

HON. JOSEPH J. ZAVAGLIA

P.O. Box 63, Manlius, NY 13104 | josephzavagliaforsupremecourtjudge.com

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Judge, Onondaga County Family Court

January 2024 – Present

Onondaga County Family Court | Syracuse, NY

- Elected November 2023 — top vote-getter in a four-candidate field, outperforming all Democratic and Republican candidates
- Presides over the full Family Court docket including custody, visitation, child neglect, child abuse, severe and repeated abuse, termination of parental rights, juvenile delinquency, PINS, persons in need of supervision, unaccompanied refugee minor cases, and domestic violence matters
- Published decision in first term: Matter of N.S., 2025 NY Slip Op 51114(U), selected for publication by the New York State Law Reporting Bureau pursuant to Judiciary Law §431

Judge, Onondaga County Court — Youth Part

January 2025 – Present

Onondaga County Court | Syracuse, NY

- First Family Court Judge appointed to serve in this role
- Presides over criminal proceedings where defendants up to age 18 are charged with felonies of every degree, including homicides, from arraignment through indictment
- Determines whether youth defendants are tried as adults before a Youth Part Trial Judge or tried as juveniles with matters removed to Family Court

Village Justice

October 2014 – December 2023

Village of East Syracuse | East Syracuse, NY

- Appointed by Mayor October 2014; elected May 2015 and continuously re-elected — over nine years on the bench
- Presided over felony arraignments, preliminary hearings, misdemeanors, violations, traffic matters, small claims, and summary proceedings from inception through sentencing or disposition
- Specially appointed: Syracuse City Court (Landlord/Tenant calendar); Cicero Town Court (Landlord/Tenant matters); DeWitt Town Court (jury trial)
- Designated Qualified Accessible Magistrate — 2019 to 2023
- President, Onondaga County Magistrates' Association — 2017 and 2018
- Vice President, Onondaga County Magistrates' Association — 2016

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Child Support Enforcement Part Attorney

August 2016 – December 2023

Onondaga County Department of Social Services / Lal, Gingold & Franklin LLP (Of Counsel) | Onondaga County, NY

- Represented Onondaga County Support Collections Unit on child support enforcement proceedings against noncustodial parties in Family Court
- Transitioned from Part Attorney (August 2016–July 2022) to Backup Attorney (July 2022–December 2023)

Staff Attorney

July 2012 – December 2023

Student Legal Services, Inc. | Syracuse, NY

- Represented Syracuse University and SUNY ESF students on a broad range of civil matters including collection defense, landlord/tenant, small claims, limited immigration matters, real estate transactions, child custody and support, family offense, and matrimonial matters

- Practiced in Supreme Court, Family Court, and City Court; attended client conferences, drafted pleadings, discovery demands and responses, and briefs; argued motions, negotiated settlements, conducted depositions and trials

Attorney / Sole Practitioner

January 2009 – December 2023

Law Offices of Joseph J. Zavaglia | Onondaga County, NY

- General practice representing private and municipal clients in criminal and civil matters across Supreme Court, Family Court, County Court, and City Court
- Criminal defense practice: felonies, misdemeanors, and violations — managed cases from arraignment through disposition
- Civil practice: landlord/tenant matters, real estate transactions, custody and child support, family offense, matrimonial matters, contract litigation, housing matters, name change proceedings
- Clients included low-income individuals and children, college students, contractors, retained individuals, a semi-professional athletic organization, and a foreign governmental agency
- Drafted litigation documents including pleadings, discovery demands and responses, and briefs; argued motions, negotiated settlements, conducted depositions and trials

Associate Attorney

March 2007 – December 2008

Sheats & Associates, P.C. (now Sheats & Bailey, P.C.) | Brewerton, NY

- Commercial construction litigation firm representing local, national, and international businesses
- Met with clients; drafted pleadings, discovery demands and responses, and briefs; practiced in Supreme Court and City Court
- Attended scheduling conferences, argued motions, negotiated settlements, and conducted depositions

Deputy County Attorney — Family Court Division

January 2002 – March 2007

Onondaga County Attorney's Office | Syracuse, NY

- Served as counsel to the County Attorney, litigating Juvenile Delinquency and Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) petitions in Family Court
- Represented the Onondaga County Department of Social Services in custody, child neglect, child abuse, termination of parental rights, and foster care proceedings
- Represented the Onondaga County Department of Probation in violation of probation hearings
- Drafted petitions, motions, court orders, and memoranda; argued motions and litigated trials

PUBLICATIONS

Matter of N.S., 2025 NY Slip Op 51114(U), Onondaga County Family Court, June 2025

Selected for official publication by the New York State Law Reporting Bureau pursuant to Judiciary Law §431. The decision dismissed a juvenile delinquency petition in the furtherance of justice, holding that the court would not use its authority to punish a child for a county agency's failure to provide suitable therapeutic placement.

COMMUNITY & JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP

- President, Onondaga County Magistrates' Association — 2017, 2018
- Vice President, Onondaga County Magistrates' Association — 2016
- Board Member (Town and Village Court Judicial Representative), Onondaga County Assigned Counsel Program — 2017 to 2019
- Member, Fifth Judicial District Town and Village Court Advisory and Peer Assistance Committee — 2017
- Member, City of Syracuse Municipal Code Violations Bureau Task Force — 2017

EDUCATION

Juris Doctor

May 2001

New England School of Law | Boston, MA

- Dean's List — Fall 1999 and Spring 2001
- Justinian Law Society of Massachusetts
- Summer abroad program, International Business Law — Beasley School of Law, Temple University, Rome, Italy (June–July 2000)

Bachelor of Arts — Philosophy, Politics and Law

May 1998

State University of New York at Binghamton | Binghamton, NY

Associate of Arts — General Studies

May 1996

Onondaga County Community College | Syracuse, NY

PERSONAL

- First-generation American — parents immigrated from Italy in the 1950s; born July 4, 1976, in Onondaga County
- First in family to earn both an undergraduate degree and a law degree
- Worked tile, marble, and construction alongside his father and brother while attending college and law school
- Father of two sons; lifelong resident of Onondaga County

Paid for by Joseph Zavaglia for Supreme Court Judge