

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Drew Aldinger

Court of Common Pleas

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1. Why are you qualified and well-suited to serve as a judge on the court for which you are running?

I am highly qualified and well-suited to serve as a Court of Common Pleas judge as a result of my professional experience, educational and personal background, work ethic, and professional demeanor. Moreover, I am fully committed to improving our system of justice.

I have a large amount of experience in the courtrooms of Philadelphia. Throughout my legal career I have practiced in the Court of Common Pleas, Municipal Court, the Pennsylvania appellate courts, and the federal courts. I practiced personal injury law on behalf of injured plaintiffs from 1997 through 1998. From 1998 through 2008, I was the lead litigation attorney in the Philadelphia office of my current firm, with court appearances three or four times per week. My vast courtroom experience has provided great insight and familiarity with courtroom procedures and will contribute to my success as a judge. My hard work and success as the lead litigation attorney in the Philadelphia office of my firm led to my appointment as the manager of all operations of the office in early 2008. In this role, I have acquired extensive administrative experience that will be an enormous asset in administering justice in an efficient, effective, and fair manner. I am licensed to practice law by multiple courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States and the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

I graduated with honors from George Washington University Law School. I graduated from Penn State University as an accounting major with a minor in the Legal Environment of Business, earning a 4.0 in my minor. I graduated as valedictorian from W.B. Saul High School. I worked all along to put myself through college and law school.

I am keenly aware and sensitive to people and the various issues that they might face. The foundation for this awareness and sensitivity was my attendance at Philadelphia public schools, including magnet schools from 6th through 12th grades, and the resulting opportunity to foster relationships with persons residing in every neighborhood of the City. Professionally, I have the opportunity to work with individuals of all income levels, from the indigent to sophisticated business owners.

I do *pro bono* work at every available opportunity and was named to the Roll of Honor for *Pro Bono* Service for the First Judicial District in its inaugural year. I have performed hands-on renovation work with Rebuilding Together Philadelphia and have worked with the Tangled Title Program of Philly VIP. I am also a frequent lecturer and panel member on issues related to the prevention of sheriff's sales. Additionally, I serve as an Elder at Old First Reformed United Church of Christ.

I hope to become a Court of Common Pleas judge so that I may devote every working hour of every day to serving the citizens of Philadelphia and those that come before Philadelphia's courts. If elected as a judge, I will work hard to apply the laws of the United States, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the City of Philadelphia appropriately and ensure that every case that comes before me is heard in a fair, impartial, and respectful manner. If I earn the opportunity to serve as a judge, I will strive to make substantial contributions to the public good and will work hard every day to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of our system of justice.

2. Did you receive a rating of “recommended” or higher from the state or local bar association? If not, why not?

Yes, I received a rating of “recommended” from the Philadelphia Bar Association, which is the highest rating available.

3. If you are an incumbent judge, what’s a recent instance in which you acted to preserve your judicial independence? If you are an aspiring judge, how do you plan to remain independent if elected to the bench?

A judge’s independence is critical to the proper effectuation of justice. It is part of my basic character to be fair and independent in every matter that will come before me as a judge. I have conducted myself in both my professional life and personal life so that I owe no favors to any person or organization, and therefore preserving my judicial independence will not be difficult. I will strictly adhere to the Code of Judicial Conduct. I understand that even an appearance of potential undue influence must be avoided to maintain the integrity of our courts. Therefore, I will be proactive and disqualify myself from any proceeding in which my impartiality could reasonably be questioned, even if not actually questioned.

4. A number of Pennsylvania judges have been sanctioned for campaign activities, ex parte dealings, and other alleged misconduct. How can the state’s judiciary promote ethical behavior among judges and court staff?

The election to the bench of individuals that have been highly ethical throughout their legal careers is the first step in ensuring an ethical judiciary. Notably, as published by Martindale Hubbell, which is considered by some to be the “gold standard” of objective attorney ratings, judges and attorneys have given both me personally and my law firm the highest rating available for adherence to ethical standards.

After election, comprehensive training should be required for all new judges. Additionally, ongoing training should be required for sitting judges and court staff. Judges must consider it to be part of their judicial duty to not only conduct themselves in an ethical manner, but to also work to ensure that fellow judges and court staff act ethically and to report any judges and/or staff who conduct themselves in an improper manner. Sanctions of judges and court staff who have acted inappropriately must be swift and severe to deter future violations.

5. If you believe that gender, racial, ethnic, class or other forms of bias can infect the justice system, how will you work to keep your courtroom as bias-free as possible?

There is always a risk for gender, racial, ethnic, class, sexual orientation, sexual identification, or other forms of bias to infect the judicial system. Creating a bias-free courtroom culture is a critical part of being a good judge. If elected, as a judge I will create a courtroom culture in which bias is simply not tolerated. Further, I will work to ensure that the staff of our court reflects the diversity of our City (just as I have worked to ensure that the staff of the Philadelphia office of my law firm reflects the diversity of our City), which will help prevent bias from infecting the courtroom. Training of new judges, in addition to the continued training of sitting judges and judicial staff, is also an important part of the judicial system’s responsibility to minimizing bias in the judicial system.

DREW ALDINGER, ESQUIRE

Professional Experience

1998 — Present

Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Partner

- Manages operations of office that collects delinquent real estate taxes and parking citations.
- Litigates civil tax actions.
- Represents clients in bankruptcy proceedings.
- Negotiates with counsel for owners, mortgagees, and lienholders for the payment of delinquent real estate taxes.
- Protects clients' secured interests in real property.
- Drafts briefs and motions and makes oral arguments in the Pennsylvania appellate courts for cases related to civil tax actions. This work has led to multiple favorable published opinions, including:
 - *First Union Nat'l Bank v. Estate of Shevlin*, 897 A.2d 1241 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2006).
 - *First Union Nat'l Bank v. Diamonds & Gold, Inc.*, 850 A.2d 642 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2004).
 - *First Union Nat'l Bank v. F.A. Realty Investors Corp.*, 812 A.2d 719 (Pa. Super Ct. 2002).
- Develops and maintains positive relationships with elected officials at state and local levels.
- Assists with marketing efforts throughout the northeast.
- Provides legal guidance to other offices of firm as a member of the firm's Litigation and Legal Standards subcommittee.

1997-1998

Milton J. Frank & Associates, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Associate

- Litigated plaintiffs' personal injury cases, medical malpractice cases, and product liability cases.

Education

George Washington University Law School, Washington, D.C.
Juris Doctor, 1996, with honors

Penn State University, University Park, Pennsylvania
Bachelor of Science (Accounting), 1993
Minor in the Legal Environment of Business

Professional Awards, Activities, and Publications

- Trainer at programs for housing counselors concerning the implementation of the *City of Philadelphia Financial Hardship Agreement Guidelines for Delinquent Real Estate Tax Accounts*.
- Leader at various neighborhood outreach events that address issues surrounding sheriff's sales.
- Arbitrator in the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas Compulsory Arbitration Program.
- Guest on *The Bottom Line* radio program on February 18, 2010 and June 18, 2009 discussing the City of Philadelphia's real estate tax collection process.
- Organizer and presenter at a program entitled "Helping Seniors Save Their Homes" on May 20, 2009.
- Named to the 2006 Roll of Honor for *Pro Bono* Service for the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania.
- Lecturer at the 2002 *Sheriff's Sales in Philadelphia County* course sponsored by the Pennsylvania Bar Institute.
- Co-author of 2002 paper entitled *Sheriff's Sales in Philadelphia County of Properties for Which the Tax Claims Were Sold in the PAID Tax Lien Securitization of 1997*.
- Co-author of paper entitled *Enforcing Collections With Tax Lien Foreclosure Litigation*, which was presented at the Center for Business Intelligence's 5th Annual Tax Receivable Forum in 2000.

Bar Admissions

- The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- The State of New Jersey
- The United States Supreme Court
- The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- The U.S. District Court-Eastern District of Pennsylvania