

Mary Ellen Barbera is the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Maryland, Maryland's state supreme court. Following her graduation in 1984 from the University of Maryland School of Law, she clerked for the Honorable Robert L. Karwacki, then an Associate Judge of the Court of Special Appeals of Maryland. She joined the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland in 1985 as an Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Appeals Division and became Deputy Chief of the Division in 1989. In January 1998, she joined Governor Parris N. Glendening's Office of Legal Counsel and Regulatory Affairs, serving as Deputy Legal Counsel until promoted to Chief Legal Counsel in June 1999. In January 2002, she was appointed an Associate Judge of the Court of Special Appeals, a position she held until September 2008, when she was appointed to the Court of Appeals by Governor Martin O'Malley. In July 2013, she was appointed Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals by Governor O'Malley. She is the first woman in the history of the Court to hold the position of Chief Judge.

Chief Judge Barbera is an adjunct professor at the American University Washington College of Law, where she has taught Criminal Procedure since 1993 and Advanced Criminal Procedure from 2006 to 2014, receiving, jointly, with her co-professor and husband, the Hon. Gary E. Bair, in November 2016, its Adjunct Teaching Award. She taught both Legal Writing and Appellate Advocacy as an adjunct professor at the University of Baltimore School of Law. Chief Judge Barbera served for four years as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Judicial Institute, which provides continuing education for Maryland judges. She has served on the faculty of Judicial Institute programs and is a frequent lecturer at educational programs sponsored by various bar associations and law schools.

Chief Judge Barbera has served on the Judicial Ethics Committee and as Chair of the Criminal Law and Procedure Committee of the Maryland Judicial Conference. She was Co-Chair of the Appellate Litigation Committee of the Litigation Section of the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA), and Chair of the MSBA's Criminal Law and Practice Section Council. She served for nearly two decades on the MSBA's Committee to draft Criminal Pattern Jury Instructions. She also served on the Judicial Administration Section Council and the MSBA's Special Committee on Anti-Discrimination. Chief Judge Barbera was for many years a member of the Executive Committee of the Citizenship Law-Related Education Program for the Schools of Maryland. She was also a member of the International Rule of Law Consortium for nearly a decade. In that capacity, she participated in seminars and round table discussions with delegations of Russian and Ukrainian judges in Maryland and Washington, D.C.; St. Petersburg, Russia; and Odessa, Ukraine. In 2014, Chief Judge Barbera travelled to India and China on an official mission of the State of Maryland.

Chief Judge Barbera is a member of the American Law Institute, the National Center for State Courts' Conference of Chief Justices, and the National Association of Women Judges. She is a Fellow of the Maryland Bar Foundation and the Bar Foundations of Montgomery County and Howard County. She served for several years on the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County Bar Foundation and, in 2011, was inducted by the Montgomery County Bar Foundation to serve as a Bar Leader. She is a member of the Maryland State Bar Association, the Bar Association of Montgomery County, the Women's Bar Association of Maryland and its Montgomery County Chapter, the Women's Law Center of Maryland, the Maryland Hispanic Bar Association, and the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association.