

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Dawn Segal

Judicial post for which you are running:
Philadelphia Municipal Court

Political Party: Democrat

Website: www.DawnSegal4judge.com



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

As a practicing attorney for twenty five years, I have tried cases before over twenty juries in Philadelphia and the surrounding counties and before hundreds of judges, both in Common Pleas, Municipal Court and District Judges (the county equivalent of Municipal Court Judges). My experience involves a range of areas including contract law, property law, labor and employment, personal injury, commercial and domestic law. My knowledge is therefore broad based. I am also deeply committed to ensuring that all matters which I handle will be adjudicated in a compassionate, efficient and equitable manner.

As a former volunteer for and President of the Board of Directors of Women Organized Against Rape for five years along with my work on behalf of battered women, I have worked with and advocated for a large spectrum of communities within Philadelphia. I will combine this work and my familiarity with the legal system with my determination to achieve a just result.

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

Yes. The Philadelphia Bar Association found me recommended.

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 plan to remain independent, as I always have been, especially when I served as a Judge Pro Tem (Acting Judge). Whichever side I have represented, I have tried to evaluate the merits of both sides based upon the facts before me and I am not

swayed by irrelevant facts. I also believe in personal accountability and integrity and will make all decisions based upon this standard.

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?

As an attorney, I have been horrified by the recent misconduct of multiple Pennsylvania judges in various courts, since I believe that this misconduct reinforces the public's distrust of the judicial system. Worse still, complaints had been made about the judicial misconduct but were ignored. Clearly, the Judicial Review Board must be held accountable by another agency or person charged with ensuring that the Board immediately investigates and, if warranted, swiftly sanctions any judicial misconduct within a prescribed time period.

In addition, I believe the standards for the recusal, or stepping aside, of a judge from a case due to a perceived or real conflict of interest must be more explicitly articulated with specific criteria warranting the recusal.

Only by taking these actions, can we restore public confidence in the judicial system and allow citizens to believe in its fairness.

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 treat everyone with respect. If attorneys or litigants make discriminatory statements or disrespect one another, I will step in to stop such conduct and remind every one that respect for all is paramount. Should such disrespect stem from or relate to underlying bias, I will address it directly. As a woman, I have experienced numerous incidents of bias directed towards me by judges, court personnel or other parties. Having experienced it first hand, I am acutely aware of how that can undermine the individual and lead to feelings of disenfranchisement.