**Candid Conversations: Judges on the Job of Judging**

**Rebecca Fanning – Moderator**

**Four Fridays in June (11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.)**

**June 9, 16, 23, 30**

**Virtual Program Requirement: Cameras and Microphones On**

At a time when polls and pundits indicate that public understanding of the courts is cloudy, participants in this study group will have the opportunity to get some clarity about the judiciary by engaging with federal judges. This series is an opportunity to interact and ask questions of diverse judges. Two judges each week, from different parts of the country, will engage with participants on the realities of what their oath of office means to them as they live out their promise to: “faithfully and impartially discharge and perform” their duties “under the Constitution and laws of the United States.”

The starting point for each session will be different, but the floor will be open to questions on any topic. **Session #1:** The Role of Judges and Jurors as Partners in Justice. How do judges see their role? How do they see jurors as partners in justice? **Session #2:** Criminal Cases: What are the complexities of presiding over criminal trials -- especially high-profile trials -- and sentencings? **Session #3:** Civil Cases: What is the everyday impact of civil litigation on the lives of law-abiding citizens? **Session #4:**  The Appellate Process: When fewer than 100 cases make it to the Supreme Court every year, what is the role of Courts of Appeals in the final determination of high-impact cases and controversies?

The conversation will be driven by participants’ interests and will explore the ramifications of court decisions on their lives. Learners will explore how abstract concepts such as the rule of law, judicial independence, and separation of powers make a difference in their quality of life in impactful and tangible ways. While judges can’t talk about cases before them, they will answer questions about their nomination experience, their thought process when their views conflict with what the law requires, how they maintain their impartiality, how they handle high-profile cases, and what the courts can teach about civil discourse in conflict resolution and the process of evidence-based decision-making.

*The moderator is* ***Rebecca Fanning*** *is the federal courts’ national educational outreach manager at the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts in Washington, D.C. She created the federal judiciary’s national Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions initiative and other programs that bring teachers and students into federal courtrooms to serve as jurors, attorneys, and judges. These realistic simulations are presided over by federal judges and coached by attorney volunteers. She writes for professional journals and makes presentations on court literacy and civics education.*