

HON. HIRAM E. PUIG-LUGO

Hiram E. Puig-Lugo was appointed to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia in 1999 by President William Jefferson Clinton. He has handled criminal felony, juvenile delinquency, criminal misdemeanor, child abuse and neglect, domestic relations, status offender, and domestic violence calendars. He currently sits in the Civil Division.

Judge Puig-Lugo was born in San Germán, Puerto Rico. He is equally fluent in English and Spanish and conversant in Brazilian Portuguese. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School, where he was the first Latino member of the Wisconsin Law Review. After graduation, he served as staff attorney with the Public Defender Service of the District of Columbia for eight years, and as trial attorney for the US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section, for three years.

Judge Puig-Lugo was Presiding Judge of the Family Court from 2014 to 2016. There, he started a Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Working Group to coordinate inter-agency support for court-involved youth victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Previously, he chaired the Court's Neglect Subcommittee and convened a stakeholder working group to address the needs of LGBTQ youth in the neglect and juvenile delinquency systems. Also, he has served on the DC Access to Justice Commission and the DC Courts Strategic Planning Leadership Council. Currently, he chairs the Superior Court Judicial Education Committee, sits on the D.C. Courts Standing Committee on Fairness and Access to the Courts, and serves as President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ).

Judge Puig-Lugo is one of three US representatives to The Hague Judicial Network. He has trained judges in the US and abroad on how to implement The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. He has taken part in separate bilateral meetings between the US and México, Spain and Japan, to facilitate implementation of the Convention between the U.S. and those nations.

Judge Puig-Lugo has been an instructor for legal education projects in Central America, South America, Puerto Rico, Spain, and the Federated States of Micronesia. He has presented on topics including rule of law, law of evidence, trial advocacy skills, human trafficking, judicial independence, child welfare, and alternative dispute resolution. He has taught at the American University Washington College of Law, the University of the District of Columbia School of Law, the George Washington University Law School, the National Judicial College Pacific Islands Law Institute, and the University of Puerto Rico Law School. He is adjunct faculty at the Georgetown University Law Center in the American Law for Foreign-Trained Lawyers LLM Program.

Judge Puig-Lugo has participated in public education programs on Spanish-language television in the District of Columbia and New York City. He has visited DC-area Latino community organizations to provide education about how the court system works, and hosted annual courthouse visits for elementary and middle students from two D.C. Public Schools.

Judge Puig-Lugo received the NCJFCJ President's Award for Extraordinary Leadership and the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts Equity Award in 2021, a special recognition from the DC Bar Family Law Section in 2016 for his service to the Family Court and the District of Columbia, the Hispanic National Bar Foundation Judicial Leadership Award in 2014, and the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia Honorable Ricardo M. Urbina Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011.