traded her title as deputy director for that of director.

As Veal wrapped up her first official week in her new role Friday, she already stood out from most other JQC directors who've come before her. After making history as the commission's first woman deputy director, she expanded her legacy as the JQC's second woman director in its 51-year history.

"I'm honored to join the ranks of women attorneys in our state who have risen to occupy important leadership positions," Veal told the Daily Report Friday. "Though I'm obviously biased because I'm one myself, I find that working moms make some of the best and strongest leaders out there."

'I've Been so Fortunate'

Veal said she felt "truly honored" to be selected as the next JQC Director, considering it an opportunity to "follow in a line of remarkable leaders."

Courtney Veal, director, Judicial Qualifications Commission of Georgia. (Courtesy photo)

"As the new director, I am looking forward to continuing to improve upon the work of the JQC," Veal said. "My efforts will be focused on investigating and prosecuting serious and repeated violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct and enhancing the education and training provided to our judiciary."

She welcomed the opportunity to continue regulating judicial ethics and conduct on behalf of the JQC, but noted the niche area of law often involved overcoming hurdles. Veal pointed out that when she joined the commission in 2020, it had still been settling into a new set of rules enacted in 2017.

“It has been challenging test-driving those rules, given the lack of precedent,” Veal said. “Unlike other practice areas, there is not a significant body of precedent or caselaw, and there are few other attorneys in our state with experience in the area.”

As Veal now further defines the practice of judicial ethics as JQC director, she credited her prior experiences as the judicial watchdog’s deputy director for making her “a better, more well-rounded attorney.”

Coming from a criminal law background, Veal said “doing the work of the JQC” required she examine and understand varying levels of court and areas of the law ranging “from landlord tenant disputes in magistrate court to wills in probate court.”

Prior to joining the JQC, Veal served three years advocating for women and children victims of physical and sexual abuse with the Cobb County District Attorney’s Office’s Special Victim’s Unit. She also garnered extensive courtroom and trial experience prosecuting felony offenses as a Gwinnett County assistant district attorney and Douglas County assistant solicitor-general.

“I often tell people that when I started, I knew a lot about a little. Now, I know a little about a lot,” Veal said. “I’ve enjoyed learning about different levels of court and aspects of the law, and in doing so, I’ve been fortunate to meet and learn from several very skilled attorneys and judges.”

‘Separate the Wheat From the Chaff’

Having acted in the capacity of her new role for the past three months, Veal now officially replaces former JQC Director **Chuck Boring**. Boring resigned in January to join Atlanta commercial and regulatory litigation firm Robbins Alloy Belinfante Littlefield.

After working alongside Veal for years in both the Cobb County District Attorney’s Office and the JQC, Boring applauded the 2011 Georgia State University College of Law graduate being named as his successor.

“I was ecstatic,” Boring said. “I’ve seen her passion for justice and for doing the right thing, even in the face of difficult pressures.”

In addition to a sense of fairness to the director role, Boring said he believed Veal would be able to “separate the wheat from the chaff.”

“She’ll be able to spot spurious and frivolous complaints and weed those out and concentrate on the more important matters that really do bring confidence in the judiciary into play,” Boring said. “She really takes the time to dig in, and where there’s not an easy answer at least try to reason through how to deal with the situation.”

From supervising JQC staff to investigating and prosecuting violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct, Boring said he’d seen Veal grow through her efforts to help oversee JQC operations since 2020. As deputy director, he said Veal assisted on a number of presentations that educated the judiciary on judicial ethics and the Code of Judicial Conduct.

Bob Barr, chairman of Judicial Qualifications of Georgia. (Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

“She is a natural and has gotten so good at doing that,” Boring said.

As one of seven members of the JQC Investigative Panel who unanimously voted for Veal's promotion, Chairman Bob Barr echoed the sentiments. Barr credited Veal's legal experience as both deputy director and a long-time prosecutor as having helped prepare her for the top leadership role.

“Ms. Veal brings to the position of JQC director the precise skill set needed to ensure that our state's judicial branch meets and maintains the highest professional and ethical standards, so that the citizens of this state can be assured their rights will be fully protected if, and whenever, they appear before a judge at any level of court,” Barr said in a statement issued by the JQC.

Deputy Director Vacancy

It's not yet clear who will take over Veal's former deputy director role, but it's already top of mind for the new director.

“Filling the deputy director position is a top priority for me in the immediate future,” Veal said. “Once a qualified candidate is identified, the Investigative Panel will authorize his [or] her employment.”