Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire



Name: Roxanne E. Covington

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

Political Party: Democrat

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Questions

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

I am qualified to serve as a judge based upon my litigation skills, diverse legal background and personal experiences. My analytical, research and writing abilities will transfer well to the review of case files, legal filings, and writing of opinions. I have the technical skills to interpret and objectively apply the law to the facts. As a trial attorney I am familiar with the construction of a case from inception to conclusion and this will enable me to review these matters thoughtfully and fairly for the litigants. My practice experience includes civil matters in family law, dependency, child abuse / neglect, custody, personal injury, landlord /tenant, insurance, motor vehicle, municipal, and liability issues. My knowledge and understanding in these areas of law enable me to readily serve in several sections of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. Through my client relationships and personal experiences I have developed the patience and sensitivity to listen to litigants and execute impartiality in my decision making. For these reasons, I am qualified to serve as a judge.

2. **Did you receive a rating of "recommended" or higher from the state or local bar association? If not, why not?**

[Rating "not recommeded" 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?**

Although I am an aspiring judge, unlike many candidates I have had the opportunity to serve in a quasi-judicial capacity as a Commissioner on the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission. During my

tenure on the HRC I reviewed the complaints and findings of the commission and approved the recommendations of the office by majority of the board vote. I was appointed to the panel of three commissioners who heard and decided the matter of Philadelphia HRC v. Geno's Steaks, Inc. In this very high profile case that received national attention, I had to maintain "judicial independence" from the employees and members of the Commission which filed the complaint, as well as the horde of public opinion to make a determination on the matter. I authored the majority opinion in the final decision of the panel: Opinion No. NO6061422 – Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations vs. Geno's Steaks, Inc. It is my intention to exercise the same level of judicial independence, impartiality and fairness if elected to serve on the bench.

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?**

Discipline scandals can be prevented by educating the members of the judiciary on rules and regulations pertaining to campaign activities, ex parte dealings and other types of misconduct on an annual basis. Members of the bench should participate in mandatory courses to review these guidelines and changes in the law.
Matters should continue to be referred to The Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania which investigates allegations of ethical misconduct against Pennsylvania judges and is responsible for bringing cases against judges who are accused of unethical actions. The Board is comprised of 12 members (all citizens of Pennsylvania) including three judges, three lawyers and six non-lawyers. Most importantly, it is incumbent upon all members of the judiciary and the bar to uphold the standards of ethical conduct legal

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 incumbent upon judges to set the appropriate tone of their courtroom by demonstrating and insisting on appropriate behavior at all times. Judges must be sensitive and respectful to the litigants who appear before them. I believe it is important to assess each person individually, taking into consideration their testimony, background and circumstances to ensure each party is treated fairly, regardless of the level of representation. This also ensures each case is weighed on its own merits and viewed independently. Additionally, all potential issues of bias and discrimination in the courtroom must be identified and addressed openly to avert problems.