

Speaker Biography



Judge Valerie Gotch Garrett was born and raised in Lafayette, Louisiana. Judge Garrett is a graduate of Holy Rosary Institute and the University of Southwest Louisiana, (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette). She received her Juris Doctorate from Southern University Law Center. Judge Garrett has practiced law in the Acadiana community for more than 28 years.

She was elected District Judge for Division B in 2020 with her term beginning on January 1, 2021. Serving Lafayette, Acadia and Vermilion Parishes on a rotating basis, Judge Garrett presides over Criminal, Civil and Drug Court cases in addition to other matters on an "as needed" basis.

Judge Garrett has served Acadiana and the State as a leader and member of several civic and community boards. In addition to being the first African American Female to be elected to the 15th JDC, she has many other firsts, including but not limited to being the 1st African American female Chair for the Lafayette Airport Commission and 1st African American female appointed to the Lafayette Housing Authority.

She has been a champion of service to the community and has made a significant impact on the community, priding herself on having a *Passion for Justice*. Judge Garrett believes every person must be treated with respect and dignity, and has maintained a reputation of *Service to the People*.

Further, as the 15th JDC Adult Drug Court Judge, she diligently lobbied for, and subsequently received, LCG's Opioid Grant Funding. Judge Garrett has also established the Co-Occurring Mental Health Track within the Drug Court Program. She prides herself in knowing that she uses all resources provided to her to better serve the people of Acadiana.

Judge Garret is also in the early stages of creating an Assisted Outpatient Treatment Court in order to provide the community with a court specializing in helping individuals comply with their mental health treatment.