

ALLEGHENY COUNTY COMMON PLEAS JUDICIAL ELECTIONS

BY COLLEEN HAMMOND

With nearly 40 candidates running for nine open seats on the Common Pleas Court of Allegheny County, this election cycle offers a paramount opportunity to remake the county's criminal justice system. Common Pleas Judges are responsible for overseeing trials for criminal, civil, and family cases and delivering sentencing. They can also be a part of doling out, or withholding, cash bail. Their discretion can reform the court. *Pittsburgh City Paper* has chosen to highlight four different categories of endorsements and/or rankings for this year's judicial candidates: legal, political, reform, and LGBTQ.

The legal rankings come from the Allegheny County Bar Association and have four different results: highly recommended, recommended, not recommended at this time (which means candidates could be recommended later, but aren't currently), and unqualified.

Political endorsements are from two large Democratic Party groups, the Allegheny County

Democratic Committee and the Young Democrats of Allegheny County, since many more candidates are filing as Democrats than as Republicans.

A new criminal justice reform coalition, formed earlier this year, is providing endorsements for reform-minded candidates. Members include police-reform group Alliance for Police Accountability, Black-led political group 1Hood Power, statewide prison abolition group Straight Ahead, and UNITE PAC, a political action committee working to get elected progressive candidates. According to the coalition, these candidates have demonstrated a commitment to equitable justice.

Lastly, two of the largest LGBTQ political organizations handed out endorsements for several candidates this cycle. The groups are the Steel City Stonewall Democrats and the Gertrude Stein Club of Greater Pittsburgh.

Voters will be able to select up to nine of the following candidates on the ballot.

	ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION RATING	ALLEGHENY COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE / YOUNG DEMS OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY	CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM COALITION	STEEL CITY STONEWALL DEMOCRATS / GERTRUDE STEIN CLUB OF PITTSBURGH
BRUCE BEEMER - INCUMBENT COMMON PLEAS JUDGE, <i>BRADFORD WOODS</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED	✓		✓
DEAN A. BIRDY - ATTORNEY, <i>NORTH SIDE</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
PAULINE CALABRESE - MAYOR OF PENN HILLS, ATTORNEY, <i>PENN HILLS</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
TOM CAULFIELD - MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE, <i>FOREST HILLS</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED	✓		
WILLIAM BILL CAYE - ATTORNEY, <i>SOUTH FAYETTE</i>	RECOMMENDED	✓		
JASON J. CERVONE - ATTORNEY, <i>NORTH SIDE</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
JESSEL COSTA - ATTORNEY, <i>SOUTH SIDE</i>	UNQUALIFIED	✓		
ALYSSA COWAN - ATTORNEY, <i>HAMPTON</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED			
ROSEMARY CRAWFORD - ATTORNEY, <i>HAMPTON</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED			
MARC DAFFNER - ATTORNEY, <i>GREENTREE</i>	RECOMMENDED			
ANTHONY DELUCA - ATTORNEY, <i>MT. LEBANON</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED			
RICHARD THOMAS ERNSBERGER - ATTORNEY, <i>OAKLAND</i>	RECOMMENDED			
BRIAN D. FLAHERTY - ATTORNEY, <i>FOREST HILLS</i>	UNQUALIFIED			
MARK PATRICK FLAHERTY - ATTORNEY, <i>MT. LEBANON</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
RYAN O. HEMMINGER - ATTORNEY, <i>ELIZABETH TOWNSHIP</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
NICOLA HENRY-TAYLOR - ATTORNEY, <i>ROSS</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED	✓	✓	✓✓
GEORGE HEYM - ATTORNEY, <i>SQUIRREL HILL</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED			
RICK HOSKING - ATTORNEY, <i>UPPER ST. CLAIR</i>	RECOMMENDED			
ELLIOT HOWSIE - INCUMBENT COMMON PLEAS JUDGE, <i>CHURCHILL</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED	✓✓		✓
CLINT KELLEY - ATTORNEY, <i>MT. LEBANON</i>	RECOMMENDED			
DANIEL J. KONIECZKA, JR. - MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE, <i>SHALER</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED			
SABRINA KORBEL - ATTORNEY, <i>ROSS</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED	✓✓		✓✓
BRIAN SAMUEL MALKIN - ATTORNEY, <i>FRANKLIN PARK</i>	RECOMMENDED			✓✓
LISA MIDDLEMAN - ATTORNEY, <i>FRANKLIN PARK</i>	RECOMMENDED		✓	✓✓
JOSEPH PATRICK MURPHY - ATTORNEY, <i>PINE</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
MIK PAPPAS - MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE, <i>HIGHLAND PARK</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME	✓	✓	✓
CHUCK PORTER - ATTORNEY, <i>SHALER</i>	RECOMMENDED			
ZEKE REDIKER - ATTORNEY, <i>SQUIRREL HILL</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME	✓	✓	
MATT ROGERS - ATTORNEY, <i>MT. LEBANON</i>	RECOMMENDED			✓
GIUSEPPE ROSSELLI - ATTORNEY, <i>BELL ACRES</i>	RECOMMENDED		✓	✓
JIMMY SHEETS - ATTORNEY, <i>BETHEL PARK</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
BETH TARASI SINATRA - ATTORNEY, <i>BELL ACRES</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
TIFFANY SIZEMORE - ATTORNEY, <i>CHURCHILL</i>	RECOMMENDED		✓	✓
PATRICK A. SWEENEY - ATTORNEY, <i>SOUTH SIDE</i>	RECOMMENDED	✓		✓
ANDY SZEFI - ATTORNEY, <i>MT. LEBANON</i>	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED			
ALBERT VEVERKA - ATTORNEY, <i>MT. LEBANON</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME			
CHELSEA WAGNER - ALLEGHENY COUNTY CONTROLLER, <i>POINT BREEZE</i>	NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME	✓	✓	✓✓
WRENNA WATSON - ATTORNEY, <i>HILL DISTRICT</i>	RECOMMENDED	✓	✓	
ILAN ZUR - PROSECUTOR, <i>SQUIRREL HILL</i>	RECOMMENDED			