



Office of the District Court Executive

LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN
Chief Judge

EDWARD A. FRIEDLAND
District Court Executive

PRESS ADVISORY
January 26, 2022

CONTACT
Joseph Pecorino, (212) 805-0513

SDNY BOARD OF JUDGES SELECTS JENNIFER WILLIS TO SERVE AS MAGISTRATE JUDGE

The Board of Judges of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (SDNY) has selected Jennifer Willis to serve as Magistrate Judge for a term of eight years. Magistrate Judges assist District Court Judges with the work of the Court by facilitating the disposition of certain civil and criminal cases. She will assume the seat previously occupied by Magistrate Judge Fox, who recently retired after almost 25 years of service.

Jennifer Willis is a graduate of Columbia University and New York University School of Law. She has worked as a public defender for over twenty years, serving as a staff attorney at the Committee for Public Counsel Services, in Massachusetts, and at the Law Office of the Cooke County Public Defender, in Illinois, before joining the Federal Defenders of New York in 2015. She is currently the Director of Strategic Litigation at the Federal Defenders and in that capacity coordinates training and litigation aimed at addressing systemic racial disparities in criminal cases. Ms. Willis has extensive experience with novel legal issues and complex motion practice. She also has considerable trial experience and over the course of her career she has tried more than one hundred felony bench trials and more than thirty-five felony jury trials.

In addition to being an exceptional litigator, Ms. Willis is a passionate mentor to aspiring and new attorneys. Combining these two interests, she has become a frequent speaker and sought-after instructor in trial advocacy. She teaches regularly at law offices throughout the country and at programs sponsored by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

“Jennifer Willis will be a superb addition to our Foley Square bench, bringing years of trial experience. Her public defense background and leadership experience in litigating complex novel issues have prepared her well for management of criminal proceedings and complex civil proceedings,” said Chief Judge Laura Taylor Swain. “We are delighted to welcome her aboard.”