

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Wallace H. Bateman, Jr.

Running for: Bucks County Common Pleas Court

Political Party: Republican/Democrat

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Questions:

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

I have 27 years of litigation experience in criminal law, family law and civil litigation, including 5 years as an Assistant/Deputy District Attorney (in which I prosecuted violent crimes such as murders, rapes and drug offenses) and have served as a partner in one of Bucks County's largest and most prestigious law firms. One of the most important qualities needed to serve as a judge is that he or she must have a well-rounded background. In addition to my extensive trial experience, I have served the community as the solicitor for our County Sheriff, as General Counsel for Boy Scouts and as an adjunct faculty member at Bucks County Community College. I also chaired a committee to provide free legal services to our Bucks County military personnel. I am honored that the Governor and the Senate recognized my qualifications in October, 2008 when I was appointed and unanimously confirmed to serve as a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Bucks County. I have been presiding over cases since that time.



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

The Bucks County Bar Association Merit Selection referendum, known as the "Plebiscite" is the only non-partisan survey of Bucks County's legal practitioners and it is a time-honored rating of all the judicial candidates. I am honored that my peers in the Bucks County Bar Association have rated me the most highly recommended of all the candidates.

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?

While it would be difficult to single out a specific case which has come before me, a judge can best preserve judicial independence by faithfully adhering to his or her oath of office in deciding each case fairly, impartially and in strict accordance with the law. I regularly receive recommendations from court conciliators in custody matters and sentencing recommendations from probation officers and

lawyers in criminal cases. While taking these recommendations into consideration I ultimately make the decision that I believe is appropriate. A judge must always refrain from "legislating from the bench" as it is the legislative function to enact the law and the judicial function to follow and apply the law strictly, fairly and without any bias.

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?

The best way to prevent scandals in the judiciary, as in every other profession, is to faithfully follow the rules and lead by example. In addition to the laws that apply to everyone in society, judges are subjected to very firm judicial canons of ethics. Strict and uniform obedience to the ethical canons in an absolute prerequisite to serving as a judge. Failure to do so depreciates the integrity of the entire justice system. The state judiciary can work toward a goal of preventing scandal by implementing a checks and balance system and by imposing severe sanctions against those who do not comply with the law. Moreover providing the electorate with information such as that contained in this questionnaire will hopefully lead to the election of only those who are qualified and meet the highest ethical standards.

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?

Justice must be blind. This country has long advanced the principle that all are created equal. As a judge, I have had to decide every case on its own merits irrespective of the prohibited criteria suggested by the question. No person should receive either an advantage or disadvantage when appearing in court. When I preside over cases, all are treated equally and in accordance with the dictates of the law. This fundamental principal begins with a single concept: when a litigant or witness walks into my courtroom, they will be treated fairly, with respect, and without any bias or prejudice.