



## United States District Court

Eastern District of Tennessee  
Howard H. Baker Jr. U.S. Courthouse  
800 Market Street  
Knoxville, TN 37902

Thomas A. Varlan  
Chief Judge

(865) 545-4762  
(865) 545-4532 (fax)

February 12, 2018

### PRESS RELEASE

DEBRA C. POPLIN  
SWORN IN AS U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Thomas A. Varlan, Chief U.S. District Judge, is pleased to announce the appointment of Debra C. Poplin to the position of United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee. Magistrate Judge Poplin was sworn in today by Chief Judge Varlan during a private ceremony that took place at the Howard H. Baker Jr. U.S. Courthouse in Knoxville. Judge Poplin's term of office will begin on February 13, 2018. A public investiture ceremony will be held at a later date.

The U.S. District Judges of the Eastern District of Tennessee appointed a seven-member Merit Selection Panel to review applications, interview prospective candidates, and recommend to the District Judges the candidates they deemed best qualified for the position.

Ms. Poplin, who has served as Clerk of Court for the Eastern District since January 2012, replaces Magistrate Judge Clifford C. Shirley, Jr., who is retiring after sixteen years with the Court.

In announcing Poplin's selection, Chief Judge Varlan said, "The district judges were pleased to select Judge Poplin from a group of extremely well-qualified magistrate judge candidates. She has served the Eastern District in excellent fashion as Clerk of Court, and we are confident she will continue to do so as a magistrate judge. We also express our appreciation and thanks to Judge Shirley for his 15 years of service as magistrate judge and most recently as chief magistrate judge for the district."

Judge Poplin said, "I am honored to have been selected by the district judges as the next magistrate judge for the Eastern District, and I look forward to continuing my public service in this new judicial role."

Ms. Poplin is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and the University of Cincinnati College of Law. Upon graduation from law school in 1990, she joined the City of Knoxville Law Department, and returned to the law department as Deputy Law Director in 2001 following two years of practice with the law firm of Ritchie, Fels & Dillard. In 2008, then-Mayor Bill Haslam appointed Ms. Poplin as City Law Director, making her the first (and only) woman to serve in the post in the city's history. Ms. Poplin served with distinction as Law Director until her appointment as Clerk of Court in 2012.

United States Magistrate Judges are appointed by the District Judges of the U.S. District Court for a term of eight years and are eligible for reappointment to successive terms. Matters before Magistrate Judge Poplin will be conducted in the Howard H. Baker Jr. U.S. Courthouse in Knoxville.

###

Contact Lori Gibson at 865-329-4674