

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Name: **Richard P. Haaz**

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

Political Party: I am a registered Democrat, but I
have crossed filed on the Republican ballot as well.

Campaign e-mail and website:
judgeswecanbelievein.com
haazforjudge.com

Questions

1. **Why are you qualified and well-suited to serve as a judge on the court for which you are running?** I have extensive courtroom and litigation experience which qualifies me to serve as a judge for Court of Common Pleas in Montgomery County.

After passing the Bar in 1978, a clerked for the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County for three years. Thereafter, I joined a litigation firm (Law Offices of Robert C. Daniels (who later became a Superior Court judge). Since 1985, I have been either the principal or a partner in my own law practice. I have tried dozens of jury trials to verdict in Pennsylvania state courts and in federal courts in Pennsylvania and in New Jersey. I tried cases to verdict in eight different counties in the eastern part of Pennsylvania.

I serve as a judge pro tem which is a court sponsored program whereby experienced attorneys act as settlement masters prior to cases being sent to courtrooms for trial.

I am the chairperson of the Montgomery County Bar Association's Medical-Legal Committee which serves to find common areas to promote better relationships between the legal and medical cultures. The two primary objectives under my leadership of this committee are revival of the Abington Hospital Mediation Program, as well as the "doctor/lawyer in the classroom" program which pairs doctors and lawyers to address students about the medical and legal consequences of drug abuse.

I have been a member of the Board of Directors for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Association for Southeastern Pennsylvania for about twenty years.

In addition, I am a Hearing Committee officer for the Disciplinary Board of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Hearing committees are charged with conducting evidentiary hearings and making recommendations pertaining to the appropriate disciplinary punishment, if warranted, for attorneys who have committed professional misconduct.

I have an even temperament and a profound respect for the courtroom, its procedures and all those



parties and attorneys who appear before the court.

I believe that the totality of the above experiences addresses my qualifications to serve as a judge in the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County.

2. **Did you receive a “recommended” or higher from the local bar association?** I was rated “highly recommended” by the Montgomery Bar Association.

3. **If you are an aspiring judge, how do you plan to remain independent if elected to the bench?** As an aspiring judge, I would recuse myself from any case in which there was an actual conflict of interest or even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

The credibility of the judicial branch, more so than either the executive or legislative branch, is singularly dependent upon the perception that cases are decided upon its merits based upon the facts and the applicable law. The system breaks down if people perceive that judges are making decisions based upon any type of political, financial or other type of potentially corrupting influence. It is, therefore, essential that judges are completely above any and all appearance of any improper associations, relationships, bias or improper conduct.

I make an unwavering pledge to conduct myself with integrity at all times.

4. **A number of Pennsylvania Judges have been sanctioned for campaign activities, ex parte dealings or other alleged misconduct. How can the state’s judiciary prevent discipline scandals of the type seen recently?** Judges, like attorneys, should be vigilant regarding the activities of their colleagues and inform the Judicial Conduct Board about conduct which raises a substantial question as to a judge’s fitness for office or compliance with code of judicial conduct.

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?** It is the responsibility of the trial judge to ensure that cases are decided on their facts and the applicable law and not decided based upon prejudice for or against one side or the other. I would not hire any person on my staff who has gender, racial, ethnic, class or any other form of bias. I would be vigilant to ensure that jurors make decisions based upon the facts adduced at trial (as opposed to outside the courtroom), and the applicable law.

I pledge to work as hard as is reasonably possible to ensure that cases are decided fairly and impartially without any bias for or against any party or class of parties.