

Vote411 Voters' Mini-Guide

Fall 2021 - Allegheny County

Judge of the Court of Common Pleas

This Court of Common Pleas Voters' Mini-Guide is an excerpt of the online Vote411 Voters' Guide -- a project of the League of Women Voters. To see your entire ballot, visit Vote411.org.

There are 18 candidates competing for 10 seats on the Court of Common Pleas. Vote for not more than TEN (10).

The Court of Common Pleas is primarily a trial court. There are four divisions of the Court of Common Pleas: Civil, Criminal, Orphans', and Family. The judges can be assigned from one division to another as needed. Judges can run on both the Republican and Democratic tickets.

Term: 10 years

Candidates are listed alphabetically. They will appear in a different order on your ballot.

You can find more information, and view short videos of these candidates at www.lwvpgh.org/common-pleas.

*All information in Vote411 Voters' Guides is submitted by the candidates and has not been edited or altered in any way. **The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh** has made every effort to enlist the participation of each candidate running for this position. Candidates who would like to submit or update their written answers should contact vote411@lwvpgh.org.*





Bruce Beemer

Party: Dem, Rep

Biographical Info:

Campaign Email: info@KeepJudgeBeemer.com

Campaign Web Site: <http://www.KeepJudgeBeemer.com>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/JudgeBeemer

District: 5th Judicial District (Allegheny County)

Education: College of William and Mary (1987-1989), transferred University of Scranton (1989-1992), BA History, Summa Cum Laude University of Pittsburgh School of Law (1992-1995)

Qualifications for office: Sitting Allegheny Common Pleas Court Judge (appointed by Gov. Tom Wolf in Dec. 2019), 49th Attorney General of Pennsylvania, Inspector General of Pennsylvania, Office of Attorney General (First Deputy Attorney General, Senior Counsel, Chief of Criminal Prosecutions, Chief of Staff)

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I serve in the Criminal Division and am one of only 2 judges managing the Sex Offender Court Docket, handling allegations of crimes committed against children. I served for 14 years in the Allegheny DA's Office as an ADA and then as a Deputy DA in charge of multiple units within the office. I tried to verdict approximately 125 jury trials. After leaving the DA's Office, I joined my father as a partner at his and my late-mother's firm focusing on criminal defense and environmental cases. I've had cases in the criminal, juvenile, and civil divisions. In those prior roles and now as a judge, I see the people in each case and strive to be fair and impartial. All of these experiences qualify me to continue to handle a docket as a judge.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: Throughout my career, I have been the person people have turned to when governmental bodies have been in need of reform. In the wake of the Kathleen Kane scandal, I was appointed by the Governor and unanimously confirmed by the PA Senate as the 49th Attorney General of Pennsylvania. During my tenure, I helped to restore morale within the Office and repaired the broken relationships with other agencies. I then served as the Inspector General of Pennsylvania, where I investigated waste, fraud, corruption, and abuse in state government agencies. Since becoming the first new judge in decades to be sent directly to the Criminal Division, I have worked tirelessly to mitigate the inequalities and inefficiencies in our judicial and penal system.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: While I greatly admire certain Supreme Court Justices (Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Thurgood Marshall come immediately to mind), it has been both my personal interactions with and observations of Allegheny County President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark that make her my role model. She was my supervisor at the District Attorney's Office for several years. Judge Clark exemplified empathy and compassion as a prosecutor, traits that are absolutely essential to being a fair and impartial judge. Judge Clark leads by quiet and distinguished example and displays a level of humility and respect for others we all need to show in the judiciary. She is prepared, punctual, and courteous to all who are before her. She is a superb role model for any judge.



Tom Caulfield

Party: Dem

Biographical Info:

Campaign Email: JudgeCaulfield2021@gmail.com

Campaign Web Site: <http://www.JudgeCaulfield2021.com>

Facebook: Tom Caulfield for Court of Common Pleas Judge

Twitter: @Caulfield2021

Education: I graduated summa cum laude from the University of Pittsburgh in 1988. I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy. I attended the University Honors College and was a University Scholar. I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 1991 when I receive my Juris Doctor.

Qualifications for office: I am Highly Recommended by the Allegheny County Bar Association. I have been a Magisterial District Judge since 2010 and have heard over 26,000 cases in every area of the law. From 1992 until 2010 I was an attorney with the Office of the Public Defender, and also had a solo practice for 12 years.

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: As an attorney with the Office of the Public Defender, my practice was concentrated in the Criminal Division. I represented clients in preliminary hearings, at trials by jury as well as before Judges, in post trial motions, as well as probation and parole matters. I had many occasions to appear in Family Division to argue PFA issues, and in Orphans Court to represent people fighting mental health commitments. From 1991 to 2004, I had a solo practice that was much more diverse. While still practicing criminal law, I also represented plaintiffs and defendants in civil cases, landlord and tenant actions, divorce and custody cases, and clients in juvenile court cases. My practice took me to most of the counties in southwest Pennsylvania.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: I try to treat everyone I interact with respectfully. All parties to the cases I hear, all attorneys who appear before me, and all witnesses who may testify in my courtroom deserve to be treated as I would like to be treated myself. In my years as an attorney, but especially my time as a Public Defender, I saw many Judges mistreat and demean people in their courtrooms. This was especially true for my indigent clients. No matter who is before me, no matter the type of case, and no matter the outcome, everyone must be treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. Failure to do so damages the integrity of the court and weakens its authority and reputation. As a Magisterial District Judge, this is one of the ethical canons I live by.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: I do not have a single role model. In my 19 years of representing clients prior to taking the bench in 2010, I appeared before dozens of Common Pleas Court Judges and Magisterial District Judges in nine different counties. I tried to take away something from every one of these court appearances. Sometimes it was a positive thing that particular Judge did, and sometimes it was a negative thing. I realized that each Judge brings his or her own strengths and weaknesses with them, and after my appointment I was determined to take the best of all of them and work to try to avoid their shortcomings. Rather than simply try to be the next "Judge So and So", I have always tried to be the best Judge Caulfield I can be. It is a work in progress.



William Bill Caye

Party: Rep

Biographical Info:

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Campaign Web Site: <http://www.williamcaye.com>

Facebook: Caye for Judge

Twitter: @BillCaye4J

District: Allegheny County

Education: Duquesne University, School of Law, JD Duquesne University, Liberal Arts, BA

Qualifications for office: Recommended - Common Pleas Judge, Allegheny Co. Bar Assoc.; Endorsed for Judge, Allegheny Labor

Council; Endorsed for Judge, Allegheny Co. Democratic Party; Endorsed by Char Valley Democrats; Endorsed by Teamsters Joint Council 40 & FOP#1; Past Sr. Deputy Attorney General, Assist. District Attorney

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I have extensive trial verdict and judicial support experience in our Courts of Common Pleas sections. For over 27 years, I have been engaged on all sides of legal disputes in substantial, complex pretrial settlement negotiations, motions, litigation, trials & alternative dispute resolutions. This all-inclusive court room litigation experience, as described, starts at the minor judiciary and covers trial courts across our state - primarily in areas of child advocacy in Juvenile delinquency, Criminal prosecutions & Criminal defense. I teach professional education at The Cyril Wecht Institute.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: Servant-leader is an important personal trait that would make me an effective impartial Common Pleas Judge. I listen and problem solve, and as such, I am well suited to make competent court rulings that will make a real and meaningful difference for enhancing quality of life issues to transform circumstances for all people with poise, honest communication, a sense of fairness, and compassion. Judges must lead in tough cases and communicate effectively and responsibly in proactive, holistic ways to conscientiously serve every citizen every time fairly and equitably.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: RBG. Justice Ginsburg was my judicial role model because she understood how to relate to people she sometimes disagreed with, with class and humanity. As a Judge, she administered balanced justice and equity as Constitutionally charged with a profound, impartial, and independent daily duty of care. In so doing, RBG performed evolving judicial obligations that were entrusted by the will of the people, for the people, and to benefit all of the people. Her decisions including her dissents significantly impact many lives in a positive way. Judges like her must be critical thinkers and deliberate in their reasoning in order to solve problems and guide sound decision making.



Jessel Costa

Party: Dem

Biographical Info:

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jesselcosta>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/jesselcosta>

District: Allegheny County

Education: Central Catholic High School. Pitt Undergrad: Pitt News; Phi Sigma Pi, honors fraternity; intern at PA Department of Labor and Industry & Pittsburgh City Council. Duquesne Law: Student Bar Association; Juris Magazine; intern at Pennsylvania Securities Commission & Pittsburgh Law Department.

Qualifications for office: Working on both sides of a trial—as a public defender AND prosecutor—coupled with working on every aspect of a case—from the investigatory stage through a jury verdict—demonstrates a holistic, comprehensive understanding of the legal system. Practiced in more than 20 counties in western PA.

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: Jessel began his career as an attorney at the Allegheny County Office of the Public Defender. As an Assistant Public Defender, he handled hundreds of cases and clients in all levels of the court system. For the next 6 years, Jessel served as a Deputy Attorney General prosecuting some of the most heinous crimes imaginable: child sexual abuse and child pornography offenses. As Deputy Attorney General, he presided over hundreds of investigations and cases in more than 20 counties throughout western Pennsylvania. Jessel now works in private practice where he specializes in criminal defense.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: Jessel believes that his temperament, listening skills, familiarity with both sides of a dispute, and his ability to think outside of the box, are all qualities that would make an effective judge. Temperament ensures that a judge is respectful and kind. Listening skills ensure that a judge is reasoned and fair. Understanding issues from both sides ensures that a judge is free from bias. Ability to think outside of the box ensures that a judge will not be hamstrung by the status quo, but rather, look for creative solutions to make the system work better, and guarantee true justice.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: Jessel's judicial role model is the late, great Ruth Bader Ginsburg. As the first Jewish woman on the Supreme Court, and only the second woman, Ginsburg was a trail-blazer and an inspiration. She was a champion of women's rights, and stalwart of progressive jurisprudence, especially as the Court grew more conservative during her tenure.



Anthony Deluca

Party: Rep

Biographical Info:

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Campaign Web Site: <http://www.DeLuca4Judge.com>

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Twitter: <http://twitter.com/deluca4judge>

District: Allegheny County/5th Judicial District of Pennsylvania

Education: Boston College, 1994 University of Pittsburgh School of Law, 1997, Magna Cum Laude

Qualifications for office: Highly Recommended by the Allegheny County Bar Association Instrumental in Developing Mental Health Court in Allegheny County. Only Union Labor Attorney in the Court of Common Pleas race. Has represented working families for better wages, benefits and working conditions for well over a decade.

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: The most impactful period of my career is when I worked to develop the Mental Health Court in Allegheny County. I was able to experience the incredible benefit of working in a collaborative way in the Criminal Justice System to treat offenders and prevent recidivism. I have a wide variety of experience in the Criminal Courts as a Criminal defense attorney for over 15 years and before that an Assistant District Attorney. In my career I have been involved in hundreds of trials. I have also practiced in the civil courts as the only union side labor attorney in the Court of Common Pleas race. I have been representing unions as a substantial part of my career for over a decade. Finally, I have done some work in every of the Divisions.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: Many people in my family are school teachers including my parents, grandmother, Aunts, Uncles and cousins. When I thought of going into the teaching profession I was warned that I was not patient enough. Since that time, through life experience and being the father of three kids, I have learned patience. That patience is necessary in a judge because a judge should take the time to lean who is before the bench to best render decisions. Moreover, particularly when a defendant is in need of treatment, a judge should be patient in allowing that treatment to take effect.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: I clerked for Judge Maureen Lally-Green on the Pennsylvania Superior Court. She was a shining example of the traits of intelligence, passion, work ethic and fair mindedness that a great judge must possess.

Mark Patrick Flaherty

Party: Rep

This candidate has not responded.

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: *Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?*

A: - no response -

Q: *Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.*

A: - no response -

Q: *Who is your judicial role model and why?*

A: - no response -



Nicola Henry-Taylor

Party: Dem

Biographical Info:

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Nicola4J>

District: Allegheny County

Education: Slippery Rock University, 1993 Duquesne University School of Law, 1996

Qualifications for office: I have 25 years of experience practicing law, including clerking for judges, running the county mental health court, and private practice focusing on family and criminal law.

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I have experience arguing in front of every division of the Court of Common Pleas. As an assistant District Attorney, I ran the County's Mental Health Court. In my private practice, I focus on family and criminal court matters. I am often appointed to be a Guardian ad Litem, for a child, and represent an Alleged Incapacitated adult in Orphan's court. If elected, I want to be a family court judge and continue to do that incredibly important work.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: My lived experiences make me perfectly suited to be a judge in the Court of Common Pleas. As an immigrant and black woman, I know the issues facing those communities and the under-representation, and systemic bias, faced in the judicial system. As an adoptive mother, I know the importance of the family division and the profound impact the court has on families every day.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: Judges are leaders who set the tone of the courtroom environment. Judges like Judge Clark, Judge Hens-Greco, Judge Bush, Judge McGaugh and Judge Williams who hire black staff, expect nothing but professionalism from everyone in their chambers are great examples. These Judges, and others like them, advocate for trauma informed courts, training on implicit bias and inclusive environments.

Rick Hosking

Party: Rep

This candidate has not responded.

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: *Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?*

A: - no response -

Q: *Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.*

A: - no response -

Q: *Who is your judicial role model and why?*

A: - no response -



Elliot Howsie

Party: Dem

Biographical Info:

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ElliotHowsie2021>

Education: Central Catholic High School, class of '86; Indiana University of Pennsylvania, BA in Criminology; Indiana University of Pennsylvania, MA in Criminology; Duquesne School of Law, class of '98

Qualifications for office: Social Worker for court-involved families; Assistant District Attorney; Director of the Public Defender’s Office; Judge in the Family Division; Judge in the Criminal Division; Highly Recommended by the Allegheny County Bar Association

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I have been practicing law in Allegheny County for more than 20yrs. I understand the generational impact that our courts have on families and communities. In my role as the Director of the Public Defender’s Office, I was responsible for ensuring that every person that was unable to afford an attorney received competent effective legal representation. As a prosecutor in the District Attorney’s Office, I was responsible for prosecuting perpetrators of physical and sexual abuse of children. As a defense attorney, I was responsible for protecting the rights of people accused of a crime, and representing people in family court matters. My previous work experience qualifies me to continue serving in the Family and Criminal Division of the Court.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: I am an effective judge because I am patient and compassionate. I believe that my background, including growing up in a low income community, and working in the social service field, has given me a perspective and understanding of the issues that typically result in members of our communities becoming involved in the court system. Given my legal experience as a prosecutor and a defense attorney, I understand that there are two sides to every story and as a judge I must listen to both sides and allow everyone the opportunity to be heard prior to rendering a decision. Therefore, I believe that my character traits and life experiences have enabled me to develop a fairly unique judicial approach to presiding over cases in the court system.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: Judge Kim Clark, our current President Judge in the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas. Judge Clark is a role model for me because she grew up in Wilksburg a short distance from my childhood home and she was the first African American Judge to become President Judge in the history of our Court. Judge Clark treats everyone in a fair and equitable manner and affords everyone an opportunity to be heard prior to rendering a decision. Judge Clark is an extremely accomplished jurist who ensures that everyone appearing before her is treated with dignity and respect. She allows her qualifications to speak for themselves and she has performed her duties as President Judge with compassion and humility during times of uncertainty.



Daniel J. Konieczka, Jr.

Party: Rep

Biographical Info:

Campaign Email: dankforjudge@gmail.com

Campaign Web Site: <http://www.dankforjudge.com>

Facebook: [Facebook/dankforjudge](https://www.facebook.com/dankforjudge)

Education: University of Pittsburgh - BA - 1982 University of Pittsburgh - JD - 1986

Qualifications for office: Highly recommended by the ACBA. I am a practicing attorney with over thirty-four years of trial experience. I am a sitting Magisterial District Judge. I also served as Deputy District Attorney in Allegheny County for over 23 years. Finally, I have 8 years of criminal defense/juvenile experience

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: As a magisterial district judge, I currently enter judgments in hundreds of civil, criminal and juvenile matters. As a Deputy District Attorney, I personally litigated or directed the prosecution of thousands of cases to include the most violent offenders and also oversaw the adult certification of appropriate juvenile matters. During my tenure, I was sworn in as a federal Special Assistant United States Attorney for the investigation, indictment and prosecution of the violent street LAW gang. As a criminal defense attorney, I handled both criminal and juvenile matters.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: I possess, as a current trier of fact, the trait of a thorough listener. A thorough listener possesses the courtroom knowledge and experience to discern, what sometimes is not well-articulated, but highly relevant to the issue at hand. A thorough listener permits all sides an equal opportunity to present their perspective. In addition, a thorough listener must understand how the law applies to the established facts. Finally, a thorough listener enters a judgment based on their common sense, personal integrity and empathy to all parties.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: I have appeared in many courtrooms and observe many fine jurists. U.S. District judges, Hornak, Barry-Fischer, and Ambrose modeled demeanor, thoroughness and courtroom command respectively. Common Pleas judges Allen (Superior Court), McDaniel, and Borkowski modeled fairness, confidence and command of the law respectively. Justice David N. Wecht is a model for his opinion writing clarity. However, to select one, the Honorable Jeffrey A. Manning is closest in possessing all of the aforementioned traits. Honorary mention to late judge Robert Dauer whose affability is unmatched.



Sabrina Korbel

Party: Dem, Rep

Biographical Info:

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Campaign Web Site: <http://www.SabrinaForJudge.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TeamSabrina2021>

Twitter: @SabrinaKorbel

District: Allegheny County

Education: Susquehanna University Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science - 1999 Graduated cum laude
with Univ. Honors University of Pittsburgh School of Law
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Juris Doctor - May 2002 President,
Student Bar Association 2002 Student Leader of the Year Award

Qualifications for office: Trial Attorney with nearly 20 years
experience representing the most resource burdened in Family Law

matters. Highly Recommended - ACBA. Serves on panels and roundtables as an expert in domestic violence, trauma & safety planning. Works to promote safe, respectful & equal access to justice for all.

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I have managed and provided legal representation to victims of domestic violence in over 7000 cases in the Family Division, including participation in negotiations, motions, hearings, and trials before Judges, Masters and Hearing Officers. Many of these matters have related cases in the Criminal Division allowing me to gain extensive knowledge of the criminal justice system and areas of needed reform. In the Orphans Division, I have handled adoption cases. I do not practice in the Civil Division, but I do oversee cases as a Hearing Officer (like a judge) for the Allegheny County Retirement Board. This experience has given me the knowledge and temperament needed to take the bench and make a positive impact on Allegheny County families.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: Empathetic. This does not mean that as a judge I would identify with each person's authentic lived experience. It does mean that I will acknowledge my bias, value our differences and accept that a person's lived experience affects how they see the world and make decisions for themselves and their families. Also, I have always recognized that most people who access the justice system have experienced some level of trauma and they need to feel safe to share their stories, that their voice is heard in the courtroom and that they are engaged in their legal case. As a judge, I would always show empathy and promise to apply my twenty years of training to ensure the use of a trauma informed approach and to strive to be culturally competent.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: The Honorable Kathleen Mulligan. She is a devoted and dedicated public servant. Judge Mulligan prioritizes the needs of the court's true customers, the litigants appearing before her, protecting their rights and explaining procedures, even when it inconveniences her or requires the commitment of additional time and resources. She treats people fairly and with respect, ensuring that they are engaged in their legal cases and understand the results and next steps. She identifies systemic changes that advance access to justice, collaborating with other individuals doing the work to ensure holistic improvements. She is humble, impartial and hardworking and has always strived to make the court equitable and accessible.



Lisa Middleman

Party: Dem, Rep

Biographical Info:

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Facebook: <http://facebook.com/lisamiddlemanforjudge>

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District: Allegheny County

Education: 1980-1983 Duke University, Bachelor of Arts in History; 1982 (summer) Carnegie Mellon University, Computer Science; 1984-1987 University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Juris Doctorate; 2012 Community College of Allegheny County "Fundamentals of Supervision and Management"

Qualifications for office: Proficiency in the Rules of Evidence and Procedure that are essential to making correct rulings on case

dispositive issues. Taught many continuing legal education classes for attorneys. Training for magistrates seeking to hear homicide cases. Conducted study on racial disparity in jury panels.

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: In addition to representing those charged with all grades of criminal offenses in adult and juvenile courts, I have represented witnesses and victims at preliminary hearings, trials, motions, grand jury proceedings, mental health commitments, PFAs, and landlord/tenant disputes. As the first woman in the PD homicide unit, I have 34 years experience trying the most demanding and life-altering death penalty cases. I have demonstrated my dedication to the rule of law, ability to work hard to research and resolve complex issues, and a deep appreciation for the significance that my judgement may have, not only on the people who would appear before me, but on businesses, families and communities.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: One of the personal traits that will make me an effective judge is my understanding that we are never finished learning. I am a perpetual student of the law, research in social science, and of the people around me. My willingness to be informed, not only by policies from other jurisdictions, statistics, texts and legal precedent, but from the experiences of people in our community, will allow me to continue to seek out solutions that are fair and harm reductive. We must continue to explore experiences that are different from our own in order to sharpen critical thinking skills, gain insight and perspective, and to expand our knowledge. No one is ever finished questioning and learning from their mistakes, triumphs and overall experiences.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: My judicial role model is Earl Warren, former Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court. Warren's greatest strength was not scholarly writing, but rather in his ability to marshal support and lead the Court to decisions that recognized and expanded individual civil rights. Warren authored landmark decisions in *Miranda v Arizona* and *Brown v Board of Education*. He led a Court that examined legal disadvantage by virtue of race, poverty, sex and political principles. Warren faced early backlash for decisions upholding one man one vote, interracial marriage, and the rights of accused in criminal cases, yet he remained firm that "when the rights of any individual or group are chipped away, the freedom of all erodes."



Joseph Patrick Murphy

Party: Rep

Biographical Info:

Campaign Email: jmurphy@jmurphyfirm.com

Campaign Web Site: <http://josephpatrickmurphy.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/josephpatrickmurphy>

District: Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania (Allegheny County)

Education: B.A. Stockton College J.D. Duquesne University Law School

Qualifications for office: Over Twenty Years' Experience Representing People in Court Matters

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I have been practicing actual courtroom law for over twenty years. I have a long history of representing PEOPLE. I was never a prosecutor or foreclosure attorney, I represented PEOPLE. During the sub-prime crisis I recruited and trained attorneys all over the commonwealth in how to defend people against predatory collections lawsuits. We saved millions of dollars for Citizens of our Commonwealth. This work went on for over a decade and involved endless appearances in court and everyone involved in the effort got a lot of experience. As a Roman Catholic, I also have a long history representing people in humanitarian immigration that dates back to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: Listening. I listen to people. I even try to create space for them to speak in. Listening can be an act of respect, even humility. Judges must show, and actually have, respect for the Citizens that come before them. A Judge that shows humility and respect will usually find those qualities reciprocated by others around them.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: R. Stanton Wettick. He was even tempered, patient, respectful of the litigants and public. Also very smart, a hard worker. Judge Wettick's rulings were very consistent. This made our court system very efficient.



Chuck Porter

Party: Rep

Biographical Info:

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Campaign Web Site:

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Facebook: <https://facebook.com/ChuckPorterforJudge/>

District: Allegheny County

Education: BSBA Duquense University 1982 JD
Duquense University School Law 1985-Law Review

Qualifications for office: I've been a trial lawyer for 36 years I have served as an Assistant District Attorney, And

have been in private practice for 34 where I have practiced at some point in every division. I have contemporaneously served as a judicial law clerk for three common please court judges for nearly thirty years

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I began my career as an assistant District Attorney where I represented the Commonwealth in pretrial and trial manners. I have been in private practice since September of 1987. I have practiced in each division at some point during my career. I have primarily been a criminal defense lawyer throughout my private practice. I have accepted court appointments as well as private clients throughout my career. I have tried numerous jury trials in both the state and federal court systems throughout my thirty-six years of being a trial lawyer. I have been recognized by my peers as one of the best trial lawyers in America since 2006. Only 1 of the 17 candidates have achieved such a recognition. I've also represented the DA's office in civil matters

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: I believe I am even tempered and possess common sense. I have been viewed by my colleagues as a "lawyer's lawyer" I have appeared in front of numerous judges over the past thirty-six years all of these appearances have been learning experiences that better enable me to understand what makes an effective judge. My experience, temperament and reputation amongst my peers will make me an effective judge.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: My judicial role model is Judge Gustave Diamond. I had the pleasure of appearing before him in many cases in the US District Court. One noteworthy case involved 13 defendants and spanned 11 weeks of trial Judge Diamond efficiently handled such a large case. He was fair and even handed with all lawyers and parties. He was prepared at all times and thoughtfully handled all objections and evidentiary matters. His rulings were well thought out and supported by the law. He required the government to properly present their case. Judge Diamond's thoughtful, fair and even approach gave all in his courtroom a level playing field. He listened carefully to the arguments of the lawyers treated all with respect and made rulings consistent with the law.



Tiffany Sizemore

Party: Dem

Biographical Info:

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Campaign Web Site: <http://votetiffanysizemore.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsoftiffany>

District: Allegheny County; Fifth Judicial District

Education: High School: The Winchester Thurston School (1995); College: Antioch College, B.A., Education (2000); Howard University School of Law, cum laude, J.D. (2004)

Qualifications for office: Tiffany is a 16-year courtroom veteran who has spent her entire career representing individuals who have been marginalized in court systems. She spent the first ten years of her career as a public defender and is now a clinical professor working to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I am a native Pittsburgher who left after high school in 1995 and returned home as an experienced lawyer in 2012. Since 2013, my practice has been primarily in Juvenile Court (Family Division) representing young people who are facing charges. I developed the Youth Advocacy Clinic at Duquesne University School of Law. Our education work sometimes takes us to the Civil Division. Additionally, I have frequently represented young people who are charged in the adult system (Criminal Division) and have jury trial experience there. The courtroom experience that I have will make me a judge who is ready on Day One to preside over cases and understand and relate to those who appear before me.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: I am tenacious. I am committed to working on my own caseload, but also to working on the systemic problems that plague our local court system including: reliance on cash bail, lack of sufficient community programming, and ending the school-to-prison pipeline. Mass incarceration is the unacceptable result when we allow these problems to flourish. We cannot afford to elect judges who will turn a blind eye to these issues or refuse to work on them outside of their individual caseloads. I have spent many years doing policy and community work, and I will take those policy partners to the bench with me. I will continue the work I am already doing as opposed to hoping to start it after I take the bench. I will be ready on Day One.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: I have many judicial role models, locally and nationally. However, one of my favorite judicial role models is Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Justice Sotomayor has consistently recognized and paid homage to ignored and marginalized people in her opinions. She is someone who, while sitting in one of the most powerful positions in the country, has not forgotten from where she came. During her confirmation hearings, Justice Sotomayor recognized the importance of diversity on the bench. She explicitly recognized that a woman of color, with the richness of her life experiences, would more often than not reach a better decision than her counterparts without those experiences. I agree with her and intend to bring the same to my work.



Chelsa Wagner

Party: Dem

Biographical Info:

Campaign Email: info@electchelsa.com

Campaign Web Site: <http://www.electchelsa.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChelsaWagnerforJudge>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ElectChelsa>

District: Allegheny County

Education: The University of Chicago, BA (Public Policy Studies)
The University of Pittsburgh School of Law, JD (Certificate in Civil Litigation)
University of Virginia Darden Political Leaders Certificate Program
CMU Women's Leadership and Negotiation Academy Certificate Program

Qualifications for office: Attorney for 16 years: public interest and advocacy focus; private practice areas have spanned litigation, employment law, immigration & business transactions. Allegheny

County Controller; Pennsylvania State Legislator (House Judiciary Cmte) Fmr. Business Analyst for state and municipal policy

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: I have been an attorney for sixteen years, starting as a plaintiff's attorney. However, as an elected official, my foremost focus has been with matters of public interest and advocacy, though I have maintained some private legal practice over the years. In these roles, I have had experience across the civil, criminal and family divisions. I've been a leader on the most pressing advocacy and reform efforts, including healthcare access, environmental justice, reforms within the Allegheny County Jail and efforts to reform fines and fees. My legal ability, independence, leadership, government understanding, advanced administrative capability, and devotion to the improvement of the quality of justice, are crucial qualities for this role.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: Principled, tested and audacious leadership. Nothing is a better predictor of how one will perform in any public office than how she has responded to challenges and adversity in life. I have demonstrated personally and professionally that I am steadfast in conducting myself with integrity, courage and tenacity. I've always been willing to speak truth to power, but also thereafter to do the more difficult work to implement reform. The role of a judge is two-fold: first is the adhering to the highest standards within her own courtroom; yet second, and often overlooked is that she must lead within our system of justice and be a true steward of our democracy. The present times desperately call for that very leadership from our judges.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: As with role models generally, I have a number of judicial role models. The common thread among each was their legal acuity combined with courage and foresight, and collective contributions to the larger body of civil rights laws. Most notable among them are Supreme Court Justices Thurgood Marshall, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Louis Brandeis. I would also point to important contributions made by individuals who came to the bench from roles in public office, such as Justices Frank Murphy and Earl Warren.



Wrenna Watson

Party: Dem

Biographical Info:

Campaign Email: JudgeWrennaWatson@gmail.com

Campaign Web Site: <http://WRENNAWATSON.COM>

Facebook: VOTE WATSON 4 JUDGE

Twitter: No Twitter account; Instagram - VOTE WATSON 4 JUDGE

District: Allegheny County Court Of Common Pleas - 5th Judicial District

Education: Duquesne University School of Law - Juris Doctor; Howard University - Bachelor of Science Psychology; Minor History; Schenley High School - Academic Diploma; The Ellis School - 10th Grade Promotion; Frick - 4.5 through 8th Grade Graduation (Scholars Program); Crescent Elementary - K to Grade 4.5

Qualifications for office: 29 year practicing Attorney; 26 year Judge in the Minor Judiciary adjudicate 50,000+ cases as Judge of Pgh Magistrates Court, Pa LCB Hearing Officer, Chair-Pgh Planning Commission and Zoning Board and as Mental Health Hearing Officer (26 yrs) for persons 302'd. Experienced . Fair . Respectful.

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: A 29-yr practicing Attorney, I represent thousands of children and community members in every division of Court. For 26 yrs, I sit as a Judge in the Minor Judiciary deciding 50,000+ cases. As Judge of Pgh Magistrates Court, I heard 22,000+ cases; criminal, child sex assault, domestic violence, homicide, traffic/housing and dog court matters; conducted arraignments, set bail, issued warrants. I served as Pa LCB Hearing Examiner for W Pa/Erie. I chaired Pgh Planning Commission and Zoning Board hearings (8 yrs), was the Section 8 Grievance Hearing Officer for HACP, and most importantly, I am a 26-yr Hearing Officer for Orphans' Court conducting Mental Health hearings for persons who have been 302'd and are on a locked psychiatric unit.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: I am fair. As City Magistrate, I presided over a case with an older wm Defendant caught with a huge bag of loosely packed marijuana. The charges were standard: Possession and Possession w/the Intent to Deliver. I called the case. The ADA and Defense Attorney had a deal: to withdraw the Possession w/the Intent to Deliver and proceed on the Possession only. I signed the papers. Two months later, the same factual circumstances presented except in this case it was a young bm. I called the case. I waited to hear the deal. But there was none. Rather than proceed to hearing I took control of the case. I eliminated the Intent to Deliver and Held for Possession only. Fair is for all. I have been fair for 26 years in my courtrooms.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: The Honorable J. Warren Watson, the 1st elected Black judge in Allegheny County, is 98 y.o., doing well, plays his horn and with whom I am Blessed to live. He is my 1st role model and was my 1st teacher and mentor in the law. Teaching began around the dinner table before I was 10. I knew my legal rights in middle and high school. I asserted my knowledge to help friends. Justice Thurgood Marshall, an alum, as am I and my mother, of Howard University, my 2nd role model, forged civil rights in Brown v Board of Education (1954). And, the Honorable Cheryl Allen where I represented juveniles. Judge Allen understood the needs of children and communities like a good mother. Justice was firm but fair. My father is still my best mentor!



Richard L. Weiss

Party: Grn

Biographical Info:

Campaign Email: RLWeiss@gmail.com

Campaign Web Site:

<http://www.alleghenygreens.org/platform/candidates>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RichardLWeiss>

Education: Bethel Park High School; University of Pittsburgh, BA Political Science; University of Denver, Juris Doctor; American University, Master of Laws in International Legal Studies, Ford Foundation Fellowship; University of Chicago, Master of Business Administration

Qualifications for office: Admitted to Pennsylvania Bar, 1992, Attorney number 66095

Questions:

Q: Describe your legal experience in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans Division and why this experience qualifies you to be a judge?

A: Civil and criminal law were required courses and on the bar exam. Family law was not a required course but I took family law as an elective in law school because I was interested in learning the subject. While in law school, I interned for a state district court judge for academic credit. (I also interned at a large corporation and a state regulatory agency.) I have been working as a lawyer in private practice for almost three decades, for the U.S. federal govt at USAID, for foreign investors in Indonesia, and as litigation support in the U.S. If change and reform is what you want, seek it from outside the current system. As an outsider, I would be open to receiving and implementing proposals from outside experts.

Q: Describe an important personal trait that would make you an effective judge in the Court of Common Pleas.

A: I listen to all sides dispassionately. If there is new evidence I am willing to change my mind. I believe in the value of every human being. If elected: 1. I will not set cash bail. 2. I will not accept charges merely for possession of cannabis.

Q: Who is your judicial role model and why?

A: Former Texas Judge and District Attorney Ronnie Earl.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL16F062474CF806E0>