

## OPENING STATEMENT:

Good Morning/Afternoon, Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Mary-Margaret Burgdorff. I am honored and humbled to be before you today as a nominee for Connecticut Superior Court Judge. I want to extend my thanks to Governor Rell for this wonderful opportunity and I want to thank you for your time today.

I have been engaged in the practice of law for the past 23 years. I started as an associate attorney as Mary-Margaret Dalton with the Law Offices of Edward T. Dodd, Jr. in 1985 after graduating from St. Mary's College in 1981 and Gonzaga University School of Law in 1985. I became a partner in the firm in 1990. The firm is presently known as Dodd, Lessack, Dalton & Dodd, LLC. In the early years of my practice, I handled criminal, family, housing and social security disability cases with a concentration on personal injury claims. I have practiced in both the federal, state and appellate courts as well as before the Workers' Compensation Commission. In addition, as part of my firm's workers' compensation practice, I have handled Medicare submissions with regard to the settlement of workers' compensation claims.

I have tried cases, both jury and non-jury, in the Superior Court, as well as in Arbitration proceedings. I have argued before the Connecticut Supreme Court. I have had the rewarding opportunity to serve as a Court appointed Fact-finder and Arbitrator in numerous cases at the Superior Court. I was able to facilitate the settlement of many cases in that role. I also had the invaluable experience of presiding over many cases and issuing written decisions on the issues of law and fact before me. In those instances, I awarded fair, just and reasonable damages where appropriate. I believe that I was able to be fair and impartial to all parties, including those who appeared before me without legal representation.

Over the years, I have been actively involved in the Waterbury Young Lawyers, the Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers and the American Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division. I have been a member of Civitan since 1986.

My 23 years of my practice have certainly been rewarding. I have handled a wide variety of cases involving many areas of the law and diverse areas of technologies and fields. I have had the privilege of representing many people from diverse

backgrounds, from the indigent to the disabled, from children to the elderly, many of whom have suffered serious and sometimes profound, life altering injuries. I have been appointed to represent minor children as guardian ad litem in both the criminal and civil courts. I have also represented a number of people on a pro bono basis. I represented each of these individuals to the best of my ability and legal expertise, and always with respect and compassion. While always zealously advocating for my client, I did so with respect and courtesy for opposing counsel and the Judges I appeared before. I believe that all of these experiences have given me valuable experience and insight that will aide me in my role as a Judge.

Growing up as the middle child of nine children also helped me to learn the art of mediation and compromise which has served me well in the practice of law and, I believe, it will continue to do so if I am confirmed. My parents taught me to have a strong work ethic and to perform every task to the best of my ability, regardless of the time and energy needed to complete the task at hand.

My husband, Brad, and I have been married for ten years. We have two wonderful daughters, Sarah (9) and Katie (7). I grew up in West Hartford and we continue to reside there. I am an active parishioner of St. Thomas the Apostle Church. My role as a parent has honed my organizational skills and strong work habits while handling a heavy caseload.

I would be honored to serve in any assignment as a Superior Court Judge and I look forward to the opportunity to do so. I assure you that if I am confirmed, I will perform my duties to the absolute best of my ability, and with impartiality and compassion.

I appreciate your time and attention. I look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.