

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Name: **Joanna M. Cruz**

Judicial post for which you are running: Common Pleas Court of Montgomery County

Political Party: Republican

Campaign e-mail and Website: Cruzforjudge.com;
Joanna@cruzforjudge.com

Questions

1. Why are you qualified and well-suited to serve as a judge on the court for which you are running? Common Pleas Judge is a trial judge. I have extensive trial experience, having spent my entire career as a trial attorney. Additionally, I am a fair-minded, even-tempered, decisive individual with a high degree of integrity, characteristics important in a judge.

2. Did you receive a rating of "recommended" or higher from the state or local bar association? If not, why not? Yes, I was recommended by the Montgomery 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?** I will base my decisions on the facts of a case. Serving in the Montgomery County Public Defender's Office has provided me a unique perspective of the criminal justice system. It requires me as an attorney to be an advocate for my clients and provide them with their constitutionally protected right to an attorney. As a result, it has taught me to listen to the facts and make decisions about their defense without pre-judgment. I will bring this experience and a complete understanding of the judicial system to the bench. I will not allow personal relationships or biases affect my decision-making. If I feel that I am unable to do so, I will recuse myself from a case.
- 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 are elected politically but are required to be apolitical. The state's judiciary could offer training on the Rules of Judicial Conduct, including do's and don'ts, to potential candidates and political leaders.
- 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?** Everyone who appears before me will come with a clean slate. Everyone will have an equal opportunity to present his or her case. I will listen to what the parties have to say and not merely base my decisions on the papers that I read or reputations that a party or attorney may have.



Please e-mail your completed questionnaire to: [judse\(a\),phillvnews.com](mailto:judse(a),phillvnews.com). You may also include a resume. We would appreciate your response by Tuesday, April 14.

400 North Broad Street, Post Office Box 41705, Philadelphia, PA 19101

Joanna M. Cruz, Esquire

212 Green Street

Lansdale, PA 19446

EMPLOYMENT

March 2008 – Present Kerns, Pearlstine, Onorato, & Hladik,, Upper Gwynedd, PA

Represent clients in criminal matters, domestic matters and real estate matters.

2000 – Present Office of the Public Defender, Norristown, Pennsylvania

Assistant Public Defender. Tried dozens of cases. Team leader managing three attorneys, reviewing all files for the team, assessing complexity, strengths and weaknesses of the cases, filing or recommending the filing of motions, recording the files assigned to each attorney, tracking the status of files assigned, assigning files based on attorneys' case load and complexity of cases, securing offers and negotiating pleas. Represent clients in all types of cases from Driving Under the Influence to Attempted Murder.

1990 – 2000 A. Charles Peruto, Sr., Esquire, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1990 - 1995 Secretary, paralegal, law clerk

1995 – 2000 Associate. Represented clients in criminal matters, family law matters: divorce, distribution of property, spousal support, alimony, child support, custody, protection from abuse matters, and adoptions; real estate transactions, real estate litigation, commercial transactions, commercial litigation, small estate planning, estate administration, personal injury, contract negotiations, contract litigation, bankruptcy, unemployment compensation and civil litigation.

EDUCATION

1986 - 1990 La Salle University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Bachelors of Art in English and Bachelors of Science in Finance

1991 – 1995 Temple University School of Law, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Juris Doctor with a concentration in trial advocacy. Enrolled as a full-time night student, taking 12 credit-hours per semester while working full-time.

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

2004 – Present Committeewoman, Lansdale, Pennsylvania

2004 – Present Treasurer Lansdale Republican Committee

Maintain financial records, balance checking account, track income and expenses of the Committee, prepare and file six or seven Campaign Finance Reports each year, organize fundraisers.

2008 Presidential Election County Election Day Organization Director for Fair Vote Committee

Coordinated with other attorneys across the state for a comprehensive strategy of poll watching and litigation, if necessary, to address voting irregularities which arise at the polls on election day. Assembled a team of attorneys in Montgomery County to serve as poll watchers and to litigate irregularities at the polls on election day.

2007 Row Office Election Treasurer Friends of Dennis Caglia Committee

Maintained financial records, balanced checking account, tracked income and expenses of the Committee and prepared and filed Campaign Finance Reports.

2008 – Present Montgomery County Republican Committee

Outreach Committee: Coordinating with other members on several initiatives to increase awareness of the Republican Party in an attempt to increase voter registration among young voters and minority voters. Initiatives include a letter campaign to targeted groups outlining the Republican principles; education campaign offering seminars on various legal and medical topics and a tutoring program providing a pool of tutors for students; youth career program whereby employers will be recruited to hire high school students for a ten-week period during the summer.

Policy Committee, Diversity Committee and Council of Republican Women.

MEMBERSHIPS

Admitted: Pennsylvania Supreme Court, 1995
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1996
United States Court of Appeals, Third Circuit, 1997

Pennsylvania Bar Association
Montgomery County Bar Association
Pennsylvania Hispanic Bar Association