



Jennifer Brunner

JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT OF OHIO



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January 2, 2021 – Present

CONTACT:

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Supreme Court of Ohio
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Justice Jennifer Brunner serves as one of seven justices of the Ohio Supreme Court. She was elected in 2020 and began her term Jan. 2, 2021.

**PRIOR JUDICIAL
PUBLIC SERVICE:**

From 2014 through 2020, Justice Brunner served as an elected state appeals court judge of the Tenth District Court of Appeals located in Franklin County, Ohio. She previously served as a Franklin County Common Pleas judge from 2000 through 2005, founding its adult felony drug court, the TIES Program (Treatment is Essential to Success), still in operation today.

**PRIOR ELECTIVE
PUBLIC SERVICE:**

Justice Brunner served as Ohio's first female Secretary of State from 2007 – 2011, overseeing the first election of President Barack Obama in 2008. In 2008, then-Secretary Brunner received the bipartisan John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for her public service. The award recognizes "a public official (or officials) at the federal, state, or local level whose actions demonstrate the qualities of politically courageous leadership." She is the first of two Ohioans to have received the award. In 2010, Justice Brunner was a candidate for the United States Senate in the Democratic primary election. In 2022 she was the Democratic nominee for Chief Justice.

**PRIOR GOVERNMENTAL
SERVICE:**

Justice Brunner has served on state and local governmental boards, appointed by both Republican and Democratic governors and other local officials, including:

- Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist Board
- Ohio Cultural Facilities Commission
- Ohio Student Loan Commission
- Central Ohio Transit Authority
- Franklin County Board of Elections

Justice Brunner also served as an attorney in the Ohio Secretary of State's office early in her legal career and as a committee secretary and legislative aide in the Ohio Senate following her graduation from Miami University.

**PRIVATE PRACTICE
EXPERIENCE:**

Justice Brunner holds 17 years' private law practice experience, having founded her own law firm in 1988 after gaining experience as an associate in a Cleveland law firm and clerking for several law firms as a law student. Justice Brunner's solo and law firm private practice was centered in election and government law, including campaign finance and election litigation. She also has assisted clients with legislative and rule drafting, multi-state and federal FCC telecom compliance for providing low-income cellular service, computer law and government contracting, criminal appellate work, and general litigation. She served as the administrative partner of her law firm for six years.

FOREIGN RULE OF LAW EXPERIENCE:

Following her service as Secretary of State, Justice Brunner assisted foreign governments with rule-of-law and self-governance matters as an expert for USAID of the U.S. State Department in matters of anti-corruption and judicial reform in the Republic of Serbia, election observation in the Arab Republic of Egypt, and legal training in the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Since joining the state's high court she has provided pro bono assistance through the American Bar Association to civil society organizations in the Republic of Kazakhstan and in person assistance to the Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Benin on the African continent.

Justice Brunner served for nine years on the Ohio advisory committee of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, based in Washington, D.C., an organization promoting adequate funding of the International Affairs budget to strengthen development and diplomacy alongside defense. She was selected as a Sisters on the Planet Ambassador for OxFam America, advocating alongside other U.S. women leaders for relief for global poverty, hunger, and injustice with a focus on empowering women and girls.

Justice Brunner has moderate fluency in Spanish. She can read the Cyrillic alphabet in Russian and Serbian with limited fluency in their spoken languages.

NONPROFIT BOARD EXPERIENCE:

Justice Brunner served for eight years as a member of the board of advisors of The Legacy Fund of The Columbus Foundation, an endowment fund created by and for the central Ohio lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, ally (LGBTQIA) community. The endowment provides grants, scholarships, and technical support for the LGBTQIA community in central Ohio. Justice Brunner served for three years as the board's first ally chair. Justice Brunner served for seven years on the board of the Cleveland-based Center for Community Solutions, a nonpartisan think tank focused on solutions to health, social, and economic issues. Justice Brunner served six years on the board of Mental Health America of Franklin County, a mental health advocacy organization in central Ohio.

EDUCATIONAL AND PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

Justice Brunner was born in Springfield, Ohio, the oldest of four children of parents who grew up in South Charleston, Ohio. As a child, she spent much time on her grandparents' farm and in South Charleston, and saw places associated with her family roots in Jackson, Fayette, Madison, and Clark counties.

Justice Brunner spent her formative and adult years in Columbus. She graduated from Columbus public schools, from college at Miami University, with a degree in sociology-gerontology, cum laude, and from law school at Capital University Law School, in Columbus, with honors, giving birth to her first child while in law school.

Justice Brunner has been married since 1978 to attorney Rick Brunner, who grew up on a farm in Columbiana County, near Alliance, Ohio. They have three adult children and six grandchildren and maintain a farm in the area where he grew up.

Justice Brunner has traveled extensively to destinations in Asia, Africa, Central America, Europe, and North America. She authored a memoir, Cupcakes and Courage, in 2012, about growing up in Ohio, her experiences in public life, and her 2010 U.S. Senate campaign. She loves dogs and cats, art, reading, and music and paints in encaustic medium.

GOALS FOR OFFICE:

Justice Brunner is committed to providing fairness, equality and respect for all Ohioans and persons who come before the state's highest court. She will work to build effective and collegial working relationships with the other justices of the court, the court's staff, and other courts of Ohio whose work is affected and advised by the work of the state's highest court. As a justice, she pledges to be fair, impartial, independent, kind, and conscientious in fulfilling her oath as a constitutional officer of the State of Ohio.