

# Introduction



**Nancy L. Buytendorp**

District Court Judge

Third Judicial District

Minnesota

(Chambered in Winona County)



# Minnesota Judicial Branch



- There are 321 judges in the state of Minnesota.
  - Supreme Court – 7
  - Court of Appeals – 19
  - District Court – 295
    - Located in all 87 Minnesota Counties and are divided among 10 judicial districts.
    - Winona County is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> judicial district with 10 other counties.
      - Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Waseca.
      - There are 24 judges and one referee in the 3<sup>rd</sup> judicial district



# My Role as District Court Judge

- ▶ District Court judges resolve disputes by determining the facts and applying the law to decide what is right.

Courts decide what really happened and what should be done about it.



# My Role as District Court Judge

- ▶ District Court judges in Minnesota hear everything from traffic tickets, to civil and family conflicts, to first degree murder trials. For example
  - Speeding tickets
  - Divorce cases
  - Slip and fall case
  - Car accidents
  - Robbery charges
  - Murder charges
  - Assault charges



# My Role as District Court Judge – criminal cases

- Judges preside over court proceedings and make sure the rules are followed. A judge is kind of like an umpire.
  - when a person waives their right to a jury trial, the judge decides whether that person is guilty or not guilty.
  - And when someone wants a jury trial, the judge instructs the jury on the law it must follow to decide the person's guilt or innocence.
- If a person is found guilty, it is the judge that sentences or determines the punishment for the defendant.



# My Role as District Court Judge –

civil cases

In civil cases, one person or business sues another because of a dispute or problem between them.

If someone loses a case, that person or business may be ordered to pay money to the other side or return property, but that person does not go to jail.

- These can be jury trials in which the judge presides to make sure rules are followed.
- Or they may be court trials in which case the judge decides what happens.



## Relationship to Criminal Justice System

The Judges' mission is to provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

Justice = fair treatment for everyone



# For More Information

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<https://www.mncourts.gov/>

