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Roger Williams University School of Law

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December 10, 2018

Law School News

Three RWU Law Graduates Nominated for State Judgeships

Dean Yelnosky says Governor Raimondo's nominations represent a "bold and long overdue step" to add diversity to the state judiciary



From left, Christopher Knox Smith, RWU Law Dean Michael Yelnosky, Melissa R. DuBose and Keith A. Cardoza Jr. at Governor Raimondo's announcement of nominating them as Rhode Island judges.

December 10, 2018

BRISTOL, R.I. – The Roger Williams University School of Law on Monday applauded Gov. Gina M. Raimondo's nomination of new state judges, including three RWU Law graduates.

Melissa R. DuBose was nominated for a District Court seat. Since 2008, she has worked as senior legal counsel at Schneider Electric in Foxboro, Massachusetts, providing in-house legal support for the company's global units. From 2005 to 2009, she worked as a special assistant attorney general in the criminal division of the state attorney general's office. She graduated from RWU Law in 2004 and is a member of the RWU Law Board of Directors.

Christopher Knox Smith was nominated for another District Court seat. Since 2010, he has represented indigent clients facing misdemeanor and felony charges at the state public defender's office. He graduated from the RWU Law in 2007 and earned an advanced degree focusing on environmental and natural resources law from the University of Oregon School of Law in 2008.

Keith A. Cardoza Jr. was nominated for a Workers' Compensation Court seat. Since 2016, he has represented employers, employees, insurance carriers and third-party administrators for all aspects of workers' compensation claims in Rhode Island and Massachusetts as a founding partner with the firm Izzo, Gardner & Cardoza. He graduated from RWU Law in 2010.

"This is a great day for our RWU Law graduates, each of whom is most deserving of the trust of Governor Raimondo and the Rhode Island Senate," RWU Law Dean Michael J. Yelnosky said. "This is also a great day for Rhode Island. The Judicial Nominating Commission and now Governor Raimondo have taken a bold and long overdue step toward making the Rhode Island judiciary more reflective of the population it serves."

All three RWU Law graduates are African-American and will add much-needed diversity to the state judiciary, law school officials said.

This also marks a great day for RWU Law, Yelnosky said. "Attracting and supporting students from diverse backgrounds has always been part of our mission, and it is gratifying for all members of the law school community to see the sustained efforts of so many bear fruit during our 25th anniversary year in the upcoming formal nominations of three alumni of color," he said.

"Today's announcement goes to show the significant role Roger Williams plays and will continue to play in shaping a bench and bar that reflects the entire Rhode Island community," RWU Law Assistant Dean of Admissions Michael Donnelly-Boylen said. "Today gives us so much pride that our long-term efforts are really making a difference."