

# Evaluation of the Judiciary Serving Jefferson County, KY

*Jefferson Circuit Court and Jefferson Family Court*

## Comparison of Judges Summary Report



LOUISVILLE BAR

A S S O C I A T I O N

*Pride in the profession. Service to the community.*

**The Louisville Bar Association and  
The Louisville Bar Foundation  
600 West Main Street  
Louisville, KY 40202**

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**2015 Evaluation**

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**Background and  
Methodology**

## Background and Methodology

### **Background**

As part of its annual review of the performance of sitting judges, the Louisville Bar Association (LBA) sent notices to all Kentucky Bar Association (KBA) members with contact addresses in Jefferson County. These attorneys were invited to rate the performance of various judges with whom they have had substantial professional contact over the past two years. Jefferson Circuit Court and Jefferson Family Court judges were included in the evaluation for 2015.

### **Methodology**

A total of 4,613 KBA members received an emailed invitation to participate in the evaluation. The invitation contained a link to participate in the electronic evaluation. A unique identification number was required to access the evaluation. The evaluation was open from October 1 through October 16, 2015. If any attorney did not want to participate via the electronic evaluation, he or she was allowed to print out a paper copy of the evaluation and return it by mail to Thoroughbred Research Group for processing.

In total, 490 responses were received – 484 electronic evaluations, along with six mailed paper evaluations.

### **Response Rate**

Because of the size of the litigation bar and the nature of such practice, only a limited number of attorneys have had significant professional contact with a particular judge in a specific court. Consequently, from the original 4,613 attorneys who received notice of the evaluation, just a fraction could reasonably be expected to respond to the questions. Of those attorneys who were qualified and participated in the evaluation, many may have had significant experience in only one of the courts evaluated or with a limited number of judges listed. Still, the number of attorneys responding is more than adequate to result in a statistically valid evaluation of the judiciary.

The judges rated during the 2015 evaluation and the total number of respondents rating each judge are shown below:

**Jefferson Circuit Court**

- Angela McCormick Bisig (n=245)
- A.C. McKay Chauvin (n=292)
- Charles L. Cunningham Jr. (n=256)
- Audra J. Eckerle (n=232)
- Brian C. Edwards (n=254)
- Susan Schultz Gibson (n=252)
- Judith E. McDonald-Burkman (n=252)
- Mitchell L. Perry (n=245)
- James M. Shake (n=270)
- Mary M. Shaw (n=210)
- Ann Bailey Smith (n=198)
- Olu A. Stevens (n=254)
- Barry Willett (n=261)

**Jefferson Family Court**

- Dolly Wisman Berry (n=105)
- Denise Brown (n=99)
- Deborah Deweese (n=97)
- Stephen M. George (n=118)
- Tara Hagerty (n=90)
- Hugh Smith Haynie Jr. (n=106)
- Angela J. Johnson (n=89)
- Deana McDonald (n=94)
- Paula F. Sherlock (n=104)
- A. Christine Ward (n=93)

**Questionnaire**

The evaluation instrument included a series of 19 attributes for the circuit court and 18 attributes for the family court that were used to evaluate the performance of each judge. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement used to describe a particular judge using a four-point rating scale of strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree. Respondents were also given an option to write in any advice they would give to a particular judge to improve his/her performance. These comments were provided only to the applicable judge under separate cover as confidential feedback for his or her personal review. General comments on how to improve the court system were provided to the chief judges of the circuit court and family court, respectively, under separate cover. General comments on how to improve the evaluation process were submitted to the LBA under separate cover.

Respondents were instructed to rate only those judges with whom they have had substantial professional contact within the past two years.

Where applicable, comparative ratings are shown from the most recent prior Judicial Evaluation in 2013.



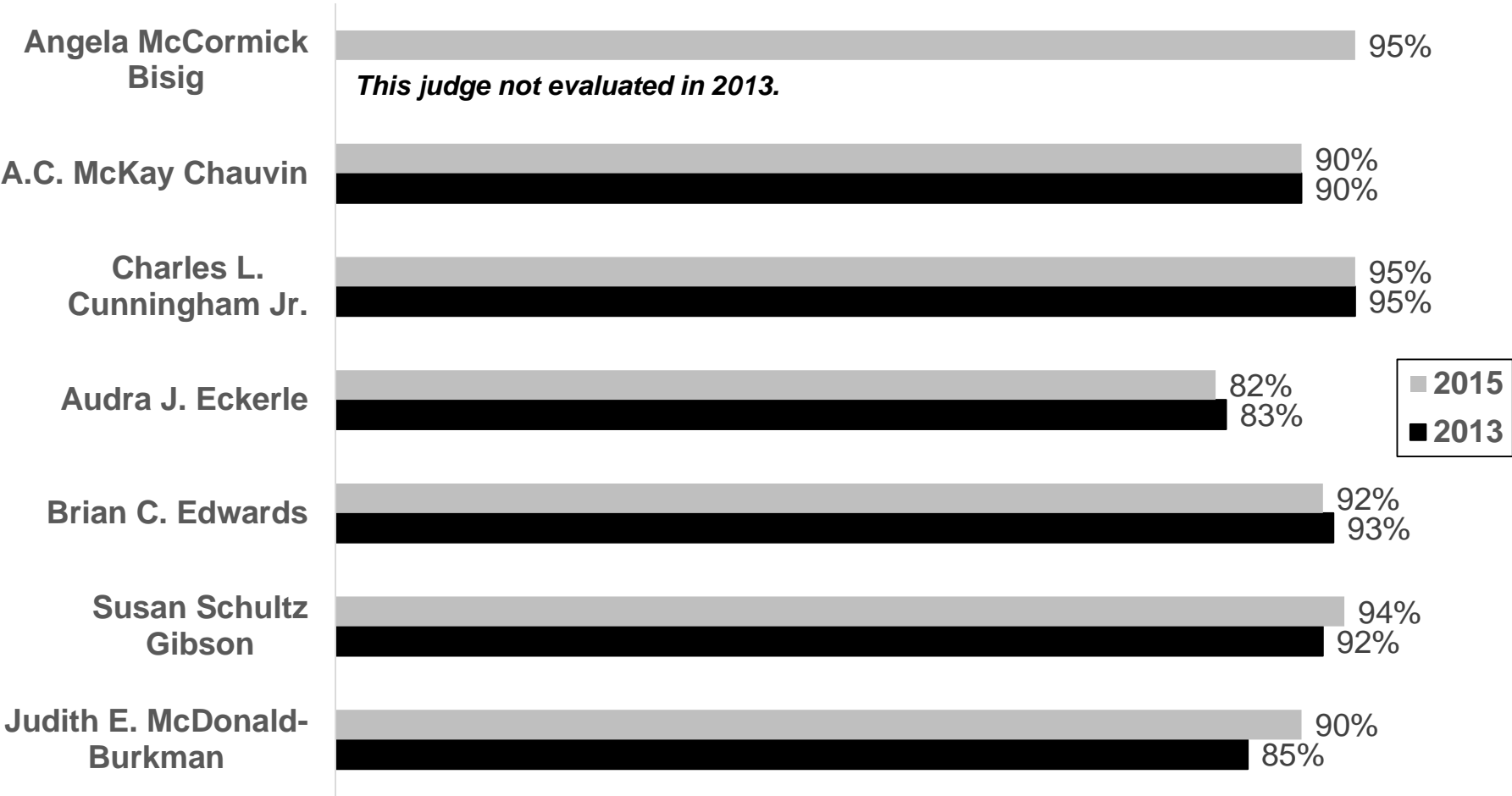
## General Satisfaction with Performance

The rating for this category is based on the level of agreement with the following statement for each judge:

- Does a good job overall.

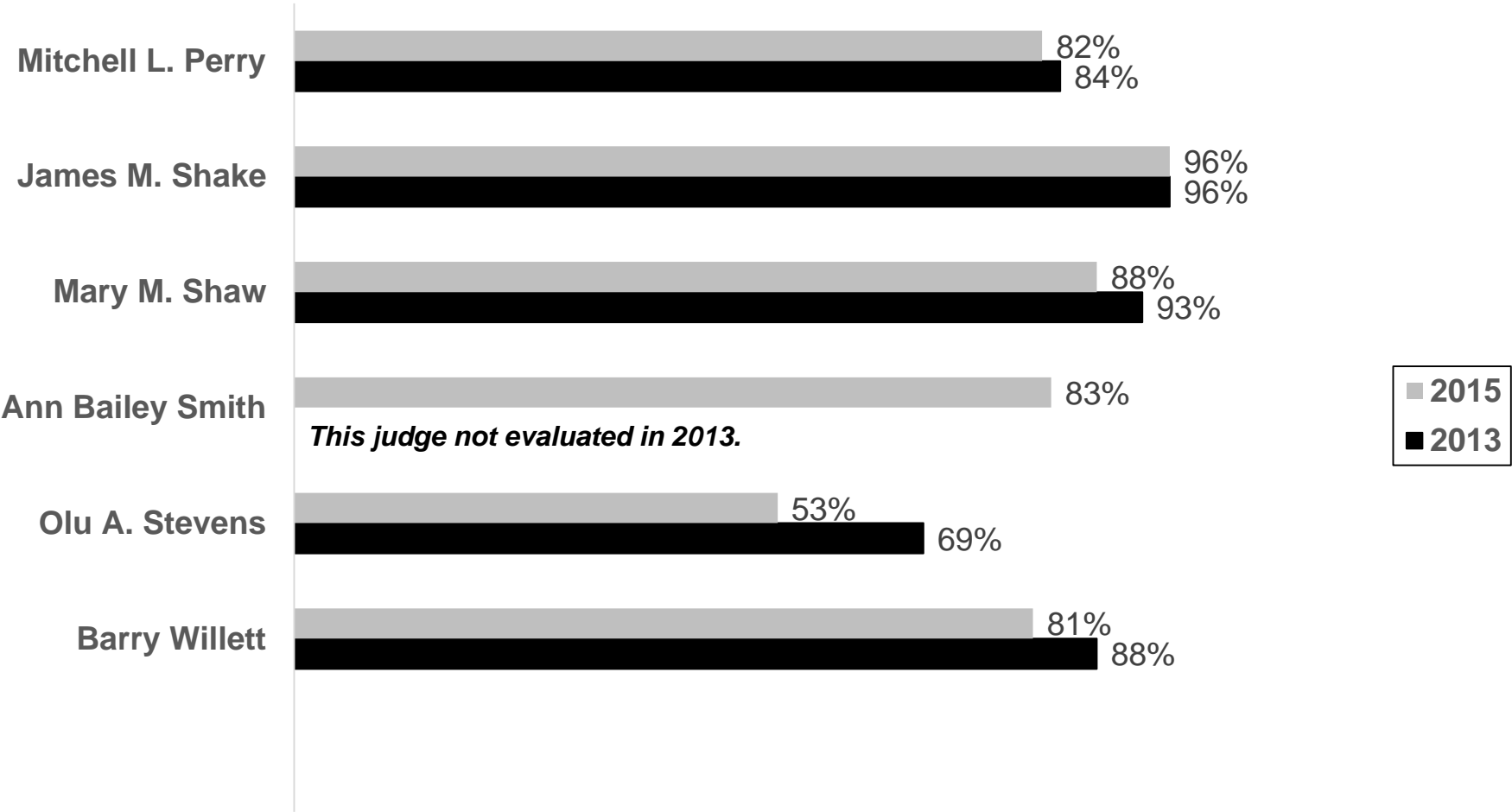
This is an independent rating of the above attribute. It is **NOT** a mathematical average of all other ratings.

# General Satisfaction with Performance – Jefferson Circuit Court

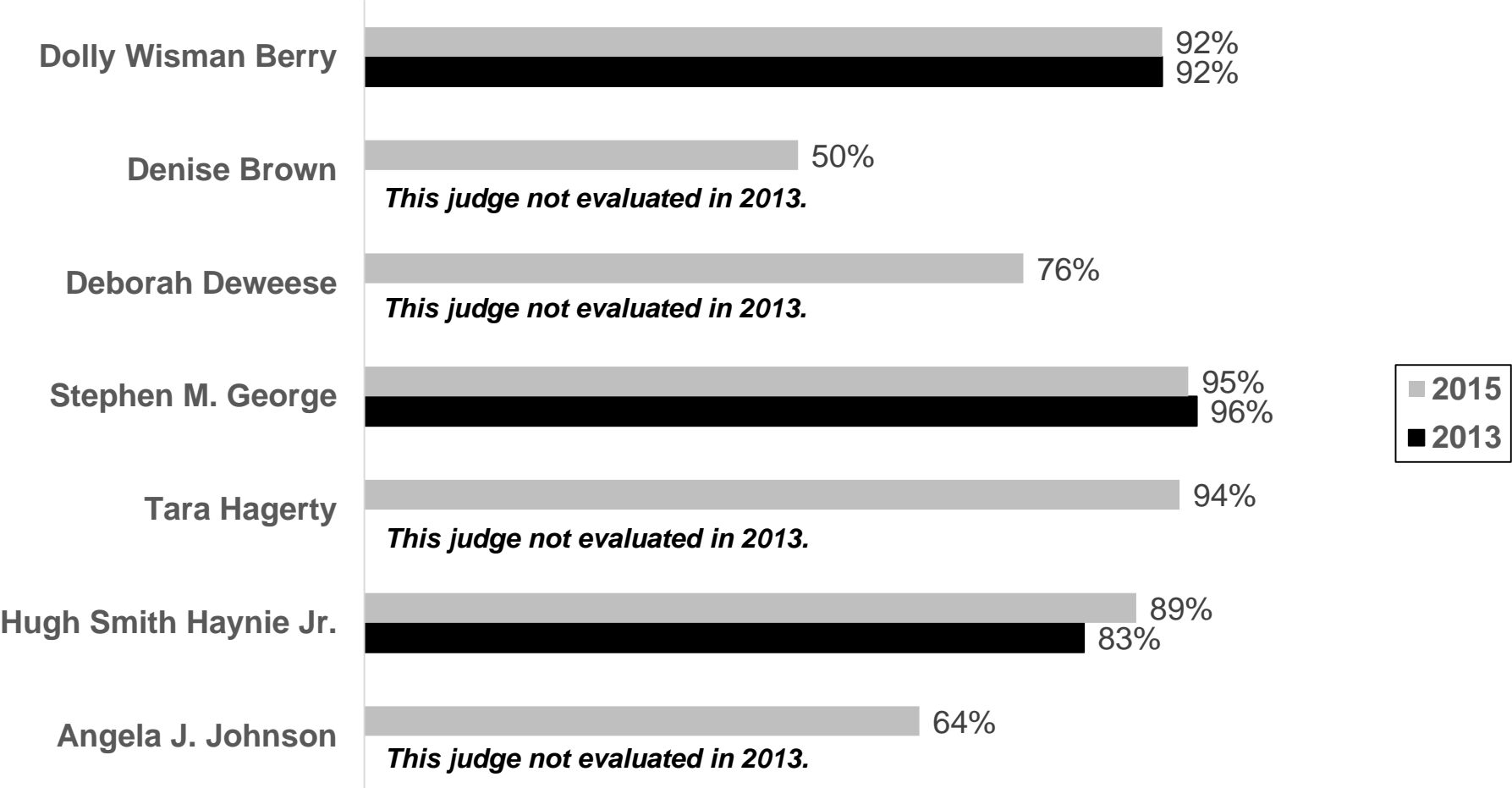




## General Satisfaction with Performance – Jefferson Circuit Court



# General Satisfaction with Performance – Jefferson Family Court



## General Satisfaction with Performance – Jefferson Family Court

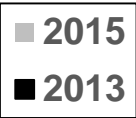
Deana McDonald



Paula F. Sherlock



A. Christine Ward



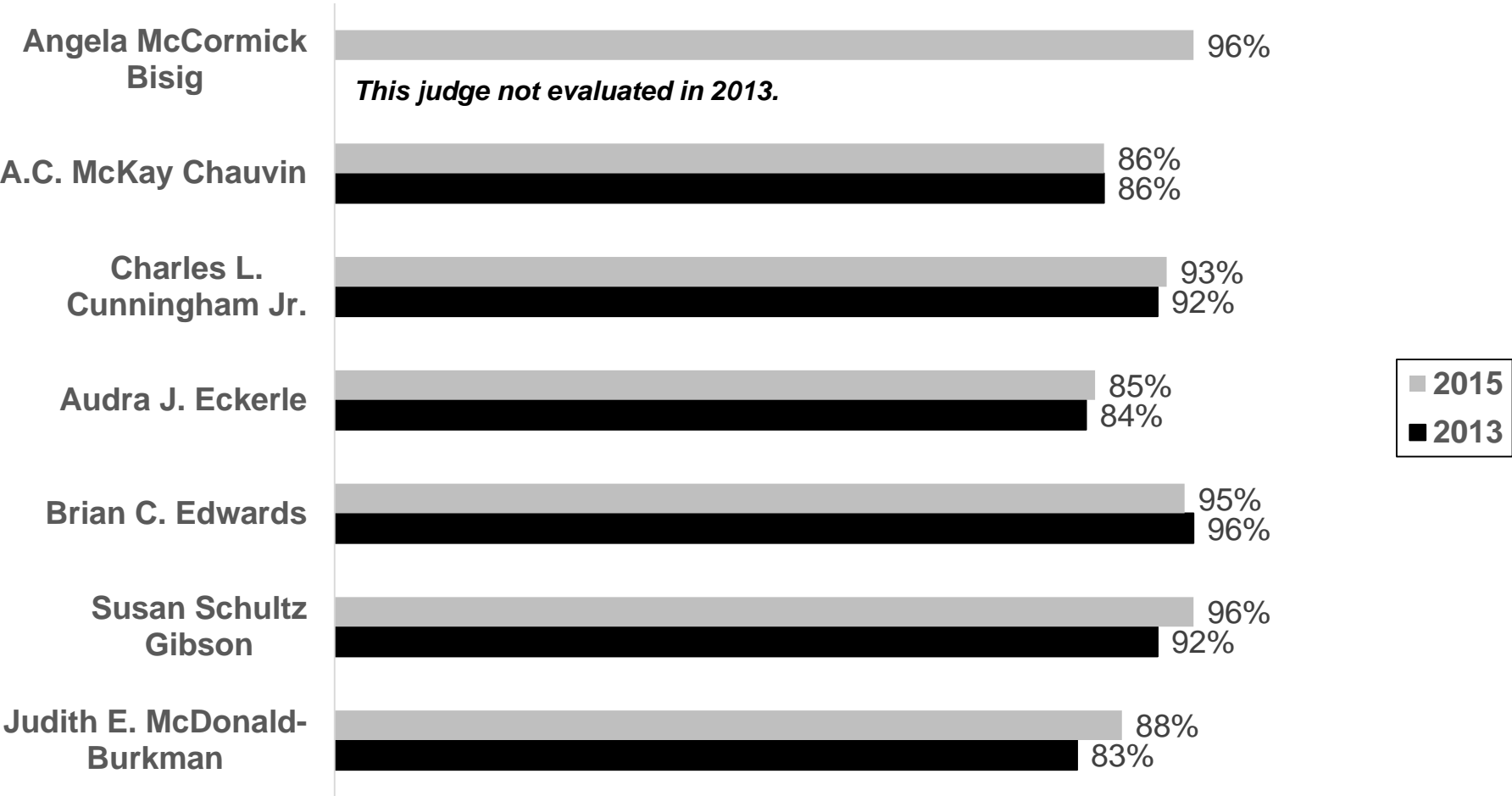


## Judicial Temperament Ratings

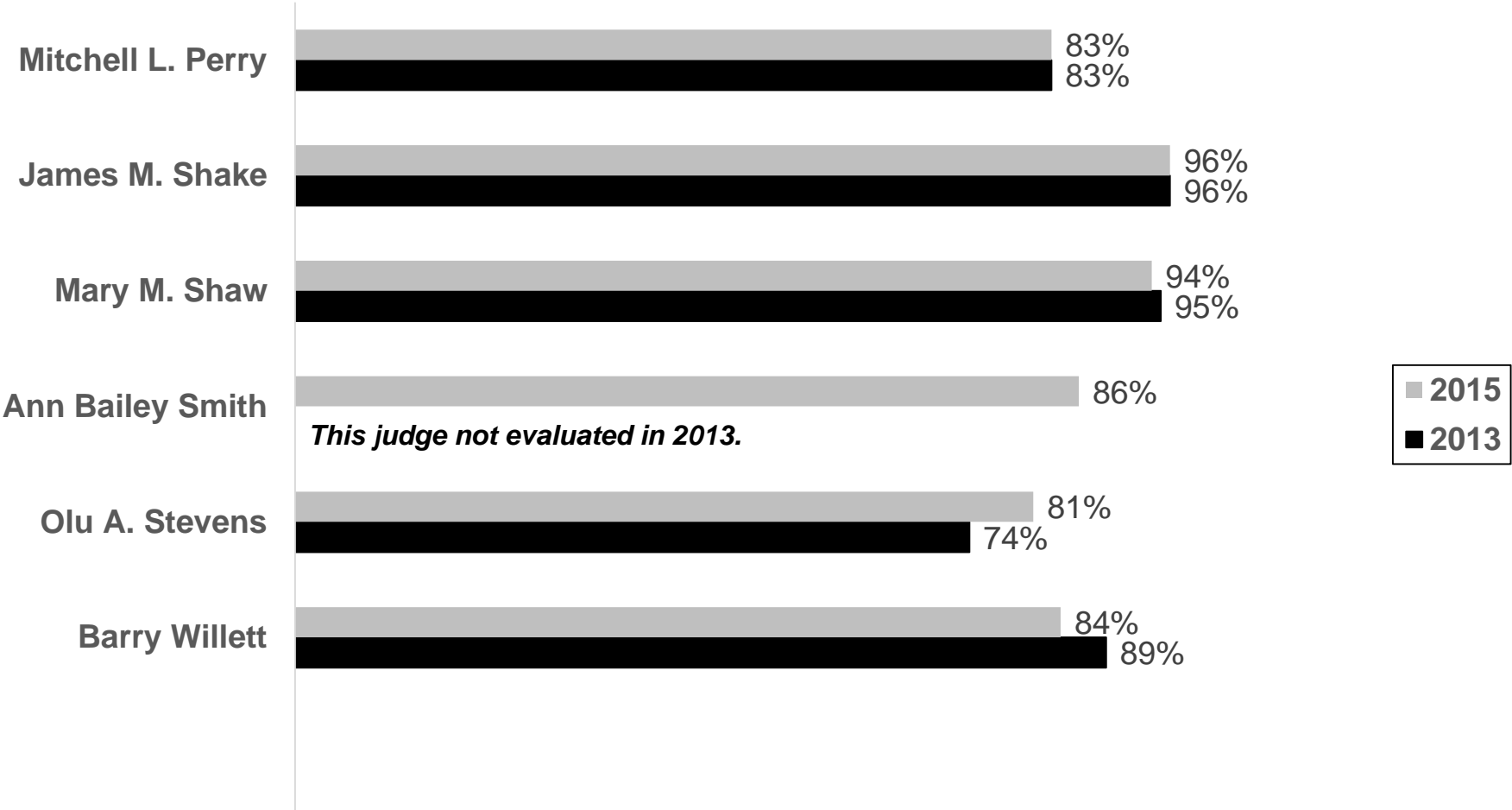
An average rating was calculated for the performance attributes that make up the Judicial Temperament category. This rating was calculated by averaging the positive ratings for each attribute (“strongly disagree” and “disagree” for negative statements, “agree” and “strongly agree” for positive statements). The performance areas under Judicial Temperament are:

- Gives due consideration to arguments of counsel.
- Conducts court proceedings courteously.
- Pre-determines the outcome of the case.
- Refrains from interfering with the role of counsel in case presentation.
- Conducts court proceedings with objectivity.

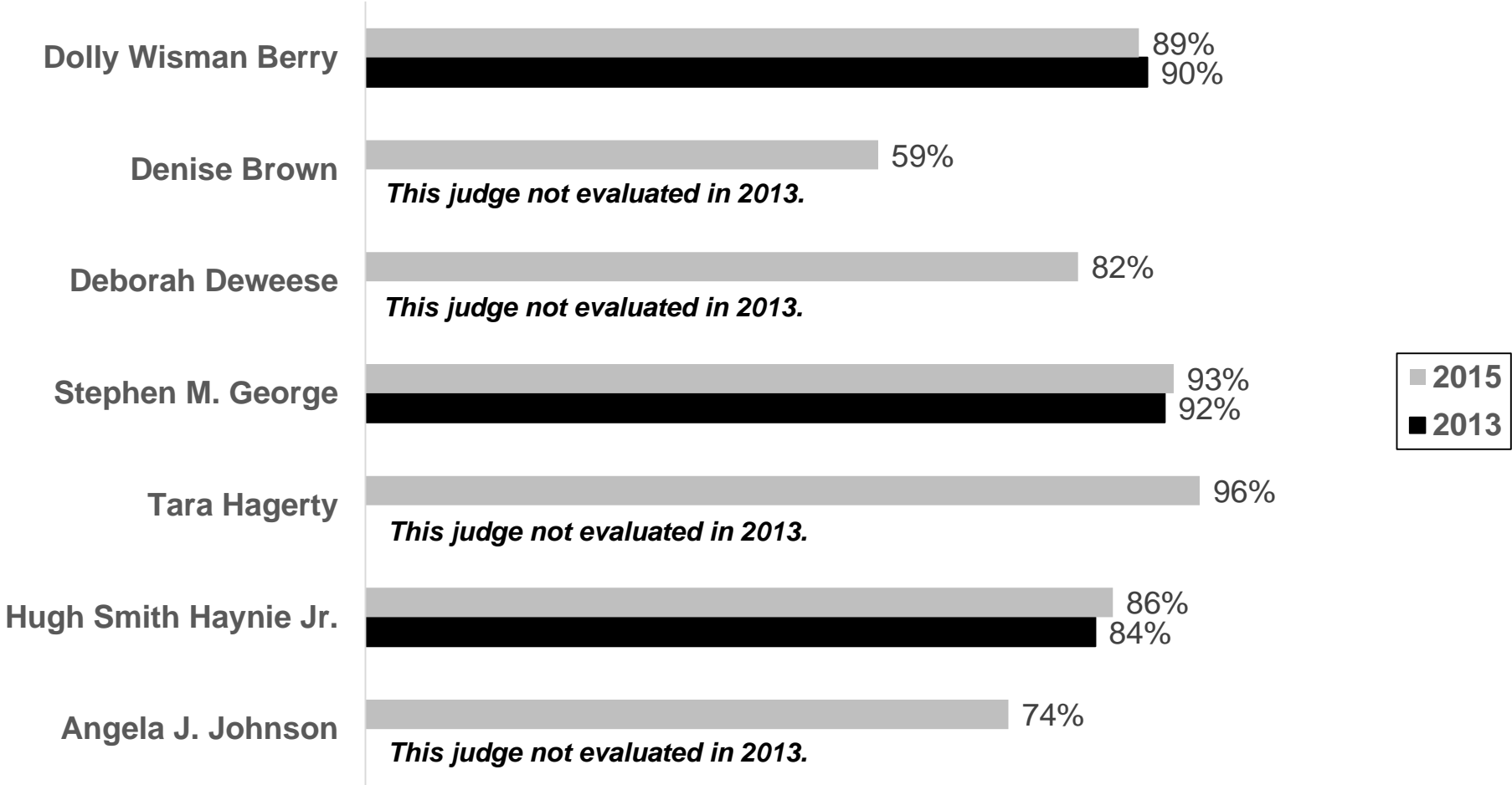
## Judicial Temperament – Jefferson Circuit Court



## Judicial Temperament – Jefferson Circuit Court

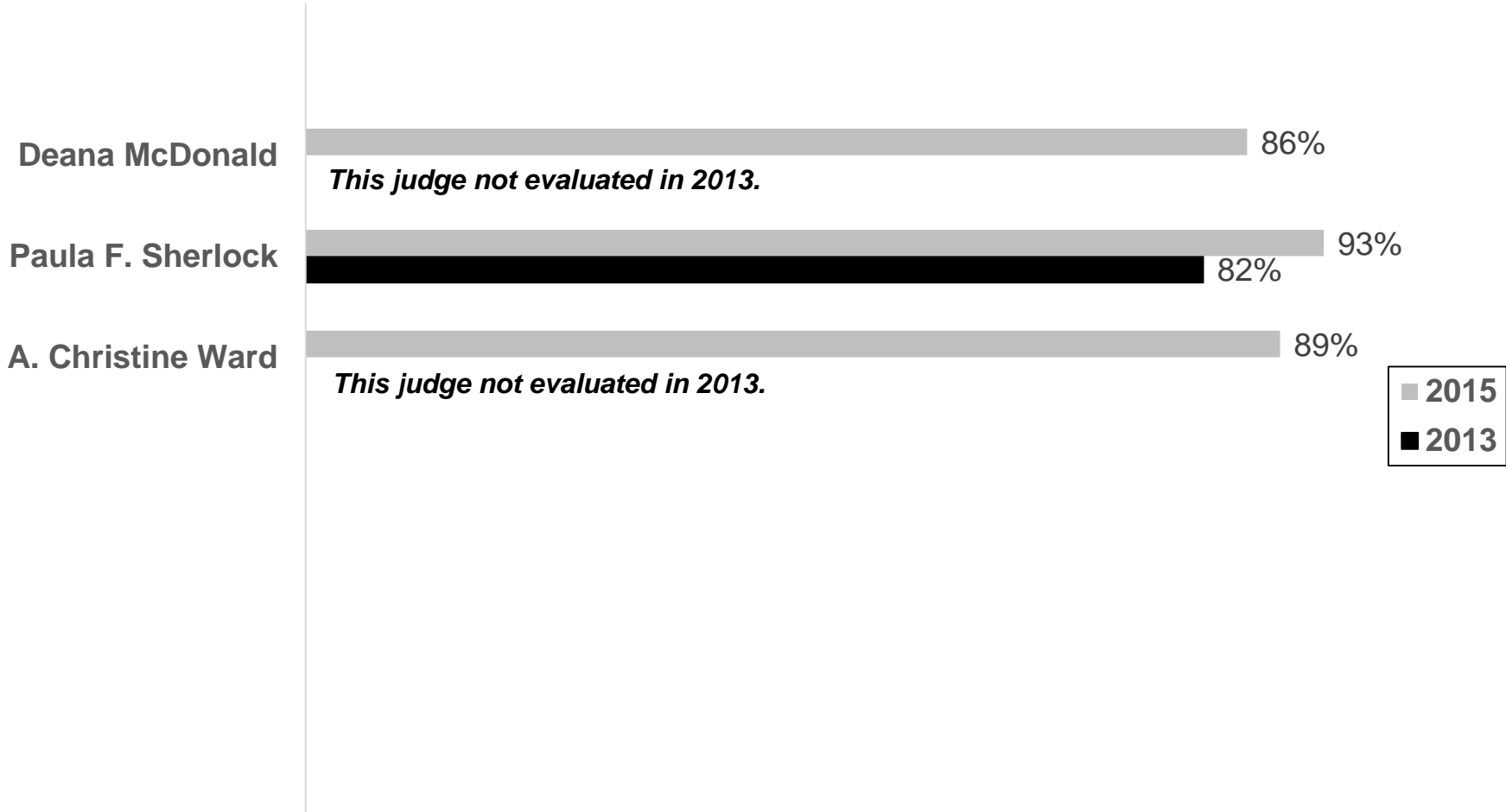


## Judicial Temperament – Jefferson Family Court





## Judicial Temperament – Jefferson Family Court



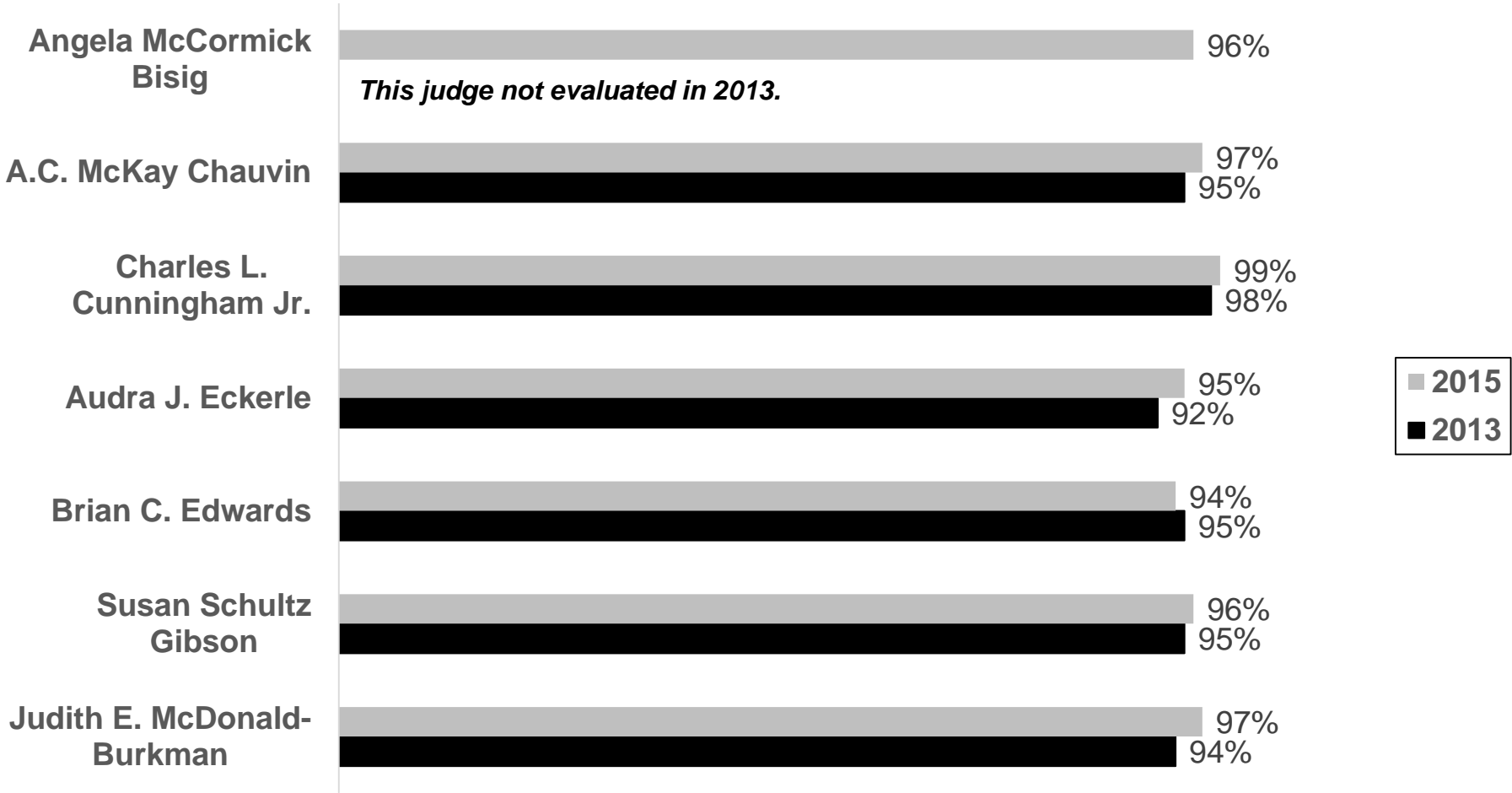


## Court Management Ratings

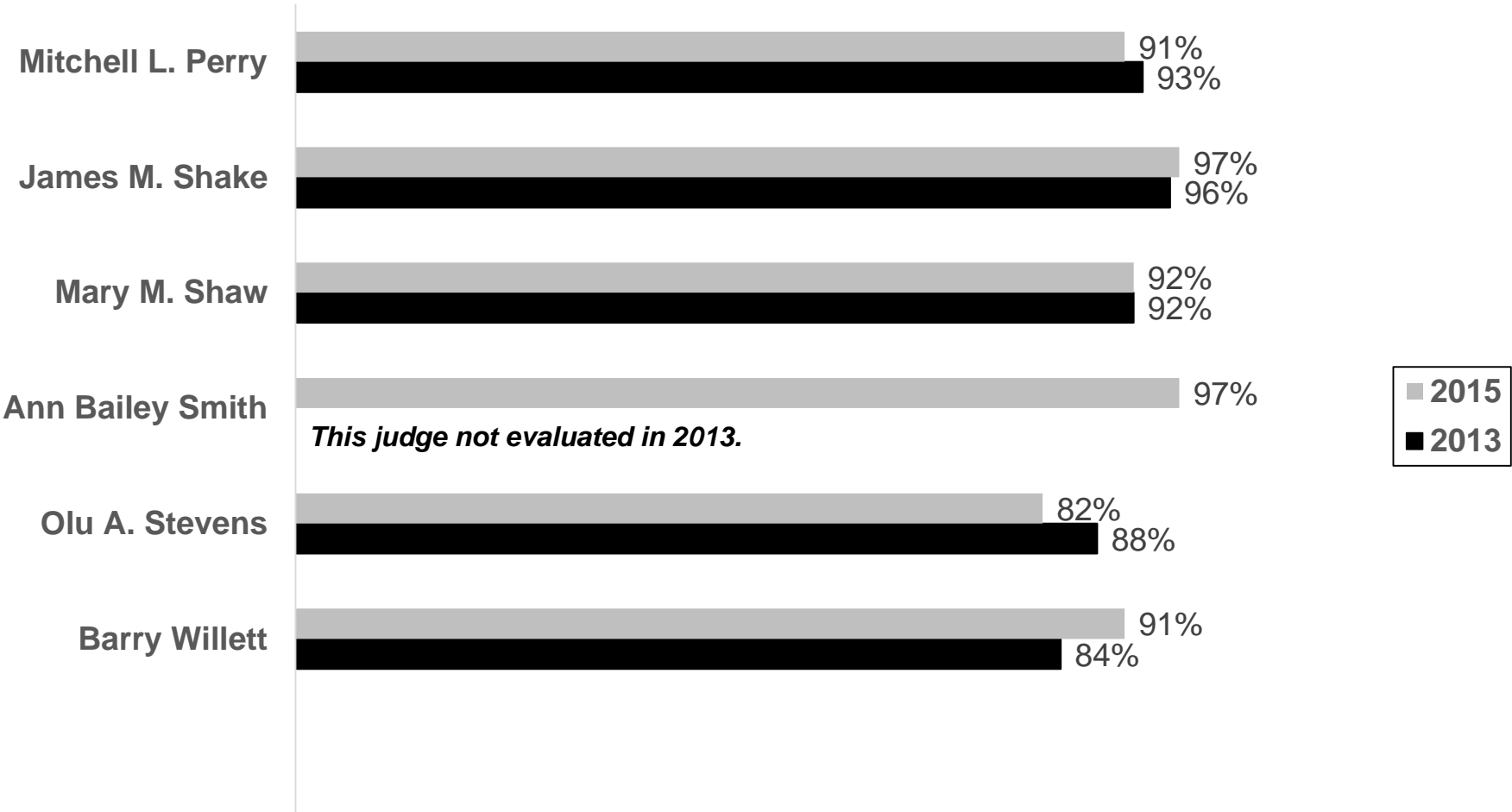
An average rating was calculated for the performance attributes that make up the Court Management category. This rating was calculated by averaging the positive ratings for each attribute (“agree” and “strongly agree”). The performance areas under Court Management are:

- Conducts court business in a timely manner.
- Is usually available for business during normal working hours.
- Is familiar with the file so as to consider issues presented.
- Exercises appropriate control over court proceedings and court personnel.

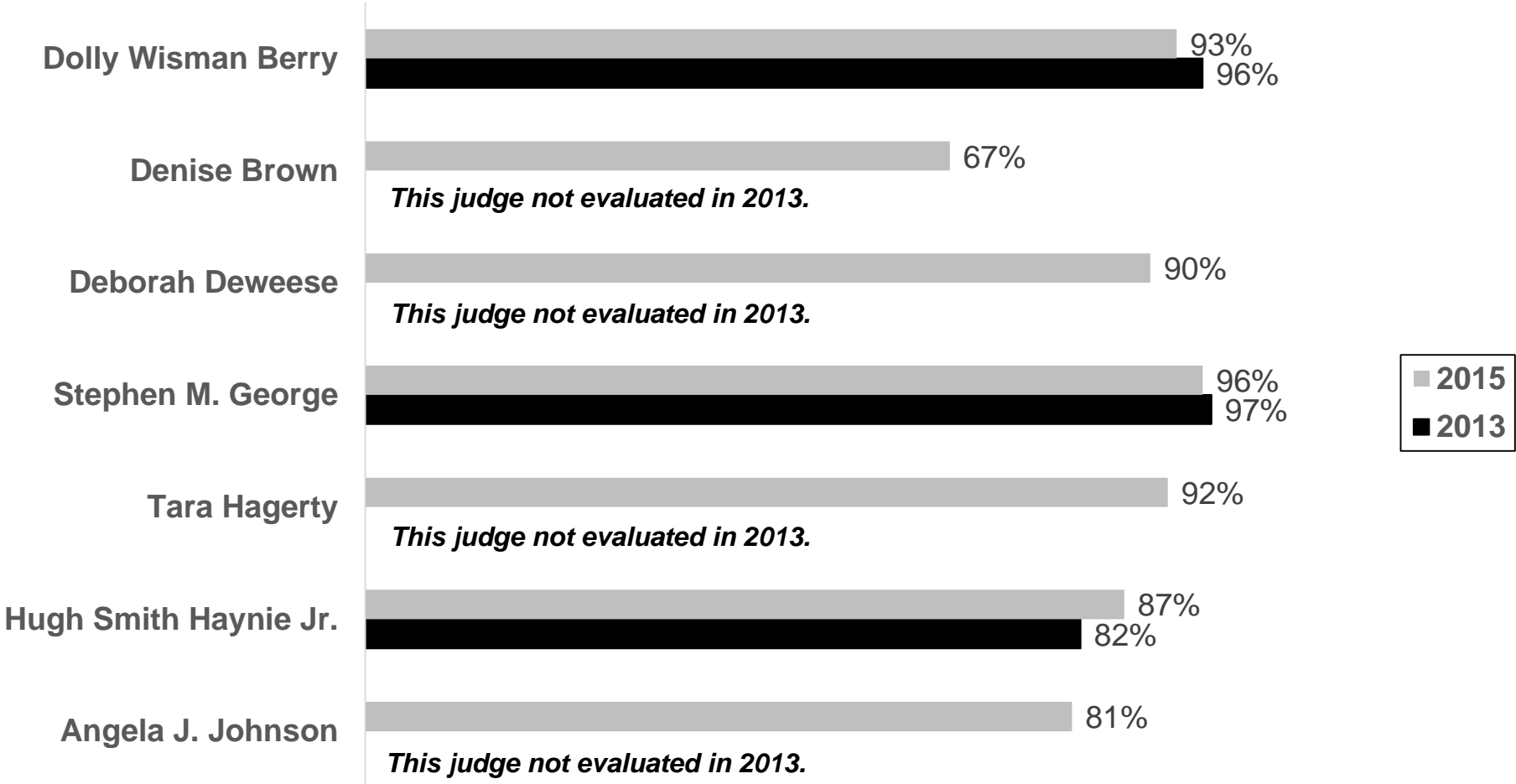
## Court Management – Jefferson Circuit Court



## Court Management – Jefferson Circuit Court

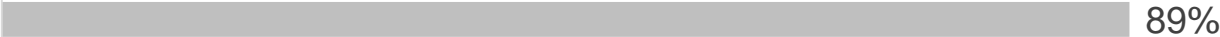


## Court Management – Jefferson Family Court



## Court Management – Jefferson Family Court

Deana McDonald

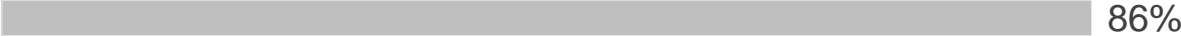


*This judge not evaluated in 2013.*

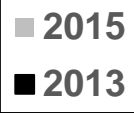
Paula F. Sherlock



A. Christine Ward



*This judge not evaluated in 2013.*





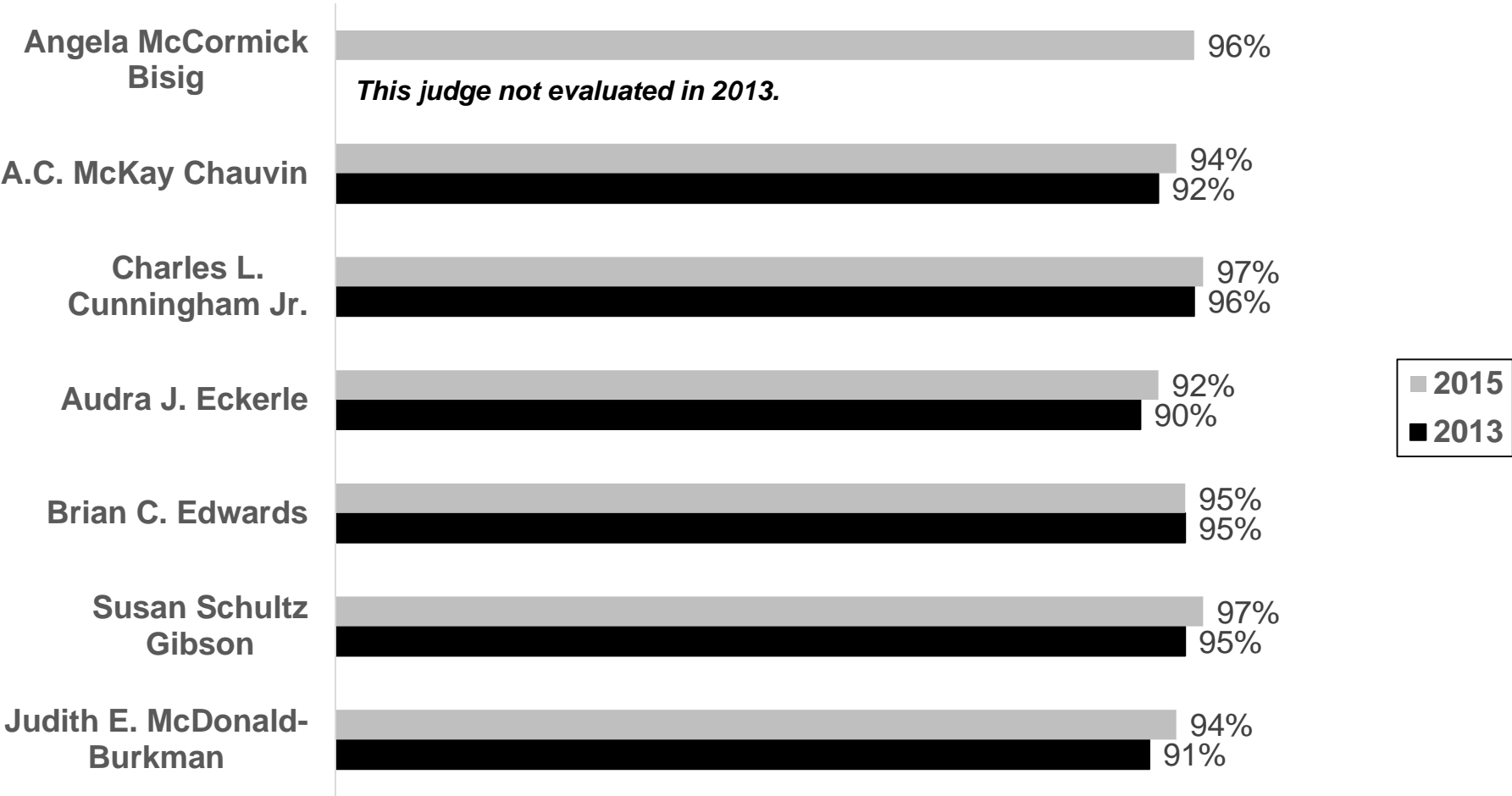


## Judicial Integrity Ratings

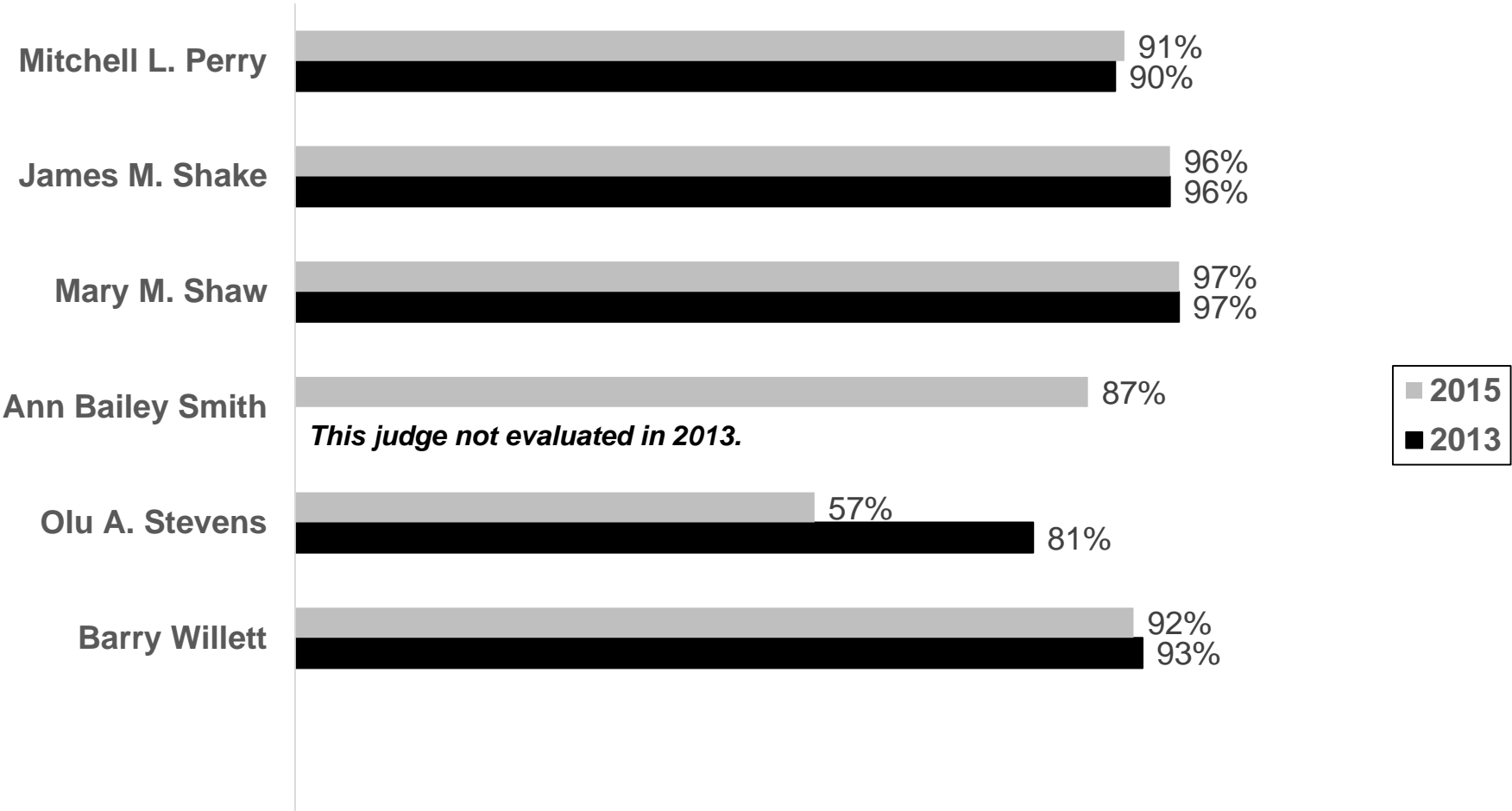
An average rating was calculated for the performance attributes that make up the Judicial Integrity category. This rating was calculated by averaging the positive ratings for each attribute (“strongly disagree” and “disagree” for negative statements, “agree” and “strongly agree” for positive statements). The performance areas under Judicial Integrity are:

- Is influenced by the race, gender, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status of persons appearing in court.
- Engages in out-of-court conduct or activity which directly interferes with judicial effectiveness.
- Is affected by partisan interests in the conduct of the court.
- Engages in *ex parte* communications which may prejudice proceedings.
- Lets personal relationships affect his/her judgment.
- Adheres to the highest ethical standards in and out of court.

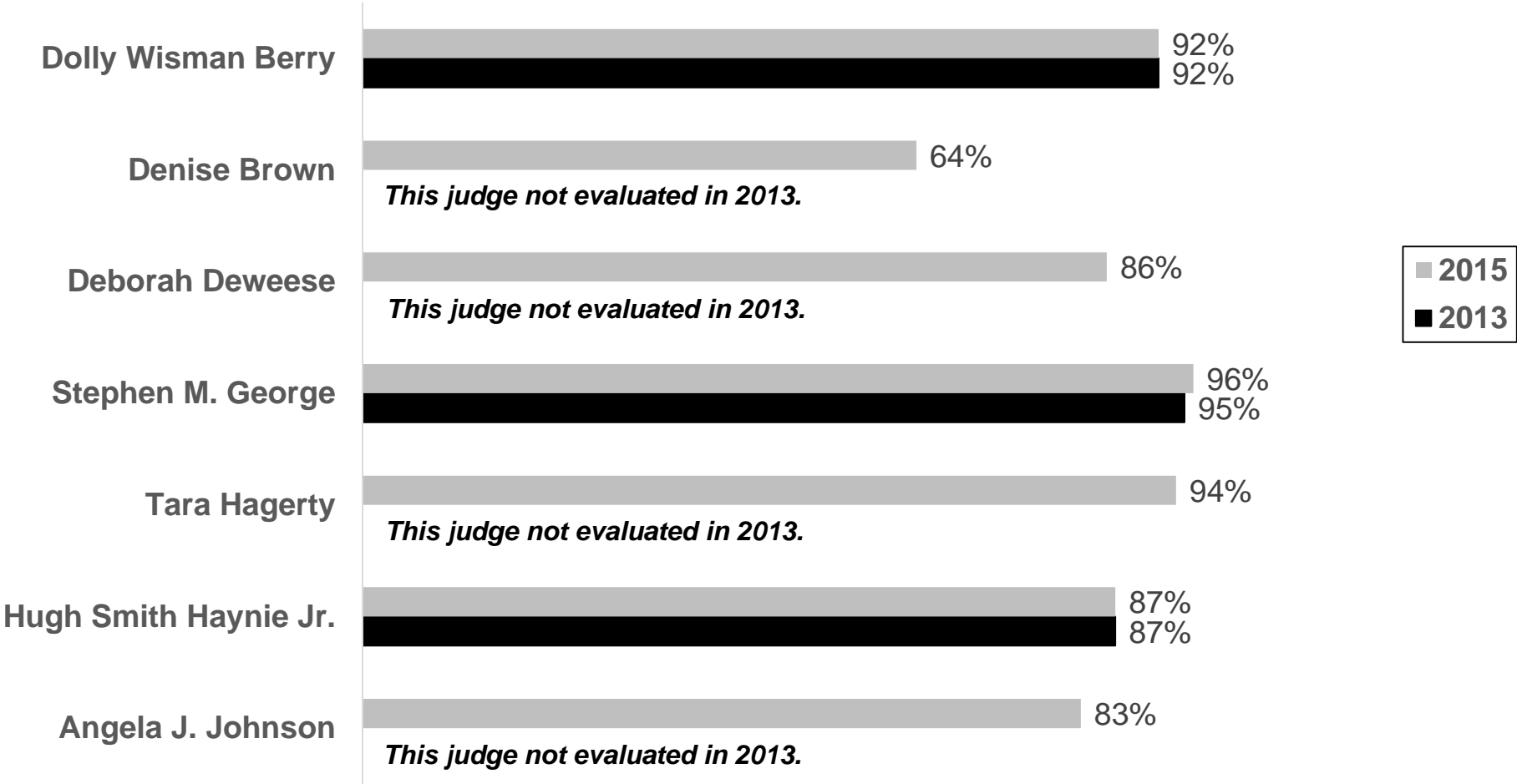
## Judicial Integrity – Jefferson Circuit Court



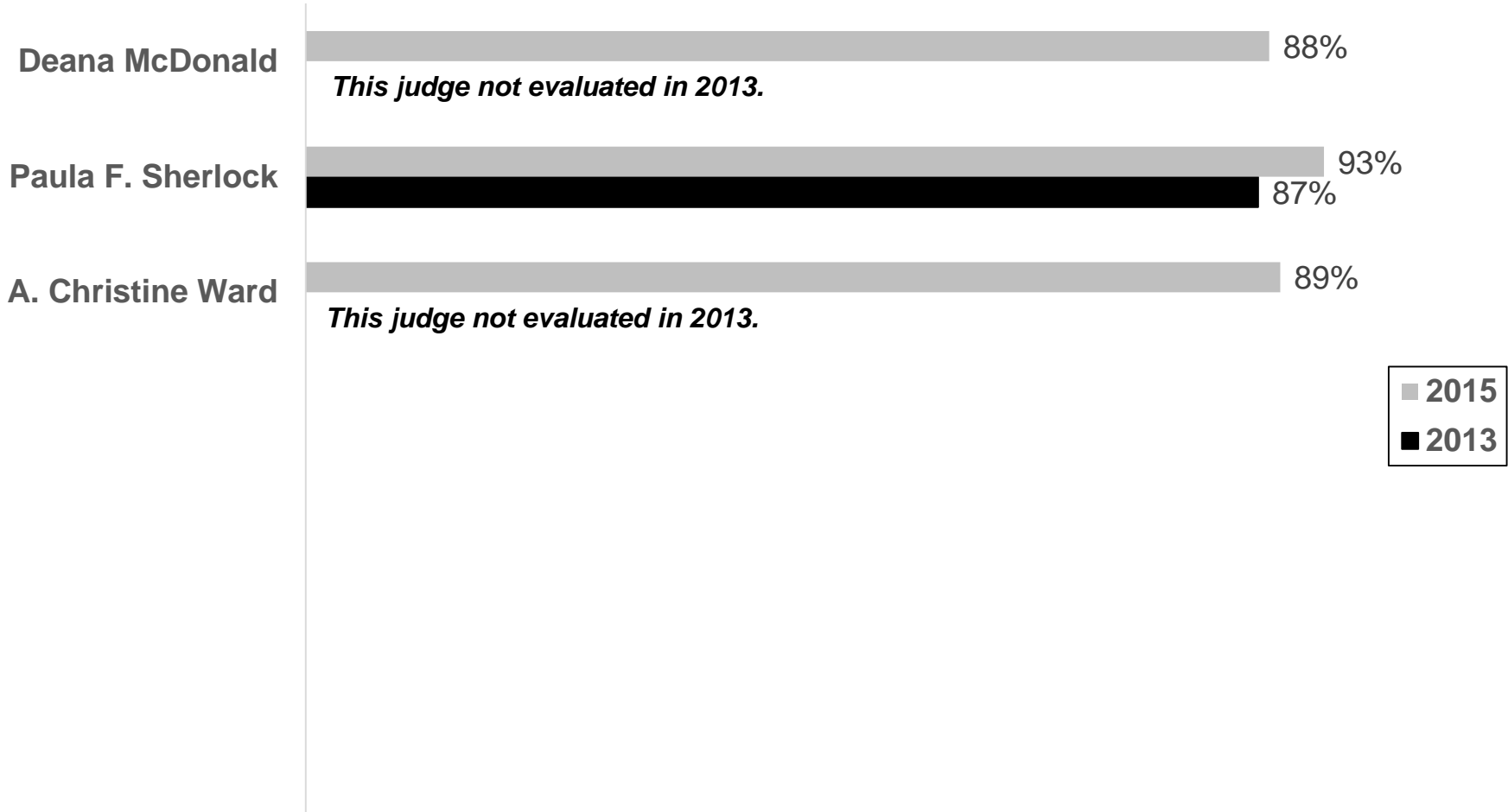
## Judicial Integrity – Jefferson Circuit Court



## Judicial Integrity – Jefferson Family Court



## Judicial Integrity – Jefferson Family Court



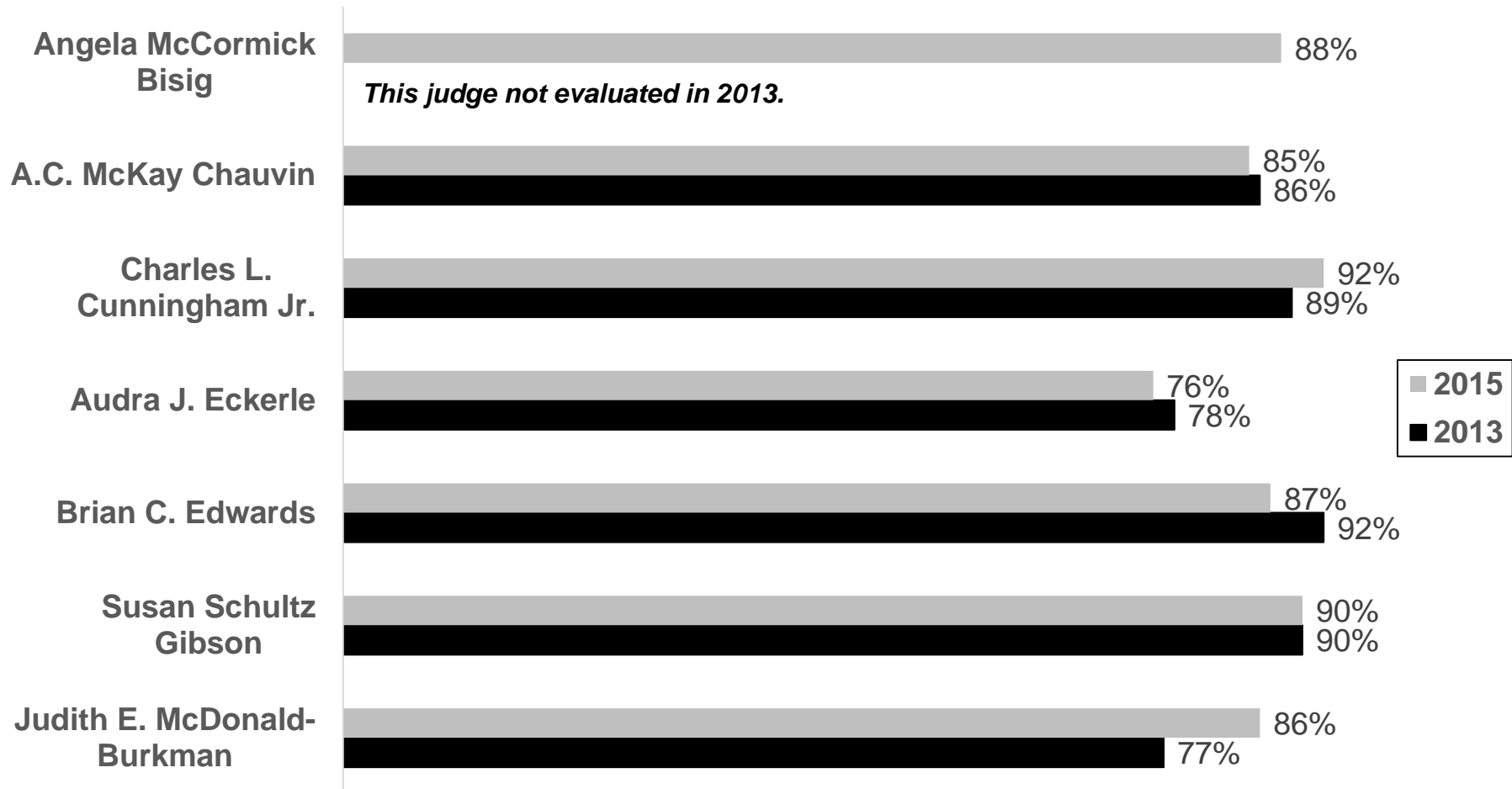


## Legal Ability Ratings

The rating for this category is based on the level of agreement with the following statement for each judge:

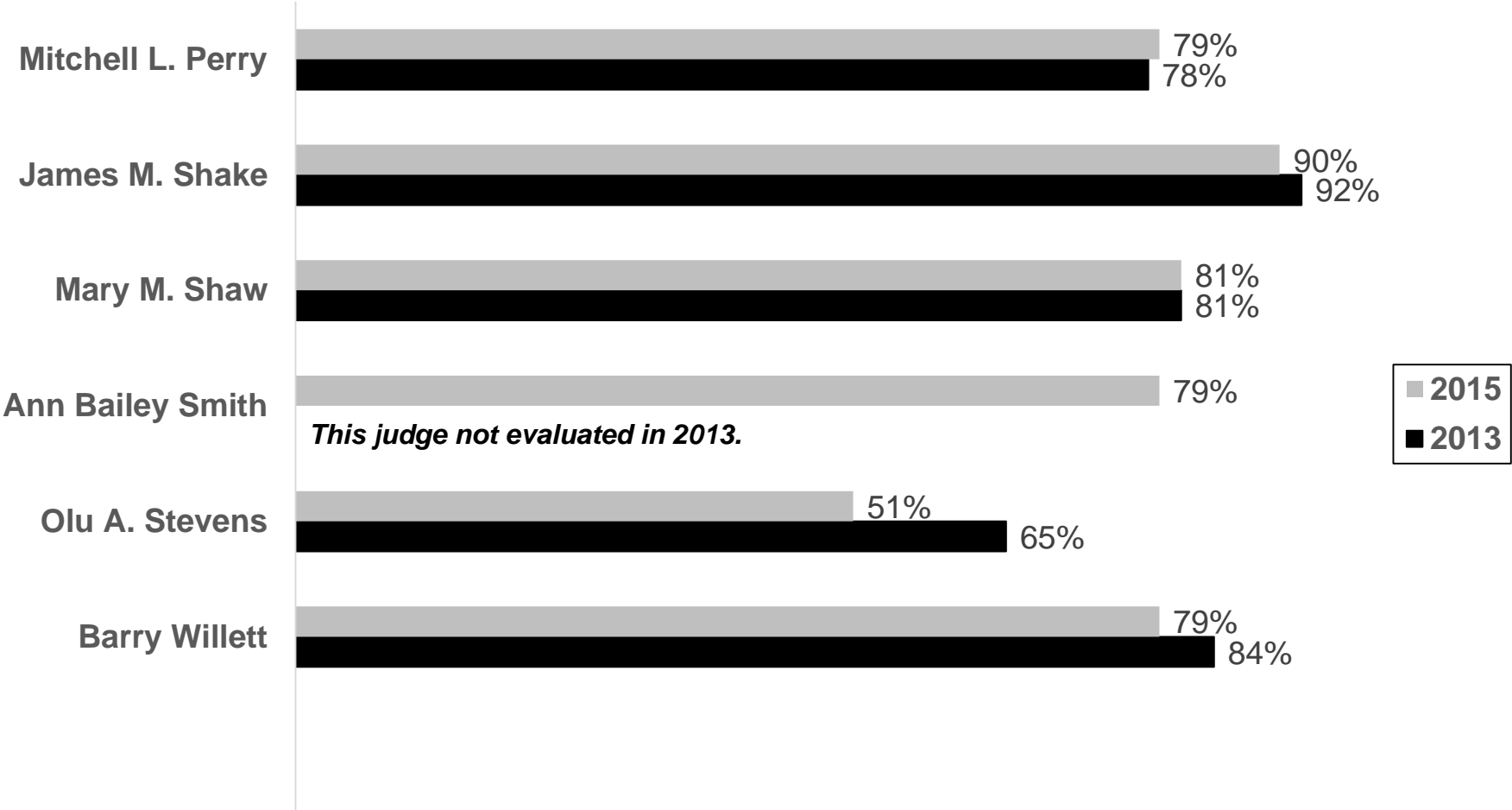
- Renders decisions that reflect sound legal analysis.

## Legal Ability – Jefferson Circuit Court

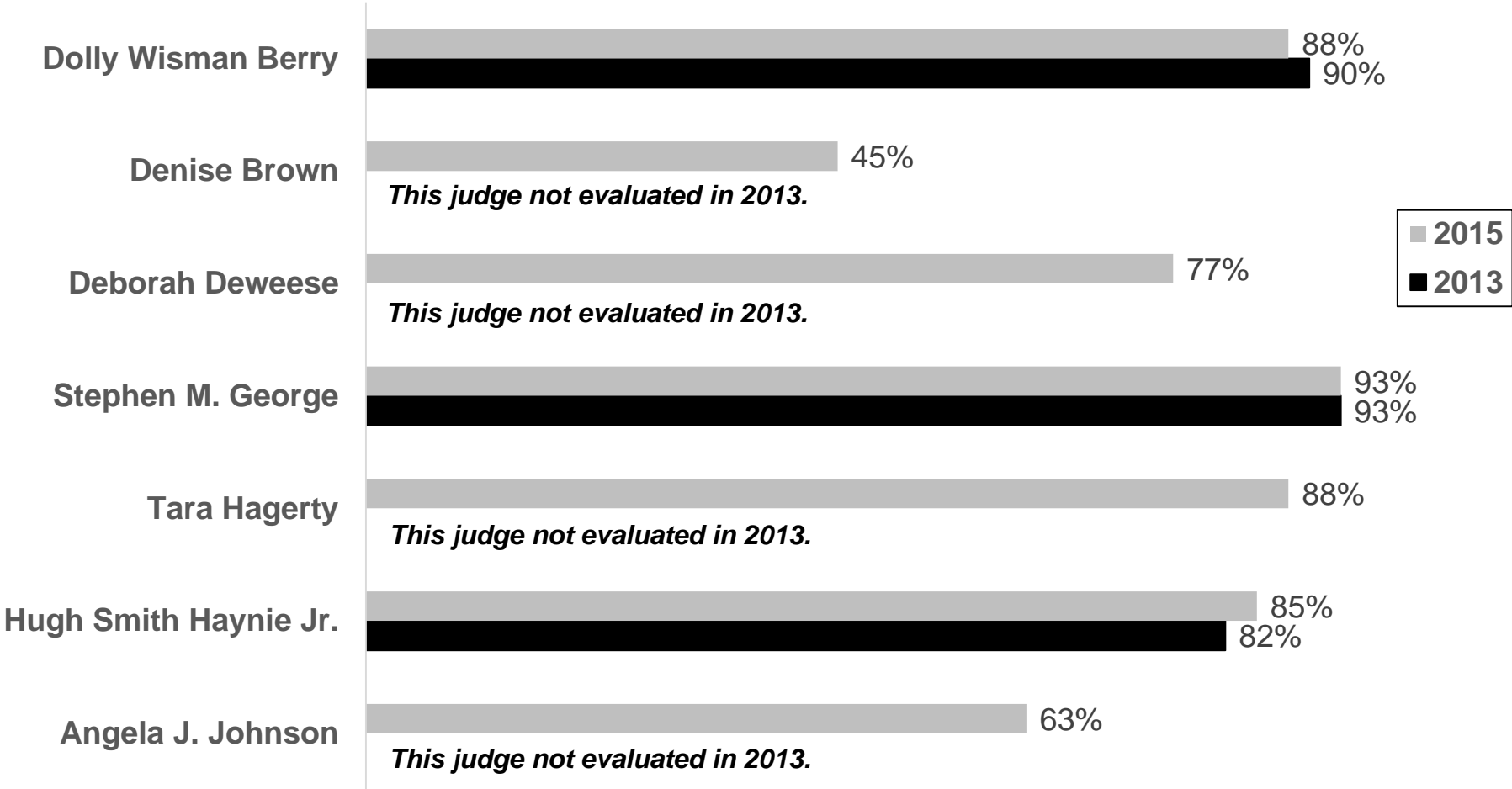




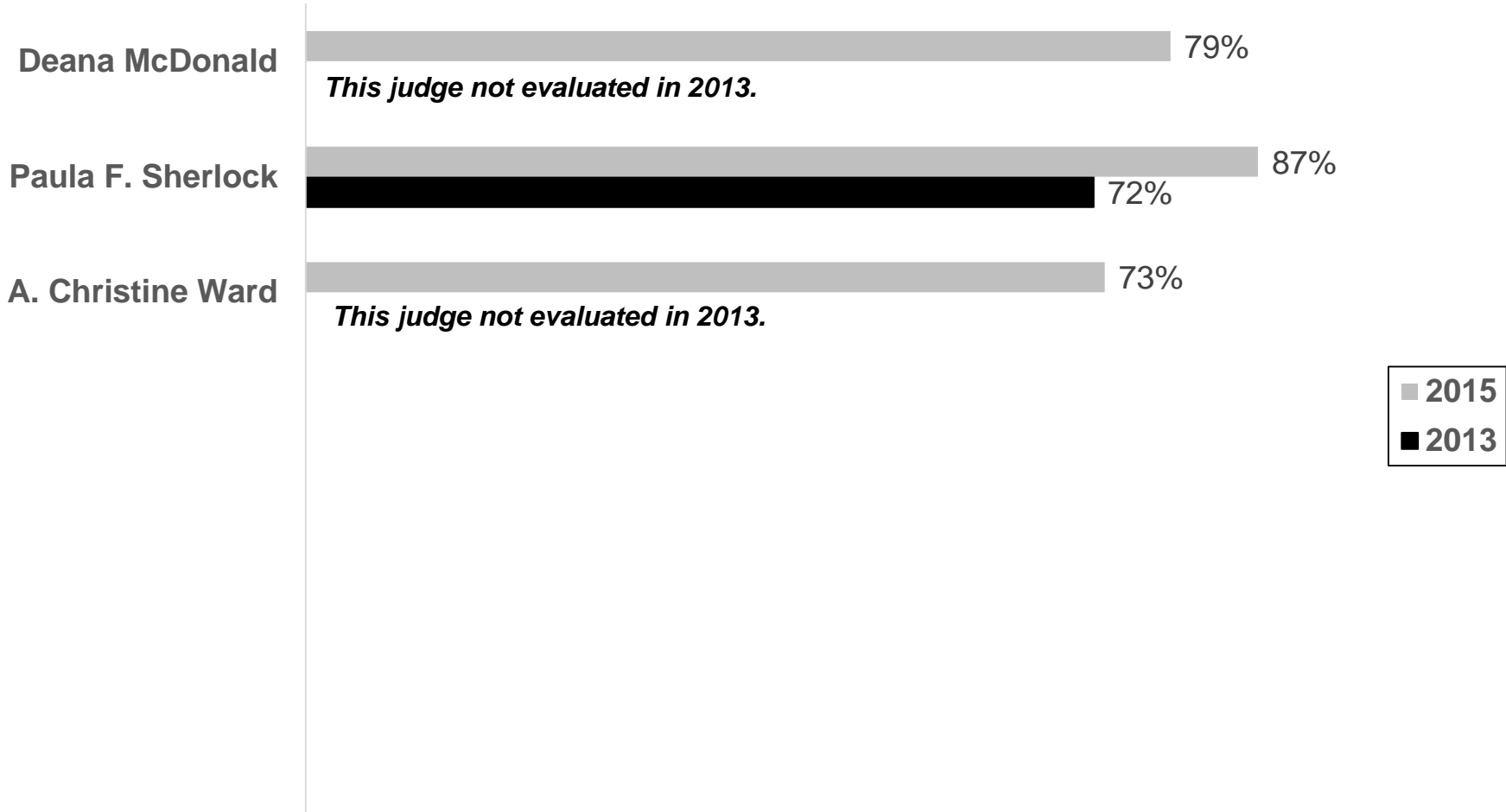
### Legal Ability – Jefferson Circuit Court



## Legal Ability – Jefferson Family Court



### Legal Ability – Jefferson Family Court



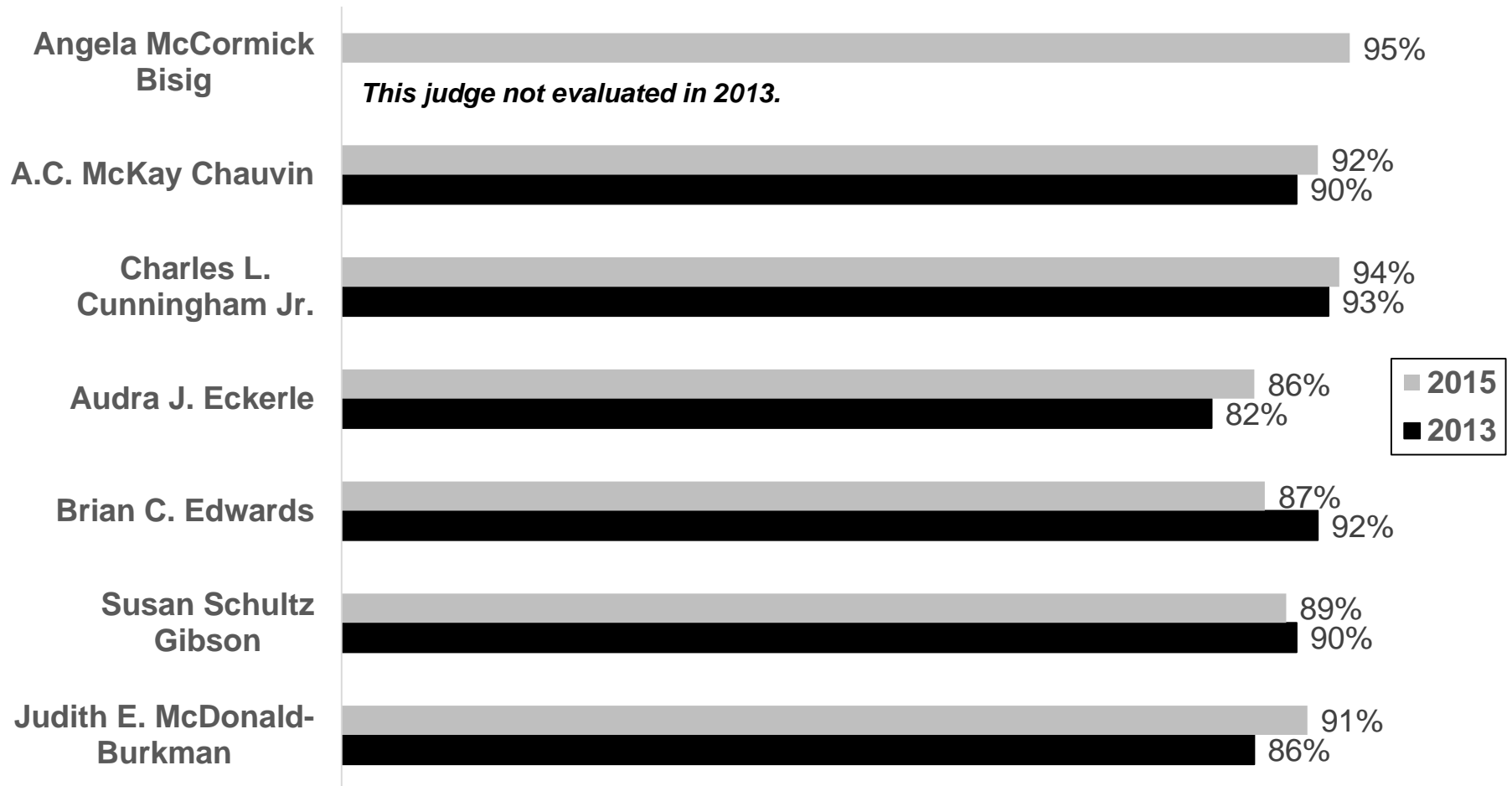


## Civil Cases Ratings

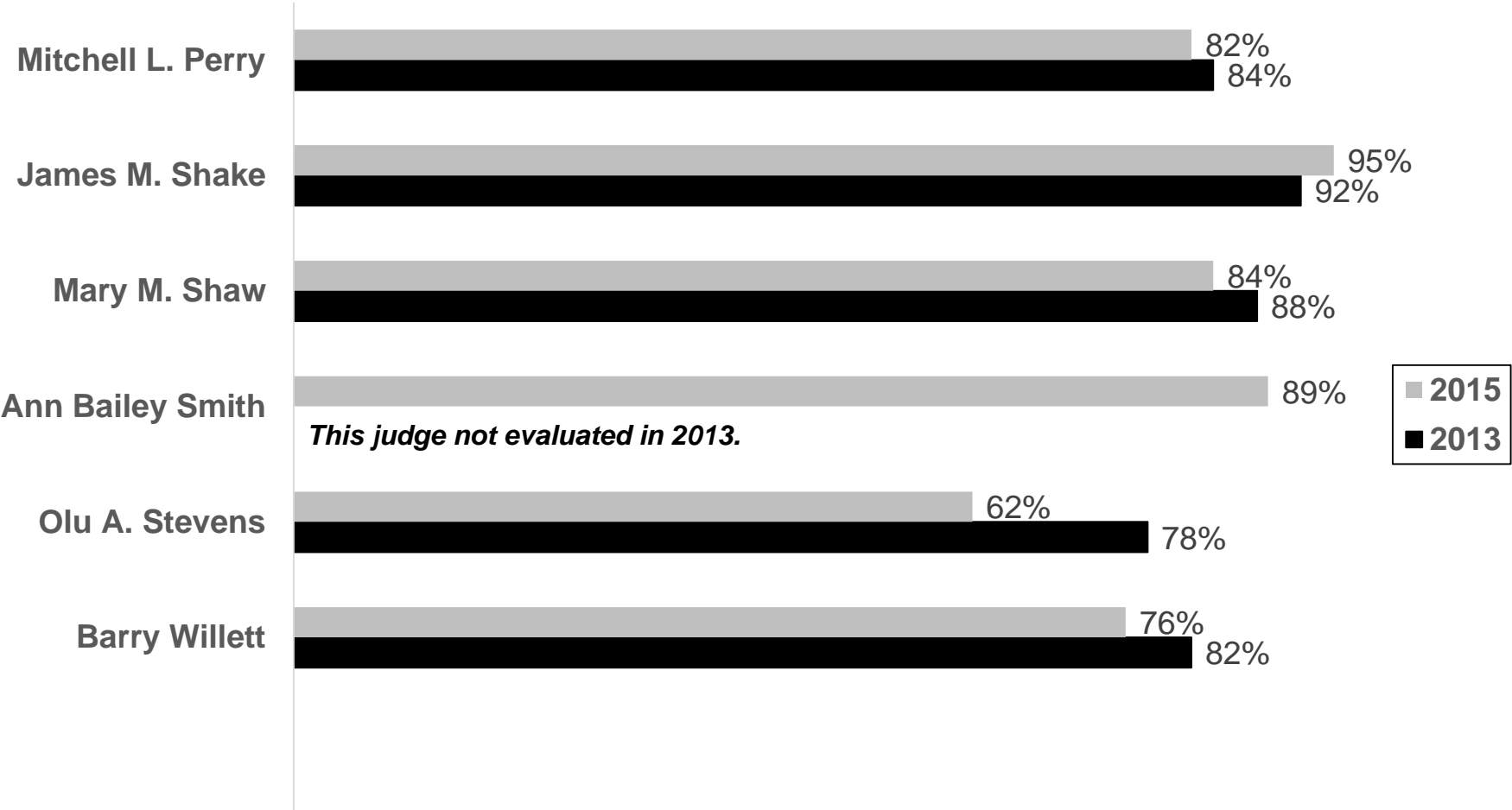
The rating for this category is based on the level of agreement with the following statement for each judge:

- Does a good job in handling civil cases.

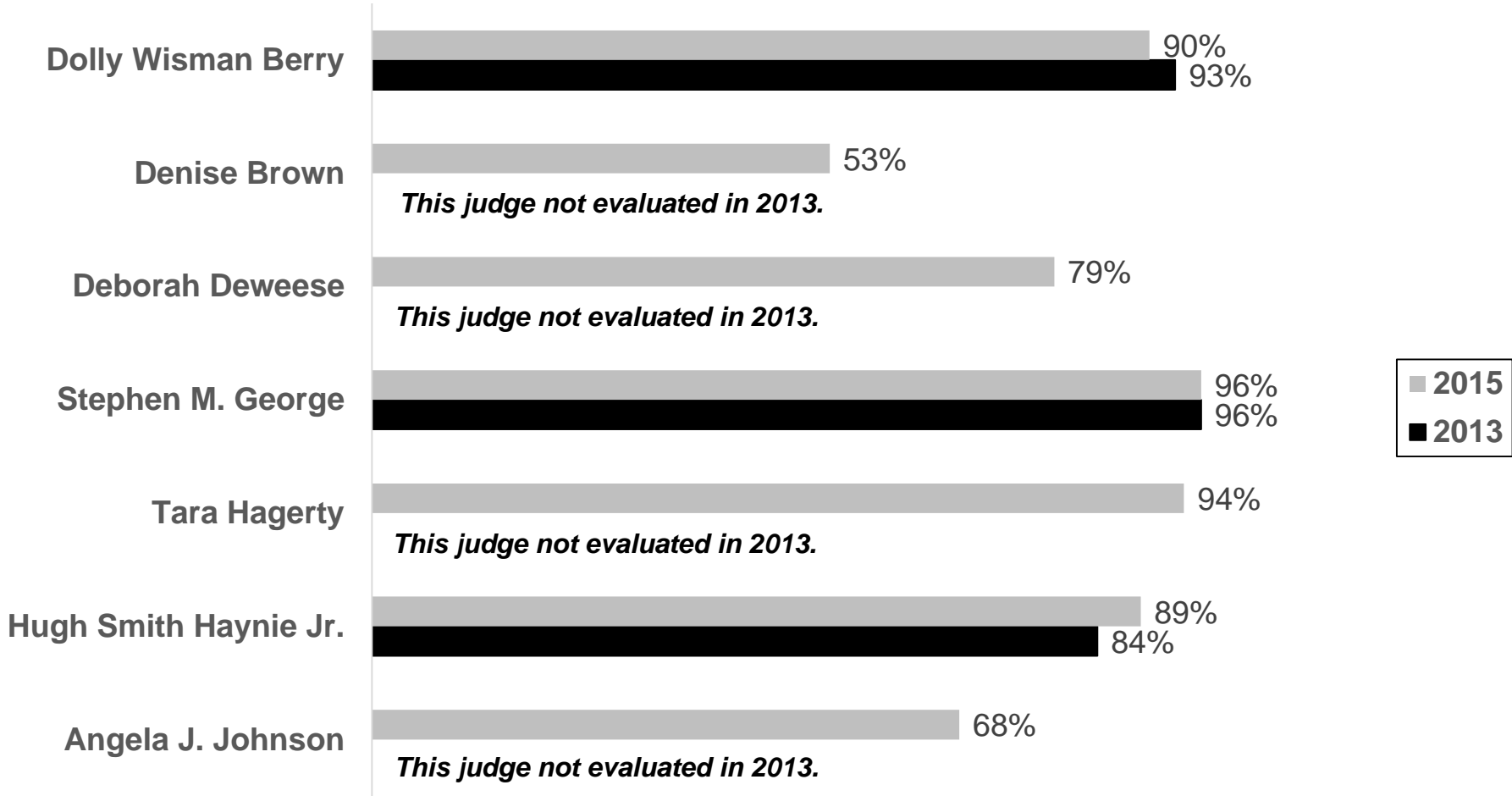
## Civil Cases – Jefferson Circuit Court



### Civil Cases – Jefferson Circuit Court



### Civil Cases – Jefferson Family Court





### Civil Cases – Jefferson Family Court

Deana McDonald



Paula F. Sherlock



A. Christine Ward





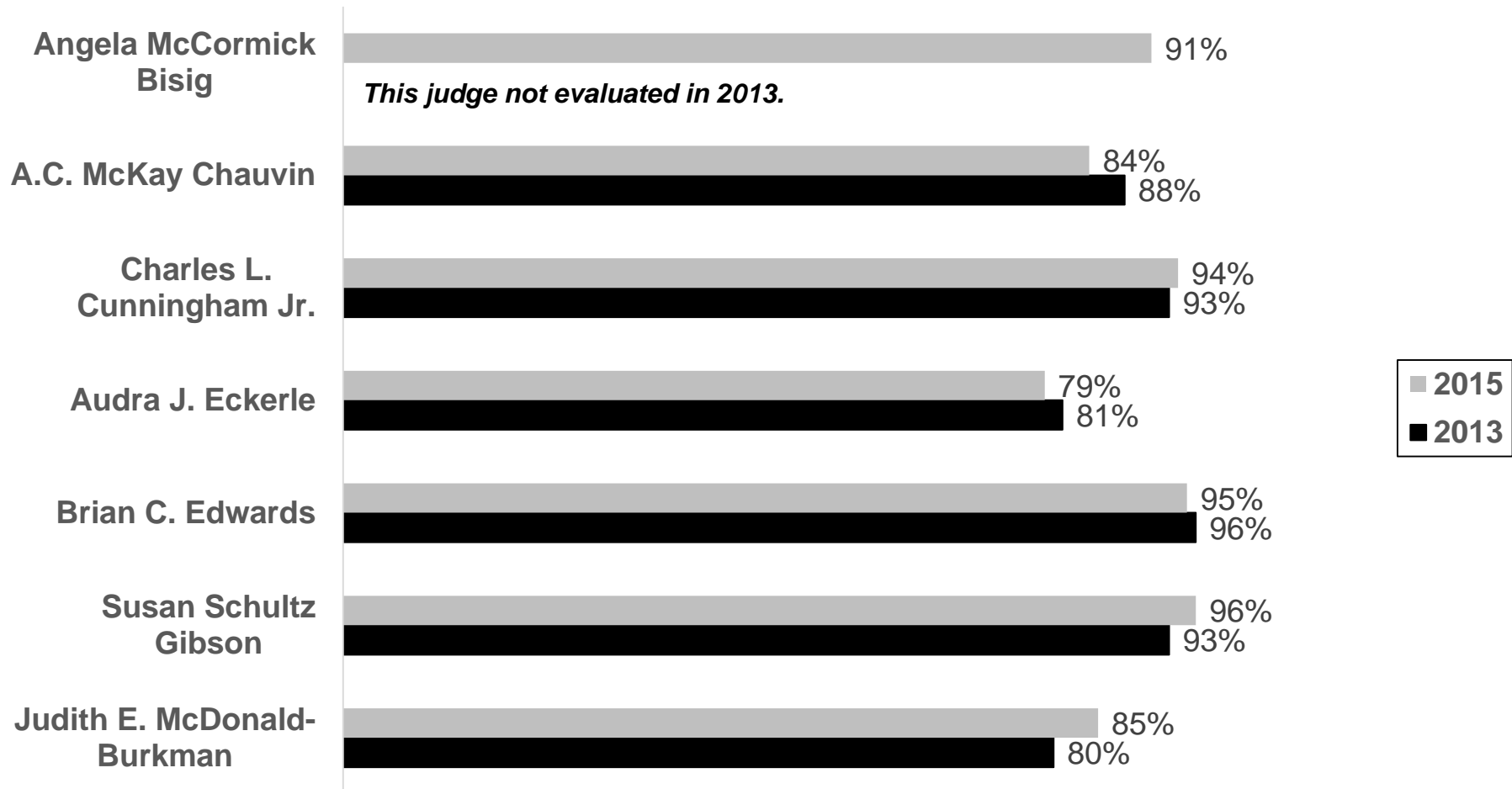
## Criminal Cases Ratings

The rating for this category is based on the level of agreement with the following statement for each judge:

- Does a good job in handling criminal cases.

*Family Court Judges were not evaluated on criminal cases.*

## Criminal Cases – Jefferson Circuit Court



### Criminal Cases – Jefferson Circuit Court

