Allegheny County Bar Association Releases Ratings for Judicial Candidates Running in Nov. 7 General Election

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Bar Association has announced its ratings for those individuals running for judicial office in the Nov. 7 general election.

These ratings are for candidates seeking to be elected as new judges, or existing judges seeking election to a higher court (for the ratings on sitting judges seeking retention, visit www.JudicialVote17.org). These candidate ratings cover those who have been interviewed by the ACBA's Judiciary Committee and who live in and/or have an office in Allegheny County.

The ACBA has issued the following ratings:

**Supreme Court of Pennsylvania**

Hon. Dwayne D. Woodruff  
Recommended

**Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania**

Irene McLaughlin Clark  
Not Recommended at this Time

Paul N. Lalley  
Highly Recommended

**Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas**

Patrick M. Connelly  
Highly Recommended

Mary C. McGinley  
Recommended

Hon. David L. Spurgeon  
Highly Recommended

The Allegheny County Bar Association’s Judiciary Committee is a non-partisan committee of 24 attorneys who have been elected at large by the 6,000-member bar association. The committee evaluates each candidate in the areas of temperament, experience in the field of law, academic achievement, honesty and integrity, reputation, general community interest and contributions to the profession.

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“Having qualified judges on the bench is a crucial element in the effective administration of justice, and the Allegheny County Bar Association wants to see only the most qualified judicial candidates elected,” said ACBA President Hal Coffey. “In order to help the citizens of Allegheny County make informed decisions when they head to the polls on Election Day, the ACBA has rated those candidates running for judge. Our Judiciary Committee invested many hours interviewing candidates and evaluating them in several critical areas. We encourage voters to use these ratings as a guide when they vote on Nov. 7.”

According to the bylaws of the ACBA, the Judiciary Committee must rate all candidates running for the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, whether they have requested an interview and rating or not. This year, all candidates for the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas were interviewed by the Judiciary Committee.

Candidates running for judgeships for statewide courts are required to go before the Judicial Evaluation Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association to be interviewed and rated (for the PBA ratings, visit [PAVoteSmart.com](http://www.PAVoteSmart.com)). Candidates for statewide courts can choose to also be rated by the Allegheny County Bar Association. The candidates included in the above listing for statewide court have requested to be interviewed and rated.

In the 2017 Pennsylvania General Election, voters will be selecting candidates for the following judicial positions: One justice for the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, four judges for the Pennsylvania Superior Court, two judges for the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court, and two judges for the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.

**Explanation of Ratings:**

**Highly Recommended**

The candidate:

a. Exhibits pre-eminence in the law by way of outstanding legal ability and a wide range of experience, either in a specialized field of law or a more varied practice, and has a reputation in the legal community as standing at the top of his or her profession.

b. Possesses a reputation for the utmost integrity and temperament to excel as a judge of the court for which he/she is a candidate.

c. Exhibits outstanding citizenship by way of community and professional contributions.

d. Is an exceptional individual who will enhance or has enhanced the competence, dignity and public perception of the bench.

**Recommended**

The candidate possesses a reputation for the utmost integrity and the legal ability, experience and temperament to excel as a judge of the court for which he or she is a candidate.

**Not recommended at this time**
The candidate’s legal ability, experience and reputation indicate that, at some future time in his or her legal career, he or she may have the potential to excel as a judge, but the candidate is not yet at that stage.

**Unqualified**

The candidate does not now possess and is not likely to acquire the ability, reputation, or temperament necessary for a judicial position.

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*Chartered in 1870 and headquartered in downtown Pittsburgh, the Allegheny County Bar Association is a professional organization with 6,000 member attorneys, judges, district justices, legal administrators, and paralegals.*