

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

EDWARD C. WRIGHT

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS



1. **Why are you qualified and well-suited to serve as a judge on the court for which you are running?** I consider myself qualified to be a judge on the Court of Common Pleas, First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, because I have a breadth of litigation experience, federal and state court, that spans many and varied areas of the law. Specifically, throughout my eighteen (18) years of practice, I have been fortunate to gain litigation experience in all three (3) divisions of the Court of Common Pleas, the Trial Division, both civil and criminal, the Family Court Division, and the Orphans' Court Division. I have also gained litigation experience in Federal Court while at the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office wherein I was immersed in a strictly federal civil practice defending the Commonwealth, its agencies, officials and employees in federal court. I have conducted jury trials in both federal court and state court, thereby evincing an experienced, working understanding of federal and state rules of evidence as well as federal and state rules of procedure. I have become efficient at managing a heavy litigation caseload in state court and federal court, developing a case from the evaluation of a prospective client in an initial interview, through trial preparation, trial, post-trial, and appeal.

I consider myself to be qualified to be a judge because I have a breadth of clerkship experience on the state trial court level as well as at various appellate levels. Specifically, I have been fortunate to gain clerkship experience in both of the Common Pleas Court's Trial Division (civil & criminal) as well as in the Family Court Division. Moreover, I have been fortunate to further gain appellate clerkship experience in one of the Commonwealth's two (2) intermediate appellate courts, the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania. Finally, I was privileged to gain appellate clerkship experience with the Chief Justice of the Commonwealth's highest court, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Having clerked for, among others, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, as well as the President Judge of the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania, I have acquired a keen insight into: the drafting of thorough, concise, well-written opinions; what judicial responsibilities entail; how to effectively maintain judicial chambers from an administrative standpoint; and, importantly how a jurist should conduct themselves personally and privately, both inside and outside of a court room.

I consider myself to be qualified to be a judge because I have been a solo practitioner. In maintaining my own practice, I have developed a keen sense of how to effectively and objectively manage difficult clients and opposing attorneys, with disturbing matters, all the way up to and through trial or settlement. I have extensive experience evaluating cases for meritorious claims and distinguishing them from those best disposed of alternatively by means other than litigation, while offering my counsel in that regard. While representing my clients over the years, I have developed the unique ability to provide highly competent counseling and legal representation while administering firm, confident guidance, but with compassion, understanding and common sense. I also have a very strong record of community involvement in public service, pro bono activities and volunteer efforts.

I consider myself to be qualified to be a judge because I have the administrative capabilities to successfully maintain a judicial office. From an administrative standpoint, throughout my eighteen (18) years of practice, I have had to set-up several offices from "scratch." When I started my practice in 1994, I had to completely set-up a law office, no supplies, no address, no equipment, no office, no filing system, no phones, no clients, no support staff. When I became a Deputy Attorney General in 2001, I had to quickly acclimate myself to federal practice, to new surroundings, to new filing methods, to new

inter-office logistics, with a jury trial caseload, all while bringing myself up to speed on applicable, relevant federal law particularly germane to the Attorney General's practice. When I became Chief of Staff for City Council's 4th Councilmanic District in 2006, I had to again set-up an office, this time without any background knowledge of City Council's work. I had to manage staff, manage constituents and their matters, manage relationships with other City Council offices, establish a filing system, manage district projects and funding, draft and keep track of legislation, represent constituent interests sometimes in legal proceedings, schedule and attend community meetings, conduct community outreach, and manage acquisition of supplies. All of this had to be done efficiently and in short order so as to maintain a seamless transition from the previous Council Person. This particular experience gave me a more-well rounded understanding of the inner-workings of the legislative branch of our City government. I believe that all of these successful administrative experiences demonstrate my strong and solid organizational and administrative abilities.

I believe that I will improve our system of justice by bringing to the bench my ability to provide sound legal analysis and quality written work, while maintaining an even temperament. Over the years I have developed my organizational skills, (administrative and otherwise), to the extent that my law office is run with the utmost efficiency and virtually no time wasted. I enjoy a favorable, professional reputation in the legal community for integrity, self-respect and respect for others. Perhaps, most importantly, I am vigorously committed and dedicated to maintaining equal justice for all within the court.

2. Did you receive a rating of "recommended" or higher from the state or local bar association? If not, why not? Rated "recommended" by 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? As an aspiring judge, if fortunate enough to get elected to the bench, I would strive to not become too close to any attorney that has a viable practice area within the assignment which I may be given (family, criminal, civil). I would try to bear in mind each and every day that I am to remain neutral and unbiased against any attorney or litigant that may appear before me, and I would try to continually remind myself every day to be cognizant of the importance of my judicial independence so that judicial independence will simply become a habitual part of my daily life.

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 promote ethical behavior among judges and court staff? The initial key to any issue of the magnitude of ethical behavior among judges and judicial staff is sensitivity and awareness training. Like any other segment of society, judges and judicial staff could use some training on ethics, particular tips and pit falls. I believe that this type of initial approach would at a minimum start to change the cultural landscape, and make a dent. From there, other methods of approach could be conceptualized with a more-informed approach therefrom.

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? As a minority with a disability, I am sensitive to the biased inequities in society and the biased prejudices that can be heaped upon minorities and those with disabilities. During my life, I have been discriminated against because of the color of my skin and sometimes because I am not fully ambulatory. Sensitivity and awareness training is normally instituted in other societal situations where decency, respectfulness and sensitivity are lacking, and such training should be instituted within the Court system.

In this regard, the Judge and the Court should make every accommodation to make every citizen feel comfortable on certain basic human levels. If you have any individuals within the justice system that do not feel comfortable or accommodated, then their interest and attention wanes and our

Court system begins to falter. I would try to get the attention of the other judges and try to get the Judges to take the lead in organizing and highlighting the need for sensitivity and awareness training.



Law Office of Edward C. Wright

EDUCATION

University of Maryland School of Law, Baltimore, Maryland;
Juris Doctor; May 1990.
Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, May 1987.
Chestnut Hill Academy, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
High School Diploma, June 1982.

EXPERIENCE

Law Office of Edward C. Wright January 2008 - Present
Two Penn Center Plaza, Suite 200
1500 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1706
Criminal & Small Business Counseling

The Honorable Nina Wright Padilla, Court of Common Pleas - First Judicial District of PA
Family Court Division, Domestic Relations Branch 9/08-11/10 & 7/03-11/06
Judicial Law Clerk: Performed legal research with emphasis on divorce, support and custody.
Drafted thirty-seven (37) opinions with no reversals.

Councilwoman Carol Ann Campbell, Philadelphia City Council, 4th Councilmanic District
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania November 2006 - January 2008
Chief of Staff: Responsible for management and oversight of the 4th Council District Office.
Handled matters and issues related to Capital Budget, Capital Programs & Projects, Legislation,
Housing Development, and Zoning. Coordinated projects and matters with City Government
including the Managing Director's Office, Recreation Department, Licenses & Inspection, Police
and Fire Departments, Water Department, Fairmount Park Commission, Art Commission, and
the Planning Commission. Initiated and conducted community outreach and constituent
services.

Law Office of Edward C. Wright July 2003 - November 2006
Two Penn Center Plaza, Suite 200
1500 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1706
Personal Injury, Medical Malpractice, Bankruptcy, Criminal, General. Handled all aspects of
pre-trial and post-trial major medical malpractice cases. Handled all aspects of personal injury,
criminal, and general cases including pretrial motions and matters, strategy, depositions,
preparation of witnesses, voir dire, settlement conferences, jury verdict, and appeals.
Represented debtors in bankruptcy proceedings.

Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, Civil Litigation April 2001 - July 2003
Civil Litigation, 4th Floor
27 South 12th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3625
Deputy Attorney General: Conducted federal jury trials while defending the Commonwealth, its
agencies, officials, and employees in cases filed pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983, 1985, implicating
the First, Fourth, Eighth, Eleventh, and Fourteenth Amendments.

Wright & Padilla, Attorneys at Law September 1994 - March 2001
1422 Chestnut Street, Suite 308
Philadelphia, PA 19102-2508
Personal Injury, Medical Malpractice, Products Liability, Bankruptcy, Small Business
Counseling, Criminal. Handled all aspects of pre-trial and post-trial major medical malpractice
cases. Handled all aspects of personal injury, products liability, criminal and general cases
including pretrial motions and matters, strategy, depositions, preparation of witnesses, voir

dire, settlement conferences, jury verdict, and appeals. Represented debtors in bankruptcy proceedings.

Chief Justice Robert N.C. Nix, Jr, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania June 1995 - August 1995
Allocatur Law Clerk: Reviewed and researched petitions for allocatur encompassing various areas of civil and criminal law. Drafted opinions suggesting either a grant or a denial of petitions for allocatur.

President Judge James Gardner Colins, Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania
The Honorable Doris A. Smith, Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania
The Honorable Charles Wright, Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, Pennsylvania January 1993-September 1994
Judicial Law Clerk: Performed legal research and drafted and filed opinions in areas encompassing administrative law, workers' compensation, zoning, and unemployment compensation. Had twelve (12) opinions published in The Atlantic Second Reporter.

The Honorable Charles Wright, Court of Common Pleas - First Judicial District of PA
Civil/Asbestos Division September 1991-February 1992
Judicial Law Clerk: Performed legal research and drafted and filed opinions and adjudications in areas encompassing asbestos, medical malpractice, comparative negligence, and strict liability issues. Had three (3) opinions published in The Philadelphia County Reporter.

O'Brien & O'Brien & Associates September 1990- January 1991
then located at One Penn Center at Suburban Station
1617 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19103
now located at 257 East Lancaster Avenue
Wynnewood, PA 19096
Researched workers' compensation, asbestos, and procedural issues. Drafted and filed appellate briefs and pleadings. Wrote legal memoranda.

Margolis Edelstein, Products Liability Department June 1989 - August 1989
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Honorable Angelo A. Guarino, Court of Common Pleas - First Judicial District of PA
Criminal Trial Division June 1988 - August 1988

Court of Common Pleas, Data Processing Unit June 1985-August 1986

SPECIAL SKILLS Westlaw, Lexis, Word, WordPerfect

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

- Philadelphia Bar Association, Lawyer Referral & Information Services, 1997-2002
 - Philadelphia Bar Association's Commission on Judicial Selection & Retention - Investigative Division, 1997 - 2005.
 - Philadelphia Bar Association, Young Lawyer's Division, 1998 Craig M. Perry Community Service Award.
 - Philadelphia Bar Association, Member
 - Pennsylvania Bar Institute CLE Lecturer, 1998.
 - Pennsylvania Bar Association, Minority Bar Committee, 1998 - 2002.
 - Consumer Bankruptcy Assistance Project (CBAP) - Volunteer Attorney, 1994 - 2001.
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- Civil Rules Committee of Philadelphia Municipal Court, 1997 - 2002.
 - Partition Master, Court of Common Pleas, First Judicial District, 1998 - 2000.
 - Barristers' Association of Philadelphia, Inc.;
 - Co-Chair Thanksgiving Drive, 1996 - 2001.
 - Temple University's Law Education and Participation Program (LEAP);
 - Co-Chair Mock Trial, 1998 - 2000.
 - Philadelphia Bar Association YLD Mentoring Program
 - At Risk Middle School Students, Mentor, 1998-1999.
 - Temple Law School - Pathways to Law School, Mentor, 1999 - 2001.
 - Chestnut Hill Academy Alumni Association Executive Board, 1999 - present.
 - National Bar Association, Annual Convention, Prayer Breakfast Committee, 1999.
 - Christian Street YMCA Board Member, 1997 - 1999.
 - National Foundation for Teaching Young Entrepreneurs, Volunteer, 1994 - 1996.
 - Woodside Park Civic Association, 1993 - 2002.
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