

Judge, County Court at Law

Two basic types of cases are heard in Texas courts--civil and criminal--and two basic types of courts make up the Texas judicial system--trial courts and appellate (or appeals) courts. All the courts are made up of judges elected in partisan elections. More information on the Texas court system can be found at <http://www.courts.state.tx.us/oca/pdf/JudSysPam0609.pdf>.

1. Please discuss your educational background and professional experience that qualifies you for the position of Civil District Court Judge. Has the Texas Board of Legal Specialization certified you in any trial specialty? (50 words)
2. As Judge, what goals would you set for yourself to ensure the timely resolution of all matters on your Court’s docket? (75 words)
3. How much time do you believe litigants should be allowed at trial to question potential jurors to ensure that any possible juror bias is discovered? (75 words)
4. Do you support campaign finance reform for judicial campaigns and, if so, what reform efforts would you support? (75 words)
5. What legislative changes, if any, do you think should be made to improve the Texas civil justice system? (75 words)

Judge, County Court at Law No. 1



Russell Roden (REP)

1. I previously served as Judge of this court from 2002-2006. During my tenure as Judge, I was one of the highest-rated judges in the Dallas Bar Association’s Judicial Evaluation Poll with a 90% or higher approval rating in the areas of “hard-working,” “impartiality,” “knowledge of the law,” and “overall performance.”
2. When I previously served as judge of this court, I diligently prepared for each court hearing so as to be able to render knowledgeable and timely rulings, generally on the day of the hearing. During my most recent year on the bench, the court disposed of more cases than any other Dallas County civil court at the lowest cost per disposition. If elected, I will return these goals and results to the court.
3. The amount of time required for *voir dire* (the process of questioning potential jurors to uncover bias) can vary from case to case. As a former judge who has presided over approximately 180 jury trials, I found that, in many cases, 20-30 minutes per side has been sufficient. Other cases have required longer. In all cases, the judge should allow adequate questioning while assuring that prospective jurors do not face unnecessary or duplicative questioning.
4. Current campaign finance rules in judicial races require full disclosure of judicial campaign contributions and expenditures, provide limits on the amount persons or firms may contribute, and prohibit corporate contributions. While removing fundraising from judicial campaigns would be laudable, as long as Texas elects judges, candidates must raise funds to inform the public of their qualifications. At this time, I am not aware of any efforts to reform the current campaign finance requirements.
5. Over the years, several legislative, as well as procedural rule, changes have sought to reduce the expense of having disputes heard at trial. Continuing efforts to make the resolution of litigation more economically accessible is a good goal for future legislation.

D’Metria Benson (DEM) - No reply received.

Judge, County Court at Law No. 3

John Goren (REP)



1. St. Mark’s School of Texas honors graduate. University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Business School. University of Georgia Law School, graduated top 5%. Board Certified Civil Appellate Law. With 26 years experience getting judges’ errors corrected on appeal, I know what mistakes trial judges make and can avoid making erroneous rulings.
2. First and foremost, rule correctly in accordance with the evidence and law, thereby avoiding appellate reversal. My experience as an appeals lawyer will be invaluable here. Developing a reputation for accurate rulings also means fewer follow-up, time-consuming motions. Second, rule at the conclusion of trials and hearings or in timely fashion thereafter, not weeks or months later. Third, try nonjury cases at one time, without breaking up a trial over weeks or months.
3. Excluding juror bias is essential, so no party is disadvantaged in receiving a fair trial. The amount of time devoted should be that which is necessary to obtain an unbiased jury. Many factors affect the time, including case complexity and number of litigants. Because County Courts at Law have six rather than twelve person juries, less time is generally necessary. The lower number actually should increase vigilance to make sure no juror is biased.
4. The non-mandatory Judicial Campaign Fairness Act contains strict ceilings on campaign contributions and expenditures to limit undue influence, especially from lawyers and law firms. I voluntarily chose to conduct my campaign in compliance with the Act because I support efforts to control inappropriate influence over judges and preserve independence of the judiciary. Ultimately, any system depends on the integrity of the individual judges to decide cases on their factual and legal merits without favoritism.
5. In most counties, County Courts at Law cannot hear cases above \$100,000. Historically, these courts quickly resolved a high volume of mid-level cases, above Justice Courts but less complex than District Courts. However, in Dallas County, the judges can hear everything a District Judge can. The bigger, more-complicated cases bog these courts down. Dallas should return to the three-tier, jurisdictionally-limited system so the County Courts can resolve more cases efficiently.

Sally Montgomery (DEM)



1. Only Dallas Civil Judge to complete coursework and be certified as a Civil Trial Judge by the Texas Judicial College. Received Presidential Commendation from State Bar of Texas for *individual leadership in improving justice state-wide*. Fourteen years of judicial experience, eight years more than any other current civil judge.
2. My goal has always been to move cases through my court with as much speed as accuracy will allow. As a result of my trial and docket management studies at the National Judicial College, I require scheduling orders in all cases, mediation before trial, and pre-trial conferences to streamline trials. Over the last eight years 22,000 cases have been moved through my court, while less than one tenth of one percent have been over-turned.
3. I leave the length of voir dire to the litigants’ common sense combined with their mutual agreements. For fairness, each side gets the same amount of time. It is very rare that I find it necessary to impose limits, and then, it is due to the inexperience of the litigants.
4. I am a judge and not a legislator, so this question is not in my purview to answer. That said, I strongly believe that the current ethics requirements disallowing party litigants to contribute to judicial campaigns should remain in effect.
5. Being a strong believer in *judicial independence*, while I do not legislate from the bench, legislators should likewise not impose on *judicial independence* with legislative changes. However, as experienced by Dallas Courts, and in the interest of court management, speedier and more accurate justice might be obtained by assignment of specific jurisdiction over the diverse areas of family, civil, criminal and probate law to the other large urban courts.

Judge, County Court at Law No. 5

Trenton Nichols (REP)



1. I have a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas A&M University and a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the University of Houston. I have represented both plaintiffs and defendants in many areas and types of litigation which gives me the wide range of litigation experience needed as a county court judge.
2. A scheduling order will be entered after each case is filed setting a trial date and deadlines for various phases of litigation. Continuances will be limited and granted only upon evidence of valid scheduling conflicts. Submission dockets will be utilized to rule on matters when hearings are not requested or not necessary. Cases will be ordered to mandatory mediation where appropriate to encourage resolution of matters or narrowing of issues and parties.
3. Unfortunately there is no hard and fast rule for time limits on jury selection. Appropriate time limits will vary depending on the number and complexity of issues in the case.
4. The current system is not perfect but I'm not sure what reforms would be successful. The primary complaint with the current system is that oftentimes a large percentage of judicial candidate contributors are attorneys. Attorneys have a vested interest in electing a fair and competent judiciary and therefore are more willing to support those candidates. All contributions are public record and therefore judges and attorneys can be held accountable to ensure no undue influence exists.
5. None at this time.

Mark Greenberg (DEM)



1. I have served as judge of County Court 5 for nearly eight years. I previously served as a magistrate judge for Dallas County State District Courts. I have more than 20 years of combined legal and judicial experience. I am Board Certified in Civil Appellate Law.
2. We are in trial nearly every day Monday through Thursday, and I hear motions all day on Fridays. During my tenure, I have presided over approximately 20,000 civil cases. I resolve cases within the time-frame guidelines set forth by the Texas Supreme Court.
3. The time I allot for jury selection varies according to the facts of the case and the potential for bias or prejudice among the jury pool. I insist that lawyers respect the time of jurors, but our goal is to always have a fair and impartial jury that will decide the disputed fact issues based upon the evidence presented during the course of the trial.
4. The Texas Legislature writes the laws governing campaign finance, and I strictly adhere to all requirements. In general, I support all efforts to increase the transparency of campaign finance reporting and to make the reports filed more easily accessible to the public.
5. I generally do not comment on political issues such as a specific law that I would like enacted. As a trial judge, I am compelled to follow the controlling law as decided by the appellate courts and the Texas Legislature, regardless of whether I agree with it or not.

Judge, County Criminal Court

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1. Please discuss your educational background, professional experience that qualifies you for the position of Criminal District Court Judge. Has the Texas Board of Legal Specialization certified you in the specialty of criminal law? (50 words)
2. How many criminal jury trials did you handle as a defense attorney or a prosecutor prior to deciding to run for Judge? (75 words)
3. Do you support expanding access to sentencing diversion programs such as those offering drug treatment or post-traumatic stress disorder counseling? If so, as Judge, how can you help to expand access to these programs for qualified defendants? (75 words)
4. What legislative changes, if any, do you think should be made to improve the Texas criminal justice system? (75 words)
5. Do you support campaign finance reform for judicial campaigns and, if so, what reform efforts would you support? (75 words)

Judge, County Criminal Court No. 2

Dan Montalvo (REP)



1. University of Dallas, BA, 1992, Texas Tech, JD, 1995. I have practiced criminal law almost exclusively since 1996. I was an Assistant DA (Dallas County 1996-2004), presently a Defense Attorney and a Police Union Attorney (LPOA), 2005 Super Lawyer-Texas Rising Star. I am not Board Certified.
2. I have tried well over 100 jury trials as a prosecutor and a defense attorney. This experience is what makes an individual uniquely qualified for sitting as a judge. Trial work allows for fair and correct rulings, in real time, based upon the law and the evidence provided.
3. I am open to programs that will keep a person from re-offending and protect the public. I will evaluate whether a person is a good and willing candidate, with legitimate needs, that will benefit from the program. This must be weighed against their criminal history, the risks to the community and the facts of the case. I will work with judges, commissioners and the DA to help secure grants and funding for Dallas County.
4. The legislature should grant judges broader authority to put those they may be successful and benefit from treatment into those types of programs and more discretion for stiffer penalties for repeat offenders and those that will not benefit from treatment and continually brake the law. The legislature should look into enhancement of punishment for those that continually drink while intoxicated and assault or kill someone.
5. I think that if campaign finance reform is enacted it should apply to all seeking public office and not just limited to judges. If any reform is needed it may be better served by eliminating the ability to vote for judges on a straight ticket ballot. This would force the electorate to be better educated on the qualifications and experience of a judicial candidate.

Julia Hayes (DEM)



1. University of California, Davis, Bachelor of Arts, English; Syracuse University, College of Law, Juris Doctor, Not Board Certified in Criminal Law; I have been practicing exclusively criminal and family law for over seven years, specifically in criminal cases, the outcome of which have significant implications in the Family Courts. Similarly, (///)
2. As a defense attorney, I have handled several criminal jury trials prior to deciding to run for Judge.
3. Yes. I plan to support such access by starting a program geared toward 17-23 year old, young adult, first time offenders. This program will focus on requiring education rather than incarceration, job-training as opposed to probation. Program graduates become eligible for case dismissal and the opportunity to seal their criminal record. We'll provide a second chance to young adults whose future educational and employment opportunities are the most detrimentally affected by a criminal record.
4. The age for adult criminal prosecution should be eighteen rather than seventeen.
5. I believe that, as long as there is no appearance of impropriety, individuals and/or entities should be able to contribute to a candidate's campaign within reasonable limits.

Judge, County Criminal Court No. 3**Janet Cook (REP)**

1. I graduated from Texas Tech Law School in 1981. I have worked as an Assistant District Attorney prosecuting cases from misdemeanors to murders, an Assistant Public Defender in Dallas representing indigent individuals charged with felonies, and Senior Staff Attorney for the Dallas Criminal District Judges. I am not board certified.
2. I have experience trying cases from both sides of the bar. As a prosecutor I tried 63 felony and 74 misdemeanor jury trials. They included offenses of murder, aggravated robbery, kidnapping, aggravated sexual assault of a child, and aggravated assault. As an Assistant Public Defender I have tried at least 20 felony jury trials on charges ranging from state jail offenses to 1st degree murders.
3. I advocate a program where people who are unemployed or school dropouts are required to take an aptitude test to see where their abilities and interests lie, get a GED or enroll in community college or trade school, do community service, actively seek employment and get a job. The program would be run by the judge, not probation. The purpose is to get these restless, bored, undereducated young people moving forward in life.
4. I think the jurisdiction of county criminal court judges should be expanded to allow them to hear state jail felony cases. This will help with jail overcrowding and free up the District Judges to handle the more serious offenses.
5. I have personally pledged not to take any campaign contributions from lawyers that may appear before me in court. I believe I am the only candidate to make that pledge. I think it is important to remove any appearance of impropriety and to relieve attorneys from the pressure of contributing to a judge when they have cases in front of him or her.

Doug Skemp (DEM)

1. BA Degree Baylor University, 1972; J.D. Degree Baylor Law School, 1975. Associate Editor, Baylor Law Review. Certified Specialist in Criminal Law by Board of Legal Specialization, 1993. Texas Super Lawyer, 2005. Elected to Judge of County Criminal Court No. 3 in 2006. Established Out Patient Mental Illness Competency Court.
2. I have handled over 100 criminal jury trials during my 31 years of experience as a defense attorney. These trials included all levels of misdemeanors up to and including First Degree Felonies. I have also presided over 200 misdemeanor jury trials since taking the bench in January of 2007. None of these cases have been reversed by the Appellate Courts.
3. I support the expansion of diversion court programs. I have established a misdemeanor out patient competency court. Through this program nonviolent mentally ill defendants can now seek treatment to regain competency-the ability to help their attorneys with their defense-on an outpatient basis, instead of going to the state hospital. This eliminates a four to six month stay in the county jail while waiting for a vacancy at the state hospital.
4. There are many funded programs to treat those with substance abuse issues in the felony courts. There is a lack of funding and commitment from the Texas Legislature in providing comparable programs for misdemeanor defendants. If in patient and out patient drug diversion programs were available to misdemeanor defendants, they could be utilized to prevent our young offenders from committing more serious crimes in the future.
5. I do believe that public financing of judicial elections, where all candidates would have the same amount of funds, would be better than the present system. This would eliminate the need to solicit funds from attorneys who appear before the Court. This would instill greater public confidence in our judicial system.

Judge, County Criminal Court No. 4

Vanita White (REP)



1. I graduated from law school in December 1996 and worked as an Assistant District Attorney for over 12 years. My positions at the DA's office included Misdemeanor, Felony, Child Abuse, Organized Crime, Grand Jury, Misdemeanor
2. As a prosecutor, I have tried over 100 felony jury trials and over 50 misdemeanor jury trials. Trials before the court are 50 plus for Felony and over 100 for Misdemeanor. Since March 2009, I have not tried any cases as a criminal defense attorney, but have several cases set for trial. (ie. Murder, Aggravated Sexual Assault, Burglary of Habitation, & Drug Offenses.....)
3. Expanding sentencing diversion programs give judges alternative options when deciding punishment. When I was Chief of the Mental Health Division, I learned a lot about individuals that suffered from mental illnesses such as PTSD. In this position, I worked with different State and county agencies and learned what programs they had available. By giving these defendants the resources they need to be productive members of society we reduced the recidivism rate of these offenders.
4. Drug treatment facilities should increase. The length of time that offenders wait to go to treatment sometimes can be up to 4 months. More treatment facilities would help reduce the amount of offenders and would also help jail overcrowding. State hospitals need more resources and more beds; sometimes individuals wait months for a bed to open up before they can be given medication and the education they need to be competent to stand trial.
5. Yes

Teresa Tolle (DEM)



1. I am Board Certified in Criminal Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. After receiving a JD degree at St. Louis University, I served Dallas County as an assistant DA, 9 years; assistant PD, 3 years; Magistrate Judge, 9 years; and Elected Judge, 4 years.
2. As a prosecutor I was in the Appellate Section and did not "do" jury trials. While a Public Defender I was "second chair" in approximately five jury trials and lead defender in two felony trials. I represented at least twenty or thirty defendants in competency trials which, during those years, required a jury.
3. As a proponent of programs which divert defendants from jail, I support the alternative sentencing program. This permits misdemeanor defendants to have house arrest with work release as well as electronic surveillance as a safeguard.
4. The Texas legislature has enacted thousands of statutes to control every aspect of our lives. I am particularly interested in any simplification of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Penal Code, the Transportation Code, and the Administrative Code. These codes are too wordy, often redundant and even conflicting.
5. Judicial Campaign Reform would have to involve the State Political Party providing sufficient money to each qualified candidate. With a ballot the size of this year's slate of candidates, that solution is problematic.

Judge, County Criminal Court No. 5

Lex Fitzenhagen (REP)



1. I have practiced law in Dallas for over 20 years, both as a criminal defense attorney and an Assistant District Attorney. I graduated Cum Laude with a B.A. from Washington and Lee University. I received my Juris Doctor from St. Mary's University School of Law in 1988.
2. I have had approximately 50 jury trials, and I have handled thousands of cases before the court. My 20 years of experience in Dallas County has all been in criminal law.
3. I support currently successful drug treatment and rehabilitation programs for qualified defendants. I would also provide a list of resources including local non-profit agencies that offer relevant treatment and counseling programs.
4. A judge's responsibility is to follow the laws as they are written. Legislative changes to the criminal justice system are far too complex to respond to in this brief format.
5. Yes, I believe a judge should not be influenced by any special interest groups. A judge should only be allowed to receive contributions in compliance with the Judicial Campaign and Fairness Act.

Judge, County Criminal Court No. 5 (continued from previous page)

Etta J. Mullin (DEM)



1. I am a graduate of Woodrow Wilson High School, Texas Woman’s University, and Thurgood Marshall School of Law. I have 19+ years of experience with felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile cases. I also have criminal appellate experience. Further I have experience in juvenile justice, youth and family services, and adult probation.
2. I have handled dozens of criminal jury trials as a defense attorney and I have a wide range of experience with criminal felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile cases, as well as appellate experience.
3. I support expanding access to diversion programs because they have been shown to reduce criminal recidivism and create costs savings in the justice system. As a Judge, I plan to educate defendants who are worthy of such programs about their existence and benefits. This has been an area of tremendous innovation in Dallas County. I will also investigate possible new diversion programs that may prove beneficial.
4. As a judicial candidate and potential future judge, I intend to follow the laws of Texas. As such, I do not find it appropriate that I comment on any present or potential legislation. As a judge, I will be compelled to follow the law regardless of my personal opinions.
5. Our current system has checks and balances to ensure that no entity can have undue influence on a judge or judicial candidate. Candidates and donors must abide by strict contribution limits. Judicial candidates must have financial resources so that they have the opportunity to educate the public about their qualifications.

Judge, County Criminal Court No. 6

Christopher Koustourbardis (REP)



1. Chris Koustoubardis was born December 10, 1953 in Dallas and was raised in University Park. He grew up working at his father Jack’s family-owned and operated Burger House in Snider Plaza, which was established in 1951. Upon graduating from Highland Park High School in 1973, Chris attended Abilene Christian (///)
2. In 2002, Chris became an Administrative Law Judge for the Texas Youth Commission where he presided over 2700 hearings throughout the entire state. During the six years in this seat, he fought hard for fair treatment of troubled juveniles under the State’s care and was seen as a fair, just and impartial protector of their rights.
3. No response.
4. No response.
5. No response.

Angela M. King (DEM)



1. I currently preside over County Criminal Court #6. I am a native of Dallas, Texas and attended Skyline High School. I received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting from Prairie View A&M Univeristy and a Juris Doctorate from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington, Indiana. I am (///)
2. As Judge, I have presided over approximately 145 criminal jury trials. Prior to becoming a Judge, I handled more 150 criminal jury trials.
3. I support expanding programs that address the underlying issues that many offenders face. I support programs that correct destructive behavior and promote education, responsibility and accountability.
4. The Legislature should work to increase funding for education and life sustaining employment which will enable potential offenders to make better choices.
5. The system in place should be reviewed to determine what works and what should be deleted or replaced to ensure transparency and accountability.

Judge, County Criminal Court No. 7

Just Jay "J.J." Koch (REP)



1. I received a degree in Economics from Duke University and a JD from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law. I was a prosecutor, a solo criminal defense practitioner and currently work for a firm representing the Dallas Fraternal Order of Police, while maintaining a book of criminal defense business.
2. I have handled more than 50 trials as both a prosecutor and a criminal defense attorney.
3. I believe that Dallas County currently offers appropriate sentencing diversion programs and would not seek expansion of those existing programs or new programs being added.
4. It has been speculated that during the next legislative session a number of bills may be considered to strengthen driving-while-intoxicated laws. I am supportive of efforts directed at the reduction of alcohol-related driving offenses, as Texas has a shamefully disproportionate amount of these offenses as compared to other states in the Union.
5. I believe that the current finance system is acceptable. As long as we maintain full disclosure of those contributing funds to particular candidates, judges cannot favor those parties without facing backlash from the electorate.

Elizabeth Crowder (DEM)



1. I have 18 years of judicial experience, 15 years as Judge of this court and 3 years as Associate Judge in Juvenile Court. I graduated from SMU, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and received my law degree from Cornell Law School.
2. As an assistant district attorney, I handled more than 50 jury trials including criminal misdemeanor, felony and juvenile cases ranging from DWI to murder. As a judge, I have presided over approximately 750 jury trials and thousands of non-jury matters.
3. I strongly support expanding access to sentencing diversion programs, including treatment for substance abuse and mental health treatment. As a judge, I have taken this approach for more than 15 years, and it works.
4. Legislation to expand access to treatment for substance abuse and mental health treatment would improve the Texas criminal justice system. For many people who appear in my court, the law violation signals an underlying substance abuse or mental health issue. By identifying and addressing the underlying problem, we are able to protect the public and end the cycle of people returning to the criminal justice system.
5. Yes. I would support capping the amount each contributor may give to a candidate and the amount each candidate may spend.


Judge, County Criminal Court No. 8

Deandra Grant (REP)





1. B.S., Trinity University 1990, J.D., SMU School of Law 1993. Dallas County DA's Office 1993-94. Private practice criminal defense since 1995. D Magazine's *Best Women Lawyer's in Dallas 2010*. Peer-review rating of AV by Martindale-Hubbell.
2. I try anywhere from 1-3 jury trials per month and have for many years.
3. If elected I intend to expand the DWI Court rehab program currently offered in Dallas County for repeat DWI offenders by opening a 2nd court. I have had several clients turn their lives around through this program but there is currently a waiting list. Though it would involve volunteering my time outside of court hours, I believe in this program and want to expand the availability in Dallas County.
4. Though it might not be popular given the current state of our economy, expanding the resources available for indigent defense would improve the criminal justice system and help with the issue of individuals being wrongly convicted.
5. I have purposely not solicited funds from fellow attorneys, rather I've simply accepted those that decided on their own to help with my campaign. It is difficult for judicial candidates on the local level to raise funds. If "reform" involves limiting donors, the result will be that only those with the financial means to fund their own campaign will run for judge.

Judge, County Criminal Court No. 8 (continued from previous page)

<p>Tina Yoo (DEM)</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I served over a decade as a Dallas County prosecutor, five years as a defense attorney and four years as a judge. I teach criminal law throughout the nation to prosecutors, investigators and regulators and at the DPD Academy once a month. I have not sought certification. 2. I have tried 124 criminal jury trials from misdemeanor to felony grade offenses in addition to my current four years of experience presiding as a judge on criminal jury trials. The felony cases I tried include offenses such as murder, attempted murder, aggravated assault, robbery, possession of narcotics, child abuse, rape, fraud, theft, and DWI. The misdemeanor cases include prostitution, criminal trespass, possession of marijuana, DWI, selling alcohol to a minor, and more. 3. Yes. I have reviewed the possibility of implementing a treatment course for moderate level offenders of DWI in Court 8 should I be elected. There is currently one misdemeanor court that has implemented this model and it has been successful. The existing program currently has 70 participants. Current grants for the existing program are substantial enough to fund another court to expand this successful program without an increase in local costs. 4. The legislative changes are the domain of our state representatives and senators. I believe that it is my job as a judge to follow the law. 5. I support the efforts to minimize influence on judicial candidates and judges in the form of campaign contributions. However, ultimately, it is up to the individual and the strength of their character to turn down campaign contributions or conduct their campaigns so that there will not be even an appearance of improper behavior.
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Judge, County Criminal Court No. 9

<p>Leigh Logan (REP)</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I attended Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia, and I graduated <i>cum laude</i> from UTD with a B.A. in Economics and Finance in 1988. I earned my J.D. at SMU Dedman School of Law and graduated in 1992, <i>cum laude</i>, in the top ten percent of my class. I (///) 2. I have been a defense attorney since February, 1995, and on average, I try about six cases a year. Most of the cases I try are misdemeanor offenses, although I have also handled felony cases. 3. I am running for Dallas County Criminal Court No. 9. This court has a pre-trial program for prostitutes in place, conceived of and created by Dallas police sergeant Louis Felini, after he realized that many of the prostitutes he arrests, want and need help. When programs like this one are successful, recidivism rates drop and the participants are able to re-enter the community and make positive contributions to their families and our society. (///) 4. As a judicial candidate, I can speak to the impartial role judges occupy within the criminal justice system. It is the solely for the legislative branch to write and/or change the law. If elected, I will interpret and apply the law as it is written by the legislature. Judges cannot and should not make the law. 5. Again, as a judicial candidate, I can only speak to the independent role judges occupy within our legal system. Campaign finance reform is an issue the state and federal constitutions have appropriated to our elected representatives. If elected to serve as judge of County Criminal Court No. 9, I will abide by the law as it is written.
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<p>Peggy Hoffman (DEM)</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After graduating from S.M.U. Law School in 1993 I worked for Dallas County prosecuting misdemeanors and felonies, specializing in child abuse cases. I moved to N.Y. in 1996 and prosecuted felonies in Brooklyn specializing in murder cases. I was promoted to Deputy Bureau Chief where I supervised felony attorneys. In (///) 2. As a prosecutor and then defense attorney, I have been lead attorney in over 90 jury trials involving all levels of misdemeanors and felonies including homicides and sexual assaults. I sat second chair in approximately 50 additional trials. I tried approximately 100 trials before the court and have argued numerous motions and hearings. As a Deputy Bureau Chief in N.Y., I helped prepare felony attorneys for trial and advised them throughout the trials (approximately 25). 3. I support expanding diversion programs. I created a specialty drug divert court (PRIDE Court) for persons charged with misdemeanor prostitution. I received a \$350,000.00 grant from the Bureau of Justice to help fund the court. The goal is to stop the cycle of incarceration and substance abuse and help these individuals become productive members of society. I also work with the Dallas Police Department's Prostitution Diversion Initiative which brings the services to this population. 4. To help fund diversion courts, the legislature has required that some funds from court costs go to those courts. I would expand that requirement overall and also make it more specific. One suggestion is to require part of the court costs defendants convicted of promotion of prostitution and soliciting prostitutes pay go to fund divert courts and rehabilitation for prostitutes. 5. As long as judges are required to be elected, financing a campaign is necessary and the funds generally come from attorneys. However, stricter limits on the amount a law firm and individual may contribute to a particular candidate may be warranted.
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Judge, County Criminal Court No. 10

Scala Byers (REP) - No reply received.



Roberto Canas (DEM)

1. My court requires more than the traditional legal education and criminal law experience which I have. It also requires experience with the issue of domestic violence. I have specific domestic violence experience that qualifies me for this court. You can learn more about my experience at www.reelectjudgecanas.com.
2. I became a prosecutor in 1999, and from 1999 to 2006 I tried 191 cases to a jury. Since becoming a judge, I have tried 73 jury trials. Of all the trials I have handled either as a prosecutor or judge, I have only had one case reversed on appeal, which means I have broad understanding of the law and how to properly try a criminal case.
3. I use the Battering Intervention and Prevention Program to help abusers change their violent behavior. It has proven effective in domestic violence cases where accountability and victim safety are high priorities. I am the first judge of Court 10 to consistently use programs like this. I will expand the curriculum to include a focus on how family violence affects children and that choosing not to use violence is an aspect of being a good parent.
4. I handle only domestic violence cases and I have proven that a judge educated and dedicated to handling these cases works for the community. If the legislature expanded my court's jurisdiction to include certain felony family violence cases, then the court could have a better response to this problem. There are no felony courts dedicated to handling these cases. Dallas County would be better served by allowing me to handle felonies as well as misdemeanors.
5. Yes I support judicial campaign finance reform. I support the apolitical selection of judges. Short of that, lower limits could be placed on what individuals and law firms could contribute to a judicial campaign. This would require a judicial candidate to have a diverse pool of funders and not feel beholden to a small group of interested donors.

Judge, County Criminal Court of Appeals

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1. Please discuss your educational background, professional experience that qualifies you for the position of Criminal District Court Judge. Has the Texas Board of Legal Specialization certified you in the specialty of criminal law? (50 words)
2. How many criminal jury trials did you handle as a defense attorney or a prosecutor prior to deciding to run for Judge? (75 words)
3. Do you support expanding access to sentencing diversion programs such as those offering drug treatment or post-traumatic stress disorder counseling? If so, as Judge, how can you help to expand access to these programs for qualified defendants? (75 words)
4. What legislative changes, if any, do you think should be made to improve the Texas criminal justice system? (75 words)
5. Do you support campaign finance reform for judicial campaigns and, if so, what reform efforts would you support? (75 words)

Judge, County Criminal Court of Appeals No. 2

Jennifer Jackson (REP) - *No reply received.*

Jeffrey Rosenfield (DEM)



1. B.A. - Texas State University 1983, J.D. - St. Mary's University 1987. I have been an attorney for over 22 years and a judge for over three and a half years. As judge, I have tried hundreds of motions and more than 400 cases. I am not board certified.
2. Prior to being elected Judge of Dallas County Criminal Court of Appeals #2, I tried somewhere between 50 and 75 criminal jury trials. These trials were Felonies and Misdemeanors. Most of the trials were DWI's which prepared me well for this bench.
3. Yes, for felony courts but not for misdemeanor courts. The misdemeanor courts already offer sentencing diversion programs. The defendant must fit a certain criteria and be a willing participant. I have not found that any defendant from this court has been denied access to such programs. The Community Supervision Department has drug, alcohol and other counseling programs available for defendants on community supervision. A new program would be unnecessary.
4. Judges should be given more discretion in setting certain sentences regarding DWI's and certain drug offenses. When the legislature handcuffs a judge regarding sentencing, the judge is sometimes unable to fashion an appropriate sentence because of certain requirements. Most judges are in a better position than the legislature to evaluate a sentence.
5. Yes. Judicial campaigns should be publicly funded by the State of Texas. A set amount would be given to each candidate and that would be the maximum amount the judicial candidate could spend on the campaign. The amount would need to be enough for each candidate to

Judge, County Probate Court

This specialized court handles matters of probate, guardianship, trust, and mental health.

1. Please discuss your educational background and professional experience. Do you see the probate courts as having unique requirements for which you possess specific knowledge and ability? Has the Texas Board of Legal Specialization certified you in any legal specialty? *(50 words)*
2. As Judge, what goals would you set for yourself to ensure the timely resolution of all matters on your Court's docket? *(75 words)*
3. What legislative changes, if any, do you think should be made to improve and simplify the Texas probate system? *(75 words)*
4. Do you support campaign finance reform for judicial campaigns and, if so, what reform efforts would you support? *(75 words)*

Judge, County Probate Court No. 2

Lori Ashmore Peters (REP)



1. I graduated with a B.A. from Texas A&M University in 1991. I received my Juris Doctor from Texas Wesleyan School of Law in 1996. For over 14 years I have dedicated my practice to Probate, Estate Planning, Guardianship and Mental Health Law. Visit www.loriashmorepeters.com.
2. I will clear the older cases first and give top priority to those emergency cases such as Temporary Guardianships and Temporary Administrations. I will make sure all files are reviewed before every hearing and that they adhere to the laws as set forth by the Texas Probate Code. My Court will notify the attorney in advance if the matter set is not able to be heard.
3. I have worked with probate systems throughout the United States. Texas is one of the few States whose probate system is streamlined and efficient. If any changes need to be made, I will work with the Legislature and the Texas College of Probate Judges, which conferences I regularly attend, to ensure those changes are made. I have been instrumental in clarifying sections of the Texas Probate Code as it relates to Ancillary Probate.
4. I support full disclosure of those contributing to a judicial campaign. As a Judge, you must make rulings based on the laws, and a Judge must uphold all laws promulgated by the Legislature. Judges are not to make any rulings based on how much money an attorney, individual or business may or may not have contributed to their campaign.

Judge, County Probate Court No. 2 (continued from previous page)

Chris Wilmoth (DEM)



1. Great probate judges embody compassion for people in crisis and legal dexterity to handle probate and guardianship issues as well as complex fiduciary litigation. I excelled academically and have practiced highly-sophisticated litigation my entire career. I have also donated over 600 hours of pro bono work since 2003.
2. In contested matters, I will use scheduling orders (based on deadlines negotiated by the parties) to govern discovery and pretrial motion practice and hopefully bring cases to trial within 18 months (or less, depending on the subject matter). In uncontested cases, within three weeks after an application is filed I intend to provide feedback to counsel regarding the application's compliance with the law and to schedule a hearing convenient to the applicant and any witnesses.
3. My extensive experience in the bankruptcy courts has taught me the importance of transparency in the administration of estates. To that end, I recommend that we change the way we give notice to interested persons when applications are submitted to probate wills, declare heirs or otherwise administer estates. Also, I would recommend changes to the rules of professional responsibility to make it easier for lawyers at large firms to handle pro bono probate work.
4. The disclosure system currently in place, requiring candidates and judges to disclose the identities of contributors donating more than \$50 to a campaign fund – helps judges and parties avoid the appearance of impropriety. Moreover, individuals and law firms are subject to a cap in the amount they are able to give. Presently, these disclosures can be obtained from the County Elections office; I would recommend that these disclosures (redacted for privacy) be made available online.