



## Mediation Panel List Mediator Spotlight Summer 2025

Under Section 3.2 of the Court's Mandatory Mediation Plan, the parties are generally able to select their own mediator from the Court-approved Mediation Panel List (unless the Court has ordered otherwise, or the parties cannot agree upon a mediator).

To help inform the parties of the unique backgrounds, experiences, training, and qualifications of the over 100 mediators on the Court-approved Mediation Panel List, each month the Court will select and highlight two mediators at random to feature in this publication.

**Lisa Van Amburg (Hon. Ret.)**

Lisa Van Amburg, LLC  
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St. Louis, MO 63130



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**Hourly Mediation/Preparation Rates:** \$400.00  
per hour

**Education and Background:** Van Amburg grew up in New Orleans, Louisiana, and attended college at Washington University in St. Louis, where she obtained her B.A. degree in 1970. She soon obtained her law degree from St. Louis University School of Law, graduating in 1975 in the top 10% of her class. Immediately after graduation, Van Amburg and three classmates formed the first all-female law firm in the City of St. Louis.

**Nature of Practice:** Before her appointment to the trial bench in 2003, Van Amburg was an experienced litigator for 27 years in labor and employment law. She tried numerous jury trials in federal and state courts and represented labor unions, public-school teachers, and individual employees. She also argued cases before the Missouri and federal appellate courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, where she and her client prevailed in upholding the trial verdict in his favor.

**Judicial and Post-Judicial Experience:** From 2003-2012, Van Amburg served as a state trial judge in the City of St. Louis. There, she presided over numerous civil and criminal jury trials. In 2012, she was appointed to the Missouri Court of Appeals for the Eastern District of Missouri. There, she served as Chief Judge during 2015-16 before she retired in 2018.

Since her retirement, Van Amburg has served as an Adjunct Professor of Law at St. Louis University, teaching Judicial Process and placing students in chambers as student law clerks to federal and state judges.

**Mediation Experience:** Van Amburg has also served as a mediator since her retirement in 2018. Her experience mediating numerous federal and state cases gives her an appreciation for the benefits of mediation to all parties.

**Cynthia Pietrucha**

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**Hourly Mediation/Preparation Rates:**

\$250/hour Pre-Mediation Preparation Rate;  
\$375/hour Mediation Rate

**Work History and Nature of Practice:** Cynthia Pietrucha is an employment lawyer with over a decade of experience specializing in unemployment insurance claims, job terminations, medical leave, and separation agreement negotiations. Cynthia has helped more than 1,500 employees and small business owners navigate complex workplace disputes. Her passion for the American workforce, combined with her extensive legal expertise, equips her to facilitate resolutions.

Cynthia's approach to legal issues is marked by a deep commitment to understanding both the emotional and practical aspects of workplace conflicts.

Cynthia brings her legal expertise, experience in conflict resolution, and commitment to fairness to the role of mediator. Her focus on finding amicable solutions, paired with her passion for supporting both employers and employees, positions her to facilitate mediation.

**Education:** Her dual academic background—holding degrees in Broadcast Journalism and Spanish from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a Juris Doctor from Northern Illinois University College of Law—gives her a unique perspective that enables her to navigate disputes with empathy, cultural awareness, and clear communication.

**Community:** In addition to her legal practice, Cynthia is a community leader, serving as a Section Council Member for Labor and Employment Law with the Illinois State Bar Association, and volunteering with Lawyers for the Creative Arts.