



**Summit County
Domestic Relations Court**

Administrative Judge Katarina Cook
Judge Kani H. Hightower

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025 (LAST UPDATE)

TO: GENERAL PUBLIC

FROM: COURT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

**REF: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SHEET FOR
KANI H. HIGHTOWER, JUDGE & PRESIDING JUDGE OF COMMON PLEAS COURT**



Judge Kani Harvey Hightower was elected as a Summit County Domestic Relations Court Judge on November 8, 2022. She currently also serves as the Common Pleas Court Presiding Judge for Summit County.

Since taking the bench, Judge Hightower has worked to reduce the trauma of court on families and to make the justice system more accessible. As a result, she created the Justice Initiatives Collaborative, which is comprised of certain community officials and office holders collaborating to increase access to justice and reduce trauma through initiatives, such as *pro se* divorce and eviction representation, suitable and adequate parking and signage, and ADA accessibility.

Judge Hightower has dedicated her career to improving the community through public service and advocacy. She is an adjunct professor of law at the University of Akron and serves on various community service organizations. She is also a member of state and local bar and legal associations and is active in the community.

Judge Hightower was an Akron Municipal Court magistrate from January 2020 through December 2022. She worked as a private trial attorney in numerous counties for over fourteen years in the areas of family, juvenile, criminal, civil, and probate law – handling complex and high level criminal and civil litigation, as well as conducting numerous jury trials. Hightower also practiced appellate law and briefed cases with the Ohio Supreme Court. Much of Hightower’s practice focused on the representation of indigent and underrepresented clients, or of individuals struggling with significant needs. As an attorney, Hightower believed that every individual needed fair and competent representation.



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Judge Hightower holds a Juris Doctor from the University Akron School of Law, certificates in general mediation and divorce mediation, and a Bachelors of Arts degree from Kent State University, where she was recently featured as a part of the “Kent Works” initiative. She is also an active member of various professional and community service organizations, including, but not limited to the Akron Bar Association, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated, Jack and Jill of America, and 100 Women Strong Ohio.

Judge Hightower is the mother of three wonderful children and happily accepts the title of “sports mom.”

Judge Hightower is proud a graduate of Stow-Munroe Falls High School and a product of the public school system. As a life-long Summit County-area resident, Judge Hightower knows our community and is committed to being a fair voice on the bench.

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For inquiries about public speaking, or interviews please contact Paul M. Henry, Public Information Officer. pHenry@drcourt.org, 330-643-7845.