

Judge Rachel L. Bell is a nationally recognized judicial leader, human rights advocate, educator, a champion for transformative justice whose 21+ year career has been grounded in the belief that justice must extend beyond the courtroom and into the community. As Presiding Judge of the General Sessions Court, Division VIII (8) in Nashville, Tennessee, she has dedicated her career to advancing human dignity, equity, and access to justice while creating innovative solutions that strengthen both individuals and institutions.

Elected in 2012 as the youngest General Sessions Court Judge in Davidson County history and re-elected to three additional terms, Judge Bell has built a judicial legacy centered on restorative justice and community engagement. She is the **founder of the Music City Community Court**, Tennessee's first community court, and the architect of nationally recognized initiatives including the **R.E.S.T.O.R.E.** Re-Entry Court for Returning Citizens, the **C.A.R.E.** Diversionary Court for emerging adults aged 18-30, the **L.E.G.A.C.Y.** Housing Resource Diversionary Court and Program for landlords and tenants dealing with eviction and rent arrearages along with the **A.S.P.I.R.E.** program for those seeking specific individualized plans focused on their needs. Her groundbreaking work addresses the root causes of legal involvement by expanding access to housing, education, employment, and supportive services that promote long-term stability and opportunity. To date these programs have **provided over 35, 912 participants access to justice**, declaring participants' indigent thereby waiving over \$18 million in court cost fines/fees and signing orders during COVID-19 to pay out over \$19 million to landlords to cure tenant arrearages to avoid eviction and homelessness.

A trailblazer in the legal profession, Judge Bell became **Tennessee's first openly LGBTQ+ elected judge** and her leadership has created pathways for greater representation while demonstrating that authentic, transparent and compassionate leadership strengthens public trust in the judiciary. She currently serves as Chair of the National Bar Association's LGBTQ+ Division and Co-Chair of the Association's Pro Bono Committee, where she has championed mentorship, expanded access to justice using her expungement clinic blueprint, strengthened national partnerships, and cultivated the next generation of legal leaders through service and collaboration. Judge Bell also serves as the Specialty Court Committee Chair for the American Judges Association.

Judge Bell's innovative approach to justice has earned national recognition through presentations at the White House Eviction Prevention Summit and features in national media. She is a graduate of Harvard Kennedy School's Senior Executives in State and Local Government program, a David Bohnett Fellow with the LGBTQ+ Victory Institute, and an Adjunct Professor in the John R. Lewis Graduate Social Justice and Leadership Program at Fisk University, where she prepares future leaders committed to justice and public service.

Her distinguished honors include the TN Human Rights Award for Outstanding Service, the TN Janice M. Holder Access to Justice Award, the Nashville Branch NAACP LEGACY Award, the National Bar Association LGBTQ+ Judge Deborah A. Batts Vanguard Award, the National Legal Week LEGALTECH Award, and numerous other recognitions celebrating her leadership, innovation, and unwavering commitment to justice. Judge Bell is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. with the Nashville Alumnae Chapter and serves on the Board of Directors for the Minerva Foundation.

Guided by her enduring principles, **"Justice does NOT stop at the courthouse steps! and Control the Controllable ®"** Judge Rachel L. Bell continues to transform lives by building systems that promote restoration, expand opportunity, strengthen the legal profession, and affirm the dignity and humanity of every person. To learn more please visit: www.judgerachelbell.com.