

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Name: **Ann Thornburg Weiss**

Running for: Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery
County

Political Party: Cross-filed; I am a registered
Democrat, endorsed by the Montgomery County
Democratic Committee

Campaign e-mail and Website:
thornburgweiss@gmail.com;
annthornburgweissforjudge.com and
judgeswecanbelievein.com



Questions:

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

I am qualified to serve as a Montgomery County Common Pleas Court Judge because I will take the responsibilities of being a judge seriously and will work hard. I have the necessary skill set for the position: I am smart, thoughtful, a good listener and my judgment is sound. I will uphold the rule of law fairly and even-handedly and will always treat everyone with respect, decency and courtesy. I will make thoughtful decisions, applying my intellect and my common sense.

I am a graduate of Gettysburg College (B.A. 1977, magna cum laude, with honors in political science) and Temple University School of Law (J.D. 1980). After graduation from law school, I had the privilege of serving as a law clerk to the Hon. Donald E. Wieand of the Pennsylvania Superior Court. The Superior Court hears appeals from most criminal, civil and family-related cases, providing me, as a young lawyer, with exposure to the trial records in matters before Common Pleas Court Judges throughout the Commonwealth, as well as the benefit of mentoring from a distinguished jurist and respected legal scholar. After clerking, I joined the Montgomery County law firm of Timoney Knox, LLP where I have been practicing law since 1984. Together with my law partner, I handled complex civil litigation matters, including the controversial and multi-faceted Point Pleasant Water Diversion Project (the "Pump") litigation, from start to completion. More recently I have focused on municipal-related representations. I also serve as the elected Clerk of Courts in Montgomery County, with responsibility for all criminal files and the collection of fines and costs, producing revenues for the County of approximately \$5 million dollars annually. As Clerk of Courts, I have implemented numerous cost-saving measures for County taxpayers, introduced efficiencies through technology improvements not paid for at taxpayer expense, and have hands-on familiarity with the technology used by Common Pleas Courts throughout the Commonwealth as well as that specific to the Montgomery County criminal court.

I also bring with me the experience of a Township Commissioner, having served in Upper Dublin Township for six years. I am active in my community, serving on the Board of Directors of the Community Ambulance Association in Ambler and as a past Council member and Council President at Upper Dublin Lutheran Church, as a volunteer with the Interfaith Hospitality Network and as a first grade Sunday school teacher and cradle roll coordinator. I have been married to John Weiss for nearly 30 years, and am the mother of John, Jr., age 19 and a freshman at the University of Michigan.

In short, my diverse background, experiences and abilities combine to make me qualified and well suited to serve the people of Montgomery County as a Judge on the Common Pleas Court, which presently includes only one female judge.

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

YES.

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?

I will adhere to all of the provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct designed to preserve the integrity and independence of the judiciary. I will make decisions based entirely and exclusively on the evidence presented and the applicable law, treating all litigants and their counsel even-handedly and with respect. Should there be an instance where my impartiality might reasonably be questioned, I will follow the Code of Judicial Conduct by disqualifying myself.

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 prevent discipline scandals of the type seen recently?

Scandals may be prevented, or reduced in frequency, with the implementation of measures designed to reduce the isolation associated with the position of Judge, measures that promote open communications between and among judges and the bar, and measures that provide greater opportunities for transparency, all so that inappropriate conduct is more readily apparent and difficult to conceal.

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?

I will work to prevent bias of any form by treating everyone with whom I deal, on and off the bench, courteously and with dignity, and by encouraging similar conduct by counsel and my judicial staff.