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League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania- Citizen Education Fund

**NONPARTISAN VOTERS GUIDE
2017 General Election**

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(information received from candidates by September 22, 2017)*

General Election is November 7, 2017

Polls open 7 A.M. to 8 P.M.

This Voters Guide may be taken into the voting booth.

FOR ELECTION INFORMATION

Contact your county Board of Elections. The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania also provides election information. CALL 717-234-1576.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The material in this Guide was compiled by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund. This material may not be altered or reprinted without the permission of the League. Each candidate's reply has been printed as submitted, except to use standard abbreviations and by editing from the bottom when a candidate's reply exceeded the word limit. The candidates listed are those whose names appear on the ballot as of September 1, 2017. They are listed according to alphabetic order. Additional information about judicial candidates and voter information including "Polling Place Lookup" can be found by going to www.vote411.org and typing in your address and zip code.

PURPOSE AND POLICY OF THE LEAGUE

The purpose of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League is nonpartisan: it neither supports nor opposes any political parties or candidates. Nothing in this guide should be construed as an endorsement of any candidate by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Registered voters who are ill, disabled, or will be absent from the municipality on Election Day may vote by absentee ballot. Completed applications for civilian absentee ballots must be received by the county Board of Elections by 5 P.M., Tuesday, October 31, 2017. Completed civilian absentee ballots must be received back at the Board of Elections by 5 P.M. on Friday, November 3, 2017. If an emergency arises (unexpected illness or business trip) after the Tuesday application deadline, call your county Board of Elections for information on emergency absentee voting. Proof of emergency may be

required. An emergency application and ballot can be obtained and voted by 5 P.M. on Friday, November 3, 2017. Any disabled voter having questions regarding the accessibility of a polling place should consult the county Board of Elections.

WRITE-IN VOTING

Information for write-in voting will be available at the polling place.

ELECTION DAY PROBLEMS

If your right to vote is challenged at the polls on Election Day and the problem cannot be resolved at the polling place, the judge of elections at the polling place should telephone the county Board of Elections. The problem could be resolved by phone if your name appears on the county records. If it does not and you want to try to resolve the problem, then you can go in person to the county Board of Elections where a judge from the Court of Common Pleas will be on duty to resolve election problems. Alternatively you can ask for and vote by provisional ballot. If it is later determined that you were eligible to vote your ballot will be counted. You will be given instructions on how to determine if your vote was counted.

IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW VOTERS

If you are a new voter or if you are voting at a polling place for the first time then you must bring your voter ID card or a photo ID such as a driver's license, student ID or some other form of Federal or State government issued ID. Some forms of non-photo ID are also acceptable such as a firearm permit, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or government check. If you do not have any acceptable ID then you must be allowed to vote by provisional ballot.

Judicial elections occur in odd-numbered years. Justices and judges may serve an unlimited number of terms until they reach the mandatory retirement age of 75 and are retained or re-elected by the voters. Vacancies that exist before an election may be filled by gubernatorial appointment until an election is held. These selections are subject to Senate confirmation.

10 Year Term

Appellate court jurists
Courts of Common Pleas
judges

6 Year Term

Magisterial district judges
Philadelphia Municipal Courts judges

JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT

Job Description

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the Commonwealth and the oldest appellate court in the nation. The Supreme Court's administrative powers and jurisdictional responsibilities are vested with the seven-member court by the Pennsylvania State Constitution and a collection of statutes known as the Judicial Code. Administratively, the courts within the Unified Judicial System are largely responsible for organizing their own staff and dockets; however, the Supreme Court has several committees and boards responsible for writing and enforcing rules for judges, attorneys, and litigants to ensure an efficient and fair judicial review. Annually, the seven justices receive over 3,000 requests for appellate review. **Term: 10 years—Salary \$206,054**

Candidates (choose 1):

Sallie Mundy

Party: Republican



Mailing Address: PO Box 412 Harrisburg, PA 17108

Website: <http://KeepJusticeMundy.com>

Campaign Email: keepjusticemundy@gmail.com

Facebook: <http://KeepJusticeMundy>

Education: University of Pittsburgh School of Law (J.D.), 1987 Washington and Jefferson College (B.A.), 1984

Qualifications: Highly Recommended by the PA Bar Association. Judge, The Superior Court of Pennsylvania, 2010-2016. Member Pennsylvania Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Board. Member Disciplinary Hearing Committee, past chair. Legal Intelligencer's Top Women in Law, 2016. Former Lawyer in State College and Philadelphia region for 22 years. Former Public Defender, Tioga County in 2008-2009.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: The single most important quality for any jurist is integrity. A Judge must be transparent, efficient and direct. When explaining a ruling in a written opinion, a judge needs to address not only the lawyers in the case, but the clients as well. It is important that everyone has a clear understanding of the decision and the reasoning behind it.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: Whenever a circumstance, such as the identity of the parties or their lawyers or the issue presented raises a question in the mind of the Judge that could compromise integrity, it is incumbent upon that jurist to engage in a process of introspection. Judges are human beings, subject to the same life experiences from which opinions are generated. The question is not whether you do or do not have opinions; rather the real question is can you set aside those feelings or opinions and judge fairly.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: Access to justice requires more than an assurance that the courtroom doors be open and accessible to all citizens. To give true meaning to those words, we must insure that they have the legal representation necessary to make that access meaningful. As a former member of the IOLTA Board, I am aware of the breadth of the problem, and the potential to address it through pro bono service. My intention is to substantially expand pro bono legal services to bridge the gap between Legal Aid for the indigent and fee paying clients. An idea I intend to explore is to offer CLE credit for pro bono service.

Dwayne Woodruff

Party: Democratic



Mailing Address: 4885A McKnight Road Suite 265 Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Campaign Phone: (412) 538-8501

Website: <http://www.Woodruff2017.com>

Campaign Email: info@Woodruff2017.com

Twitter: twitter.com/Woodruff2017

Facebook: <http://Woodruff2017>

Municipality: Pittsburgh Allegheny County

Education: June 1988 Duquesne University School of Law Juris Doctor
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Areas of Study: Taxation, Securities, Corporations &
Contracts.

May 1979 University of Louisville B.S. Finance Louisville, Kentucky

Qualifications: -17 years private practice on defense & plaintiff side -12 years
serving on Common Pleas Court of Allegheny County -National Council of Juvenile

& Family Court Judges -Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board -Juvenile Court Judges' Commission -PA
Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee -National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges -Allegheny
County Bar Assoc, -American Bar Assoc. -Pennsylvania Bar Assoc. -Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission on
Juvenile Justice -Allegheny County Interbranch

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: A judge should possess the most important quality of Discernment which is obtained through the ever-expanding accumulation of knowledge, wisdom, experience and compassion. Knowledge - knowing/fully comprehending the law. Wisdom - knowing what the law requires and what affects rulings will have on the parties and society. Experience - knowing the people/cultures/community. Compassion - incorporating mercy in rulings when proper and just; humbly realizing 'there but for the grace of God go I'.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: A judge should recuse himself/herself when he/she is unable to quell one's own passion or when a bias exists. Yes, I have recused myself in cases where there is familiarity with the parties involved and/or I felt that there would be a perceived bias. Propriety always suggests that it is more important to create an open and fair perception of neutrality than to allow questions that impugn the judicial process.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: As a judge, I have worked earnestly to secure equal justice for all; I lead the development of new court procedures that provide necessary legal assistance to pro se litigants; Appointed by PA Supreme Court to 3 statewide commissions all dealing with 'access to justice'; Chaired Allegheny County (AC) Commission on Juvenile Justice, implementing system reforms (published booklet, October 2012) & Under my leadership AC became first court in Commonwealth to practice continuing judicial education.

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Superior Court is one of Pennsylvania's two statewide intermediate appellate courts. This court, which was established in 1895, reviews most of the civil and criminal cases that are appealed from the Courts of Common Pleas in the Commonwealth's 67 counties. The Superior Court consists of 15 judges who serve 10-year terms. The president judge of Superior Court is elected to a five-year term by his or her colleagues. A huge volume of appeals flow to Superior Court from the trial courts. Generally, appeals are heard by panels of three judges sitting in Philadelphia, Harrisburg or Pittsburgh. The court often is the final arbiter of legal disputes. Although the Supreme Court may grant a petition for review of a Superior Court decision, most such petitions are denied and the ruling of the Superior Court stands.

Term: 10 years—Salary: \$194,422 (Vote for 4)

Candidates (choose 4):

Emil Giordano

Party: Republican



Campaign Phone: (717) 234-5424

Facebook: <http://judgegiordano>

Education: J.D. Villanova Law School, B.A. Moravian College

Qualifications: I have received a "Highly Recommended" rating from the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: Experience. The Pennsylvania Bar Association cited my "broad experience as a practicing attorney, proven record of judicial leadership, high ethical standards and dedication to the legal profession" as they awarded me a "highly recommended" rating. I believe those are important qualities that will serve me well on the Superior Court.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: I believe I have a proven record of conducting myself in a highly ethical manner as it relates to this issue.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: The biggest issue that needs to be addressed in the courts is the crisis of public confidence our judiciary faces. Through scandal and ethics lapses, the courts are viewed negatively by too many people. That image will only be changed by electing qualified, ethical judges who will comport themselves in an appropriate manner when in office.

Wade Alan Kagarise

Party: Republican



Mailing Address: Post Office Box 98 Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Campaign Phone: (814) 330-1604

Website: <http://www.judgekagarise.com>

Campaign Email: info@judgekagarise.com

Facebook: <http://Kagarise for Superior Court>

Education: B.A. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, J.D Widener University School of Law

Qualifications: Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, 15 years experience as a criminal prosecutor (the last eight as Chief Deputy) handling all types of criminal cases including murder cases, twelve years experience handling civil, family, and labor law. Adjunct Professor, Infantry Veteran of US Army Reserves.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: I believe experience and temperament are equally important. Judges should have broad based legal experience and should treat those who appear before them with fairness and dignity.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: Consistent with the Judicial Cannons, any Judge should recuse themselves when they are unable to decide a matter fairly and impartially or where their fairness or impartiality could reasonably be called into question.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: By working to improve the justice system for all Pennsylvanians. I have and will continue to work towards this goal. My experience on appointed committees has provided a venue to work on improvements. I also believe my experience as an adjunct professor has provided me the opportunity to have an impact on future generations of legal professionals.

Deborah Anne Kunselman

Party: Democratic



Campaign Phone: (412) 999-0547

Campaign Email: judgetebbieforsuperiorcourt@gmail.com

Twitter: twitter.com/JudgeKunselman

Facebook: <http://Deborah Kunselman>

Education: "J.D., University of Notre Dame Law School, cum laude B.A., Penn State University, with Honors and with High Distinction"

Qualifications: 12 years experience as a trial court judge in Beaver County: presided over family, juvenile and civil matters; 13 years experience as an attorney: represented clients in personal injury, family and employment cases; 8 years as Chief County Solicitor for Beaver County; "Highly Recommended" by the Bar

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: Integrity. If you cannot trust a judge to do the right thing, and follow the law, then who can you trust?

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: I have and would recuse in cases involving family members, close friends, or former clients. I have also recused in matters involving my campaign officers. I would also recuse in other cases as required by the PA Code of Judicial Conduct, Rule 2.11.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: As a judge, on the bench, I can treat self-represented litigants with respect, so they are not intimidated by the legal system. Off the bench, I can speak at seminars and to the general public about the need for all

people to have access to a lawyer to protect their legal rights. I can also advocate for state funding for our public defenders. (Pennsylvania is one of only two states that does not provide any state funding to the public defenders' office.)

Maria McLaughlin

Party: Democratic



Campaign Phone: (215) 605-3114

Campaign Email: info@mclaughlin4superiorcourt.com

Twitter: twitter.com/honmmclaughlin

Facebook: http://JudgeMcLaughlin4SuperiorCourt

Education: JD

Qualifications: As a Judge in the largest Judicial district in our Commonwealth, I've had the opportunity to issue thousands of rulings. I have been appealed only 5 times and have never had a decision overturned. I believe this uniquely qualifies me for the Superior Court.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: It is most important for a jurist to be objective because parties must have confidence that their case will be heard fairly and impartially.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: I have recused myself in a criminal matter after hearing argument on a bail reduction motion. It would be inappropriate for me to hear the underlying case because information was revealed during this motion that would be prejudicial to the defendant in his underlying case.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: As a sitting Judge I always ensure that all parties are treated fairly and equally regardless of the issue before the Court. I also believe it is my duty as a Judge to educate the public and is the reason I take part in many community based organizations. I believe I should be a good example both on and off the bench.

Jules Mermelstein

Party: Green



Mailing Address: 821 Twining Road Dresher, PA 19025

Campaign Phone: (215) 806-0201

Website: http://Jules4Judge.com

Campaign Email: jules@mermelstein4judge.org

Twitter: twitter.com/Jules4Judge

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/Mermelstein4Judge/

Municipality: Upper Dublin Township

Education: BA Political Science Temple U. Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa JD American University's Washington College of Law, Cum Laude. M.Ed. in Secondary Social Studies at Arcadia University. Perfect 4.0.

Qualifications: Proven record of integrity: 5 terms as township commissioner, no scandals; afterwards awarded medal for "Outstanding Citizen" Handled multiple cases before Superior Court. 2 decades teaching teens values in Sunday School. Taught government and US history at the college and high school level. Licensed PA lawyer for 37 years, with no disciplinary complaints.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: Integrity. The public needs confidence that decisions will be based on the law as applied to the particular facts of the case. Personal interest and bias must not even appear to be a consideration by the judge. The Pennsylvania justice system's credibility has taken a hit. 3 Supreme Court justices have had to resign in disgrace, 2 Attorneys General have gone to jail, 2 judges sold juveniles to a private prison, and the Phila. DA was led away in handcuffs in fed. ct. See Jules4Judge.com/integrity

Q: Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?

A: I would recuse myself in any case in which a party, or their attorney, contributed any money to any of my political campaigns; if I had a financial or political interest in the outcome of the case; if I believed that I could not fairly and impartially decide a case or if, for some reason, it appears that I could not fairly do so. Even if I believed I could fairly decide a case, if there was an appearance that I could not, then I would recuse myself. Public confidence in our system is #1.

Q: As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?

A: I will grant petitions to waive court filing fees which would be an unreasonable burden. I will also decide all cases based on the principles of justice, without regard to how good or experienced the attorneys are representing the parties. Off the bench, I will volunteer to speak at law schools and at Bar Assoc. events promoting pro bono. I would be willing to advocate for more support for equal access. I will work closely with the PA Legal Aid Network with sponsorships for fellows and events.

Geoffrey Moulton Jr.

Party: Democratic



Campaign Phone: (215) 817-3312

Campaign Email: Geoff@judgemoulton.com

Twitter: twitter.com/JudgeMoulton

Facebook: <http://Facebook.com/judgemoulton>

Education: B.A. Amherst College; J.D. Columbia University School of Law

Qualifications: The Judicial Evaluation Comm'n of the Pennsylvania Bar Association concluded: "This commission believes that the candidate possesses the highest combination of legal ability, experience, integrity and temperament and, therefore, highly recommends his candidacy for the Pennsylvania Superior Court."

Answer to Questions:

Q: What is the most important quality in a judge?

A: Beyond the baseline requirements of professional competence, integrity, and appropriate judicial temperament, the most important qualification is a commitment to ensuring that every participant in the judicial system is treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

Q: Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?

A: Judges should recuse themselves when their impartiality might reasonably be questioned. In the context of the current judicial campaign, I have recused myself in situations where lawyers providing significant support to my campaign, or members of their firms, represent clients in our court.

Q: As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?

A: I believe deeply in our civil justice system, but it is far from perfect, in large part because too many litigants do not have the resources to afford legal representation in important classes of cases where such representation is not provided by the state. As a result, I have supported and will continue to support efforts to find ways to bridge that gap, including the "Civil Gideon" movement.

Mary P. Murray

Party: Republican



Mailing Address: 200 Parliament Drive Moon Township , PA 15108

Campaign Phone: (412) 264-0440

Website: <http://www.mary4judge.com>

Campaign Email: judgemarymurraycommittee@gmail.com

Facebook: [http://Judge Mary P. Murray Committee for PA Superior Court](http://JudgeMaryP.MurrayCommitteeforPA SuperiorCourt)

Municipality: Moon Township

Education: Duquesne University, BS/BA 1992, MBA 1995, JD 1996

Qualifications: As Magisterial District Judge for over 13 years and as an attorney for over 20, I have heard cases and practiced law in the areas that come before the

Superior Court. In my tenure as a Magisterial District Judge, I have handled over 70,000 cases which make me aware of the concerns of PA citizens.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: The most important quality in a jurist is to listen to the evidence presented at a hearing and to apply the law in a fair and impartial manner. As a jurist giving every citizen their day in Court and being fair and impartial is the only way democracy can continue to flourish in our county.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: I have recused myself from cases where police officers who appear regularly in front of me were either victims or defendants. I have also asked for a change in venue on cases where someone has run against me in a recent campaign or if someone called me at my home and tried to influence my decision on a case.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: On the bench, I make sure that my staff provides litigates information on their rights to appeal and phone numbers for legal representation through Neighborhood Legal Services or Lawyer Referral Services or the Public Defender's Office. Additionally, we try to provide interpreters when requested by the litigants. Off the bench, every citizen should lobby for adequate funding for the Courts and Legal Service organizations.

Carolyn Nichols

Party: Democratic



Mailing Address: 2900 Grays Ferry Ave. PO Box 3998 Philadelphia, PA 19146

Campaign Phone: (267) 586-5260

Website: <http://www.nicholsforpa.com/>

Campaign Email: CarolynNicholsPA@gmail.com

Twitter: twitter.com/nicholsforpa

Facebook: [http://@nicholsforpa](https://www.facebook.com/nicholsforpa)

Municipality: Philadelphia, PA

Education: Eastern University, St. Davids, PA MBA, 2000-2002; Temple University, Phila., PA, LLM Trial Advocacy, 1992-1994; Temple University, Phila. PA., Juris Doctor, 1981-1985; Temple University, Phila., PA, BFA, 1973-1978

Qualifications: Before becoming a judge, I was a licensed attorney for over 20 years, practicing law in local government and as an independent solo practice attorney. Phila. Court of Common Pleas Judge, Criminal Trial Div. 2011-present;

Dep. Secretary of External Affairs, Mayor's Office, 2005-2006; Asst. Gen. Counsel at PPPA, 1999-2005; HR Dir. for Crime Prevention Assoc., 1997; Asst. Legal Counsel PHDC, 1995-1996; Asst. City Solicitor, City of Phila. Law Dept., 1990-1994

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: There are 3 important qualities: knowledge and respect for the law, judicial temperament, and a commitment to community service. Judges must apply the law evenhandedly and make difficult decisions without bias or regard to personal beliefs, popular opinion or political pressure, and operate with the highest personal integrity. We must also respect the Rule of law, follow the precedential law in decision-making and rulings. We should also work to improve our neighborhoods thru community service

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: Impartial judges are a cornerstone of equal access to justice for all citizens. Recusal is a significant decision and is undertaken only when a judge's impartiality can be reasonably questioned. Circumstances, where recusal might be considered, would be conflicts of interest such as, personal economic gains or losses related to the outcome of a case, the involvement of a family member or friend in a case, or if there was a case that I previously worked on as an attorney.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: In order to ensure fair and equitable treatment for a fair trial, I make sure that defendants are represented by competent legal counsel who will zealously defend them. If there is a conflict with the Defenders Office, I appoint legal counsel who can fulfill that role. Concerning all litigants, victims, and

defendants alike, they come to court for justice and seek a full and fair hearing of the issues. Everyone, regardless of their background, or income level, deserve to be treated with respect.

Craig Stedman

Party: Republican



Campaign Phone: (717) 234-5424

Website: <http://www.stedmanforjudge.com>

Campaign Email: craigstedman17@gmail.com

Facebook: <http://@stedmanforjudge>

Education: B.A. History - University of Delaware; J.D. Penn State Dickinson School of Law

Qualifications: The Pennsylvania Bar Association awarded me a "Highly Recommended" rating.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: The most important quality in a judge is fairness. There are many characteristics which make up an excellent judge such as intelligence, integrity, and temperament, but everything a judge does must be forged in fairness. A judge must do the right thing for the right reason in all cases and the Pennsylvania Bar Association specifically noted my commitment to fairness in rating me as Highly Recommended.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: I would follow the current law and all ethical standards in deciding whether to recuse myself. Moreover, even if there is no actual conflict of interest, I would be will be extremely cognizant of the appearance of impropriety in making the decision to recuse. Part of justice is making sure that the public is confident that matters were handled fairly, properly, and without taint.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: Judges must start by leading by example when it comes to integrity and must never forget that they serve the public and not the reverse. As District Attorney, I have made a strong commitment to outreach, prevention, and education, and I believe a judge is in a perfect position to engage the community in similar ways without compromising their impartiality. Education is an absolute key in making sure that people know their rights and it will also instill confidence in our justice system.

JUDGE OF THE COMMONWEALTH COURT

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Commonwealth Court is one of Pennsylvania's two statewide intermediate appellate courts. This court, which was established in 1968, is unlike any other state court in the nation. Its jurisdiction generally is limited to legal matters involving state and local government and regulatory agencies. Litigation typically focuses on such subjects as banking, insurance and utility regulation and laws affecting taxation, land use, elections, labor practices and workers compensation. Commonwealth Court also acts as a court of original jurisdiction, or a trial court, when lawsuits are filed by or against the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Court is made up of nine judges who serve 10-year terms. The president judge is chosen by his or her colleagues for a five-year term. The court generally decides cases in three-judge panels and sits in Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.

Term: 10 years—Salary \$194,422 (Vote for 2)

Candidates (choose 2):

Christine Fizzano Cannon

Party: Republican



Mailing Address: 115 North Jackson Street Media, PA 19063

Campaign Phone: (215) 990-8928

Website: <http://www.FizzanoCannonforJudge.com>

Campaign Email: christinefizzanocannon@gmail.com

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/judgefizzanocannon>

Education: Widener U. School of Law, J.D. cum laude 1994, University of Arizona, B.A. 1991

Qualifications: I am honored to be the only candidate in the race for Commonwealth Court that is rated "Highly Recommended" for a seat on the PA Commonwealth Court by the Pennsylvania Bar Assoc. Judicial Evaluation Commission. My 23 years of experience as a judge, attorney, public official, community leader, and special prosecutor have uniquely prepared me for the position on this Court. I am currently

the head of the civil division of the Court of Common Pleas where I have closed over 1500 civil matters.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: I believe intellect, integrity, humility and temperament are important qualities for effective judges. As head of the court's Civil Trial Section, I listen and consider all sides of each matter before me with impartiality. A courtroom experience is often a rare and difficult experience for litigants. With this in mind, I apply a high level of courtesy and patience in the courtroom, which I believe can positively affect the level of trust and comfort that a litigant has in our justice system.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: It is important not only that a judge approach each case with an open mind and complete impartiality, but also that a judge avoid even the appearance of impropriety or partiality, which could undermine the public's confidence in the judiciary. I abide by the rules of judicial conduct which note that a "judge shall disqualify himself or herself in any proceeding in which the judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned."

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: As a judge, I cannot advocate for or against specific legislation on the state level, however, I believe that everyone should have access to the justice system. I worked as a special prosecutor representing individuals who could not afford an attorney in presenting their cases before the court. In addition, I ensure that equal access to justice exists in my courtroom where I treat everyone I encounter fairly, impartially and equally, including litigants, attorneys, staff and the public.

Ellen H. Ceisler

Party: Democratic



Mailing Address: 1525 Locust St. 6th Floor Philadelphia , PA 19102

Campaign Phone: (215) 735-6760

Website: <http://CeislerforPA.com>

Campaign Email: info@ceislerforpa.com

Twitter: twitter.com/ceislerforpa

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/JudgeEllenCeisler/>

Municipality: Philadelphia

Education: Montgomery County Community College (Associates Degree 1977)

Temple University (BA 1979); Temple University School of Law (JD 1986)

Qualifications: I have been a Common Pleas Court judge for ten years, handled over a thousand bench and jury trials, decided thousands of legal motions, written close to 700 Opinions, and presided in an appellate capacity

handling precisely the types of governmental agency appeals that the Commonwealth Court handles.

Recommended by PA. Bar Association who, after a thorough and independent investigation, determined my judicial reputation and record is one of "fairness, thoroughness, independence, and integrity"

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: A judge must possess the utmost integrity and independence. A judge must approach every case, and every litigant, in an impartial, unbiased, and respectful manner. A judge must give every case the full, careful, and thorough consideration every case deserves before rendering a decision. And finally, a judge must be timely and prepared in all areas of responsibility.

Q: *Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?*

A: I am well versed in the Judicial Canon of Ethics. I would absolutely recuse myself from any matter in which I could not be completely fair and impartial. I conduct my personal and professional life in such a manner as to avoid potential conflicts. I have recused myself once in ten years based on a close relationship with a character witness in the case.

Q: *As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?*

A: I have frequently presided over matters involving unrepresented litigants. I always treat these individuals with the same respect as I would attorneys. I carefully consider all of their issues, pleadings, and arguments, and, to the best of my ability, provide the time and patience necessary to put unrepresented parties at ease by fully explaining the process. Judges should participate in appropriate community outreach programs to help citizens understand our judiciary.

Irene M. Clark

Party: Democratic



Campaign Phone: (412) 848-3731

Campaign Email: ireneforjudge@gmail.com

Facebook: <http://Irene M. Clark for Judge>

Education: 1982-Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania-B.S., 1988-CUNY Law

School, J.D., 1999-McGregor School of Antioch University, M.A./Conflict Resolution

Qualifications: Judge-Pittsburgh Municipal Court-1993-2003; Public Interest Attorney-preventing and addressing blighted and abandoned real estate, training and educating on laws we have, drafting of and advocating for laws we need, implementing new laws, representing inaugural PA land banks-2003-present.

Answer to Questions:

Q: *What is the most important quality in a judge?*

A: The capacity to be reflective is the most important quality in a jurist. It describes being thoughtful and contemplative. The teaching mantra of my public interest law school was "plan, do, reflect". It instilled regular historical review of my place in and contributions to social justice as a lawyer and former judge. Just as the moon reflects only the light of the sun, a good jurist's character, conduct and standards reflect only the highest values and aspirations of our system of democracy.

Q: Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?

A: I did not recuse myself from any case during ten years of judicial service on the Pittsburgh Municipal Court. Although I cannot anticipate circumstances under which I would recuse, I will always adhere to judicial conduct rules. I will continuously reflect on my impartiality from an objective point of view, readily disclose relevant information and be guided by Formal Advisory Opinion 2015-4 of the Judicial Ethics Committee of the PA Conference of State Trial Judges.

Q: As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?

A: My record demonstrates commitment to social justice as a public interest attorney and to quality court administration as a former judge. As an appellate judge, I will do my part to eliminate the 'justice gap'. On the bench, I will review trial judges' use of existing authority to appoint counsel for litigants. Off the bench, I will join and advance the state and national Civil Gideon movement and persevere for systems' change needed for PA to achieve a record of excellence on access to justice.

Paul N. Lalley

Party: Republican



Campaign Phone: (412) 395-1273

Campaign Email: lalley4judge@gmail.com

Education: "Dickinson School of Law -- J.D. 1996 University of Pennsylvania -- B.A. 1993"

Qualifications: I am highly recommended by the Allegheny County Bar Association for Commonwealth Court and have twice been recommended by the Pennsylvania Bar Association for the Commonwealth Court. I am a former Pennsylvania Supreme Court law clerk and a successful appellate litigator.

Facebook: <http://lalley4judge>

Answer to Questions:

Q: What is the most important quality in a judge?

A: Fairness to the parties is the most important quality in a judge. It means treating parties with courtesy, respect, patience, and an open-minded willingness to listen to their positions and allow them to have their say.

Q: Under what circumstances would you recuse or have you recused from a case?

A: I would recuse myself from any case where the Code of Judicial Conduct requires my recusal, or in any case where, after serious reflection, I would find that I could not give impartial consideration to a party's cause for whatever reason.

Q: As a member of the judiciary, what can you do on and off the bench to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to justice?

A: Supporting the efforts of the ACBA and the PBA to ensure the provision of effective legal services to all members of our society, regardless of their means, is what I would continue to do if I am elected to the Commonwealth Court.

Nov. 7 Ballot Question

This question will be on the November 7 ballot:

“Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to permit the General Assembly to enact legislation authorizing local taxing authorities to exclude from taxation up to 100 percent of the assessed value of each homestead property with a local taxing jurisdiction, rather than limit the exclusion to one-half of the median assessed value of all homestead property, which is the existing law.”

This amendment modifies the constitutional requirement that all commercial property and homes be treated the same and it would be a first step in any effort to eliminate property taxation for homeowners altogether.

The amendment does not by itself eliminate property taxes, it merely authorizes the House of Representatives to enact implementing legislation giving local taxing authorities — county, municipal and/or school — the option to do so.

Revenue from any property taxes eliminated in this manner must be made up through other means.

Any alternative tax scheme requiring increases in income taxes and/or sales taxes would necessarily benefit senior citizens living on fixed incomes whose earning days are behind them while putting much more of the tax burden on young working families and in the case of a sales tax increase, on the poor.

Proponents say the amendment would be the first step in changing the system so that an inability to pay property taxes could never again result in the loss of homes that people have worked their whole lives to pay for.

Opponents say that the amendment allows taxing authorities to replace a stable tax source (property) with unstable ones (income and sales taxes) that fluctuate with the economy and could be subject to legislative manipulation. Additionally, opponents fear that allowing districts to eliminate property taxation could lead to a loss of local control of education and to a significantly diminishing commitment to public education.