



Pamela Harris
Nominee to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

President Obama nominated Pamela Ann Harris to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit on May 8, 2014. If confirmed, Harris will fill the seat vacated by Judge Andre M. Davis, who assumed senior status on February 28, 2014. Currently, Harris is a visiting professor at Georgetown University Law Center and a senior advisor to its Supreme Court Institute. Upon her nomination, President Obama observed that “[t]hroughout her career, Pamela Harris has shown unwavering integrity and an outstanding commitment to public service.”¹

Biography

Pamela Ann Harris was born in 1962 and grew up in Bethesda, Maryland, where she attended Western Junior High School and Walt Whitman High School. She received her B.A. *summa cum laude* from Yale College in 1985, and her J.D. from Yale Law School in 1990. During Law School, Harris served as the Current Topics Editor of the Yale Law & Policy Review.

After law school, Harris served as law clerk for Judge Harry T. Edwards of the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. She then spent one year, from 1991 to 1992, as an associate at Shea & Gardner (now Goodwin Procter LLP) before clerking for Justice John Paul Stevens of the Supreme Court. After her clerkship, Harris joined the Department of Justice, where she worked as an Attorney-Advisor in the Office of Legal Counsel from 1994 to 1996. In 1996, Harris joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where she received the Harvey Levin Memorial Teaching Award in 1998. In 1999, Harris joined O’Melveny & Myers LLP as counsel, specializing in appellate and Supreme Court litigation; she was named partner in 2005. Harris was also a visiting professor at Georgetown University Law Center from 2007 to 2010, and executive director of the law school’s Supreme Court Institute from 2009 to 2010. From 2007 to 2009, she served as lecturer and co-director of the Supreme Court and Appellate Practice Clinic at Harvard Law School. Harris returned to DOJ from 2010 to 2012 to serve as Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Legal Policy.

Legal Experience and Expertise

In addition to her uniquely broad experience as an appellate litigator, Harris has a demonstrated commitment to public service, improving the fair administration of justice, and educating new lawyers.

¹ White House Press Release, *President Obama Nominates Pamela Harris to Serve on the United States Court of Appeals* (May 8, 2014), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/08/president-obama-nominates-pamela-harris-serve-united-states-court-appeal>.

Harris is a renowned Supreme Court and appellate advocate, having practiced regularly at the Supreme Court during her 10 years in private practice at O'Melveny & Myers. Throughout her career, Harris has appeared in approximately 100 federal appellate cases. Her more notable cases include *Pleasant Grove City v. Summum*, where she argued on behalf of a religious organization before the Supreme Court *pro bono*,² and filing an *amicus* brief on behalf of the Human Rights Campaign and others in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas*.³

Harris has used her vast experience and expertise to improve the administration of justice. As Executive Director of Georgetown's Supreme Court Institute, she managed and participated in a moot court program that prepares advocates for oral argument before the Supreme Court. The program accepts lawyers on a first-come, first-served basis. During her tenure, Harris served as a judge for dozens of moot courts, assisting a wide variety of causes, including, for example, assisting state attorney general offices in defending criminal convictions in some cases, and in other cases lawyers for criminal defendants. She has helped improve argument both by lawyers bringing civil rights actions and in other cases lawyers defending against civil rights claims. She has assisted attorneys for plaintiffs and attorneys for corporations. In addition, Harris established a cooperative program between O'Melveny and the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, through which the firm provides representation to indigent criminal defendants appealing their convictions in state court.

As a law professor, Harris has taught a wide variety of courses. During her time at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Harris taught classes on criminal procedure, the law of church and state, and law and literature. At Georgetown she has taught courses in constitutional law and criminal procedure, and as co-director of the Harvard Law School Supreme Court and Appellate Practice Clinic, she taught Supreme Court and appellate practice.

Professional and Community Activities

Harris is currently a member of the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy, having served on the board of directors from 2001-2008. She also currently sits on the board of directors of the Constitutional Accountability Center, and the board of trustees of the Norwood School in Bethesda, Maryland. Harris is a former member of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and for several years she served as *pro bono* counsel for the NACDL in Supreme Court litigation.

² 555 U.S. 460 (2009).

³ 539 U.S. 558 (2003).