

**CARI STEELE**  
(General District Court)

Cari Steele, 50, was born in Fort Benning, GA. She is married with three (3) children and resides in Arlington, Virginia. She attended Florida State University for three semesters before transferring to Methodist College in Fayetteville, NC, where in 1996 she obtained her Bachelors of Arts, majoring in English. Ms. Steele attended law school at T.C Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond, receiving her Juris Doctor in 2000. She has been admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia since 2000.

Ms. Steele has been employed as a prosecutor for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church since 2002 and currently serves as the Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney. Her practice spans all types of cases in all courts. Her legal experience prior to beginning at the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office included working for one semester as a teaching assistant for the Honorable Marla Decker, who at the time was a prosecutor and adjunct professor; serving as a judicial law clerk in the Circuit Court of Virginia Beach for one year; and working as a staff attorney for the American Prosecutors Research Institute for one year.

While employed with the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, Ms. Steele has taken on additional responsibilities, including serving as the special liaison to the Arlington County Police Department's Special Victim's Unit and Homicide/Robbery Unit; the liaison to the Falls Church Police Department; the mental health liaison; and a Commonwealth's Attorney's representative on the Arlington Drug Treatment Court. She has been active in the Arlington County Bar Association and since 2018 has been a member of its Board of Directors.

**LEGAL ABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

Ms. Steele is well-regarded as a thoughtful and respectful prosecutor, and she left the Committee with the same impression. She has spent almost her entire career in Arlington, and has worked in every corner of the courthouse, with every type of criminal and delinquency case. She is a skilled litigator and makes a concerted effort to maintain positive working relationships with colleagues and adversaries alike. Ms. Steele is someone who exhibits a genuine heart for her work – she cares about what she does, and it shows.

Ms. Steele expressed a desire to help the General District Court develop in ways that would bolster its reputation in the legal community. She believes that judges

should be humble, patient, and give parties the opportunity to be heard, and the time they need to present their claims fairly. She understands that communication between courts and between the court and the bar must improve, and would look to improving coordination of the various courts' schedules. In all, Ms. Steele showed a keen insight into the role of a district court judge, and the needs of the Arlington and Falls Church legal community.

### **TEMPERAMENT**

Overall, the Committee unanimously believes Ms. Steele has the temperament to be a judge and would treat all litigants with dignity and respect. The Committee found Ms. Steele to be a thoughtful and compassionate candidate.

### **IMPARTIALITY**

Notwithstanding her significant experience with the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, this Committee believes that Ms. Steele would exercise the necessary impartiality required of a judge. The Committee appreciated her thoughtful responses to questions about implicit bias and believes her personal experience enhances her cultural competence.

### **DILIGENCE AND SERVICE TO THE LAW**

Ms. Steele is duty driven and it shows. Her aspiration is to serve others and to serve her community. She has proven that in her work in the Commonwealth's Attorney Office and by building a solid reputation among her peers for compassion and fairness.

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

The Committee was very impressed with Ms. Steele's application and interview. It was obvious to the Committee that she views a judgeship as an opportunity to continue serving her community and to further promote justice. She understands the needs of the Arlington courthouse and wants to make the court a welcoming place to practice law.

### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Highly Recommended: 7

Recommended:	0
Not Recommended:	0
Not Voting/Abstained:	0