

# Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** Donna Woelpper

**Judicial post for which you are running:** Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas

**Political Party:** Democrat

**Campaign e-mail and website:**  
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donnaforjudge.com



## Questions

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

My extensive experience in Family Court as Juvenile Court Master, Custody and Support Master, Truancy Master and law clerk, together with my history of *pro bono* representation and community commitment make me uniquely qualified to serve on the bench. My judgment and integrity have earned me the respect of lawyers and members of the bench. At this point in my career, I want to pursue my passion and commitment on the next level as a judge in Family Court. It is a role I will respect.

**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” by the Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

**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?**

Rulings by judges must be made without prejudice, bias, sympathy or fear of public opinion. The perception and expectations of the parties and the public must be that justice is administered fairly and impartially

without regard to a party's or an attorney's status or relationship. To avoid the appearance of impropriety or favoritism, I will reveal and recuse from any matter where I have or had a social or professional relationship with the parties, witnesses or attorneys. Whenever there is the slightest familiarity, I will make known and leave it to the parties to decide if they want me to recuse. I will never permit *ex parte* communications from anyone, directly or indirectly, about any matter that is pending or likely to come before me.

**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?**

Judges must scrupulously follow the Judicial Code of Conduct and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court must enforce it. For my part, see the answer to the preceding question. In addition, I will require my courtroom staff to adhere to the same protocol.

**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 continue to treat litigants, witnesses and attorneys as I do now as a Master. I will ensure that my staff is properly trained, educated and culturally competent in issues relating to forms of bias in the justice system. Everyone will be treated equally and courteously.