

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Kelly Wall

Judicial Post for Which You Are Running:
Common Pleas of Montgomery County

Political Party: Republican

Campaign E-mail and Website: kwall@millerturetsky.com



Questions

1. Why am I qualified and well suited to serve as a judge on the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas?

My qualifications to serve as a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas are extensive. I have over ten years of business experience which I accrued while attending night school at Temple University. Presently, I am a partner in the Collegeville law firm of Miller, Turetsky, Rule & McLennan, P.C. and have fifteen years of litigation experience with an emphasis in family law, civil litigation, employment and tax assessment appeals. I have practice experience in 4 of the 5 benches of the Court of Common Pleas including civil, family, juvenile and orphans' court. I have direct hands-on experience researching, preparing and litigating my cases so I understand the challenges, limitations and needs of the smaller law firms and solo practitioners. I am an assistant solicitor for the Office of Children and Youth and I volunteer my time for the Montgomery County Advocacy Program which protects the rights of children who have been physically, mentally and sexually abused.

I have extensive experience with the concerns that face children and families including mental health issues, crime and domestic violence and the difficulty of some parents caring for their children. I served on the Governance Board of the Norristown Family Center which, among other things, promotes programs to provide a safe nurturing environment for families with opportunities for learning, growing and achieving self-sufficiency. In addition, I currently serve on the Board of Northwestern Human Services, which provides programs for therapeutic care, special education, juvenile placement and intellectual and developmental disabilities.

My experience as a child advocate for physically, mentally and sexually abused children and my duties as a Solicitor for the Office of Children and Youth as an advocate for children in the foster care system has prepared me to face the difficult decisions that affect the lives of families and children. This combined experience has given me the temperance to be an effective judge. I will be able to make sound, reasonable and common sense decisions.

As a Whitmarsh Township Supervisor, I have municipal law experience and address a number of "quality of life" issues including green space preservation, zoning, and land use. I have the opportunity to contribute to the creation and modification of ordinances and resolutions. Over the years I have learned to separate my personal feelings on a particular issue from that which may be good for the Township. The ability to set aside personal beliefs is extremely invaluable as a judge whom is

often required to apply the rule of law contrary to his or her personal feelings or beliefs.

From my experience as a Township Supervisor, solicitor, and practitioner of the law, I have learned much about impartiality, patience, and compassion.

2. Did I Receive a Rating of Recommended from the State Bar Association?

I am proud to state that I was recommended by the Montgomery County Bar Association.

3. How do you plan to remain independent if elected to the bench?

As a judge, I will be guided by two principles: the rule of law and a commitment to doing what is right for litigants and families that come before my Court. It is the function of a judge to apply the law as written by the legislature and interpreted by higher courts. Strict adherence to the rule of law and legal precedent will ensure my judicial independence while my care and compassion will ensure that I treat all litigants equally.

As a Whitmarsh Township Supervisor, I am able to separate my personal feelings on an issue from that which may be good for my constituents. This ability will enable me to apply the law without personal passion guiding my decisions.

4. How can the State's Judiciary prevent discipline scandals of the type seen recently?

Just as lawyers must guide their practice according to the Rules of Professional Conduct, Judges must carefully and zealously follow the Canons of the Code of Judicial Conduct. The Court of Judicial Discipline, established by constitutional amendment in 1993, has jurisdiction over all judicial officers in Pennsylvania and has the authority to hear and decide formal charges that may be brought against a judicial officer. If charges are sustained, the Court has the sanctioning authority ranging from a reprimand to removal from office. The rules of conduct and enforcement mechanisms are in place and, to remain effective, they must be transparent and open to the public to the fullest extent possible. First and foremost however, it is up to us as voters to educate themselves on the qualifications of the candidates, consider the background and service of each candidate and select men and women of character for public office.

5. How will I ensure a bias-free Courtroom?

Every case must be decided on its merit according to the law unaffected by bias of any kind. The key to a bias-free administration of justice is openness and transparency. There can be no place in our judicial system for backroom deals or secrecy. Courtrooms are, generally speaking, open to the public and must remain as open as possible so that everyone, the public, the press, and attorneys, may observe proceedings and thereby be assured that it is the law that controls a case and nothing else. My record as a township supervisor demonstrates that my decisions are based upon the merits of the issues before the board. I believe in and have practiced open government so that all may feel confident in the integrity of the system. My courtroom will reflect the same ideals.