



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Kevin M. Levy**  
Philadelphia LGBTQ Bar Association  
[philalgbtqbar@gmail.com](mailto:philalgbtqbar@gmail.com)

**Jahlee J. Hatchett**  
The Barristers Association of Philadelphia, Inc.  
[info@phillybarristers.com](mailto:info@phillybarristers.com)

**Susan M. Lin**  
Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania  
[info@apaba-pa.org](mailto:info@apaba-pa.org)

**Celebrating the Appointment of Chesley Lightsey, Natasha Taylor-Smith, Samantha Williams, and Kay Yu to Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas**

---

**Philadelphia, PA – July 5, 2023:** In a joint statement, Jahlee Hatchett, Susan Lin, and Kevin Levy, the respective leaders of The Barristers Association of Philadelphia, the Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and the Philadelphia LGBTQ Bar Association, said:

The Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania, The Barristers' Association of Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia LGBTQ Bar Association jointly celebrate the appointment of Chesley Lightsey, Natasha Taylor-Smith, Samantha Williams, and Kay Yu to seats on the Court of Common Pleas for the First Judicial District. These four remarkably qualified lawyers were nominated by Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro to fill vacant seats on the bench and were unanimously confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate on June 30, 2023.

Natasha Taylor-Smith is an experienced public defense attorney and has served in both the Defender Association of Philadelphia as well as the Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Philadelphia. She was the top vote-getter in the recent May primary.

Samantha Williams is a former prosecutor and policymaker and rises to the bench as the recent Director of Legislation and Policy for City Councilmember Curtis Jones, Jr. She is a current appointed member of the Executive Committee of The Barristers Association of Philadelphia, Inc.

Kay Yu is an arbitrator and mediator with her own law office and served as the Chairperson of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations from 2008-2013 and spearheaded the modernization of the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance. She will be the first Korean-American woman to serve as a state court judge in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She is a former president of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania and was a long-serving member of the Board of Directors before recently resigning in light of her confirmation.

Chesley Lightsey is a veteran homicide and juvenile justice prosecutor with years of experience in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office where she served as the chief of each of those sections. She is a current member of the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia LGBTQ Bar Association.

These four lawyers are members and leaders of each of our respective bar associations, and were the top



four non-incumbent candidates in the recent May Democratic primary election and are running unopposed in the November general election for full 10-year terms on the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. They will soon take their judicial oaths and take the bench several months early before the November election.

On behalf of each of our organizations, we are so incredibly proud of Chesley, Natasha, Samantha, and Kay for their unanimous confirmation by the Pennsylvania Senate to serve as judges on the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. Their landmark achievements serve as a testament to their peerless talent and dedication to the legal profession, and their confirmations serve as a significant step forward in promoting diversity and inclusivity within the legal profession and in the judiciary.

Against the backdrop of cases from the United States Supreme Court concerning racial justice and equity, and important provisions of anti-discrimination law, we are inspired by these four lawyers who serve as strong leaders of our communities, and we know that they will continue to show the resiliency and perseverance of our communities while serving on the bench.

We thank Governor Shapiro for his swift action on appointing future Judges Lightsey, Taylor-Smith, Williams, and Yu and for the leadership of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas on working to fill vacancies which will have the effect of lessening the burden on the local judiciary and continue to work against the backlog of cases arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Barristers Association of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia LGBTQ Bar Association are registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and do not and did not endorse candidates for public office. This release should not be construed as an endorsement of any candidate's campaign for public office.

\* \* \*

#### **About Us:**

APABA-PA, an affiliate of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, represents the interests of the Asian Pacific American law students, lawyers, and judges and the Asian Pacific American community across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by supporting the advancement of Asian Pacific American attorneys and promoting justice, equity, and legal access, especially for all Asian Pacific American communities.

The Barristers' Association of Philadelphia, Inc. helps address the professional needs and development of Black lawyers in the City of Philadelphia and surrounding areas through programs, seminars, cultural events, and publications.

The Philadelphia LGBTQ Bar Association is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to the advancement of the welfare and full equality of the LGBTQ+ community, the promotion of the expertise and advancement of LGBTQ+ legal professionals in the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area, and the education of the larger community on LGBTQ+ legal issues. The Association's mission also includes promoting the welfare of society by advocating for the civil and human rights of all persons, regardless of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or national origin.