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Presents

2010

Judicial Candidates' Forum



Thursday October 21, 2010

6:00 PM—7:30 PM

The Charlotte School of Law

Moderator: Taylor Batten-*Charlotte Observer*



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Justice Initiatives envisions a court system that delivers the highest quality justice and fosters community trust and confidence.



PROGRAM

Welcome

Taylor Batten, Moderator

Introductions

**Candidates
Panel Members**

Presentation of Rules

Questions and Answers

**Moderator Questions (55 minutes)
Audience Questions (25 minutes)**

Closing

Moderator

*The use of cameras and/or other electronic recording devices
by the audience is prohibited*

CANDIDATES

District Court Judge (I)

**The Honorable Lisa C. Bell
Twyla E. Hollingsworth**

District Court Judge (II)

**The Honorable Jena P. Culler
Donald Cureton, Jr.**

District Court Judge (III)

**The Honorable Tyyawdi M. Hands
Sean Smith**

District Court Judge (IV)

**Matt Osman
The Honorable Tim Smith**

Superior Court Judge (26B)

**The Honorable William H. “Bill” Constangy
The Honorable Hugh B. Lewis
The Honorable F. Lane Williamson**

Candidate descriptions have been provided by each campaign. They have not been validated by Justice Initiatives, Inc.



The Honorable Lisa Bell, Chief District Court Judge

Judge Bell has served as a District Court Judge since being elected in 1998. In December, 2008, she was appointed Chief District Court Judge by Chief Justice Sarah Parker.

Judge Bell is a member of the NC Association of District Court Judges; serves on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Child Custody; is a board member of the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation; has presented at state and national conferences; has published in the Juvenile and Family Court Journal; and co-authored North Carolina legislation.



Twyla Hollingsworth, Senior Associate County Attorney

Twyla E. Hollingsworth attended Alcorn State University, receiving a BA in Political Science, summa cum laude, 1993, and received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Mississippi of Law, Oxford in 1996.

Ms. Hollingsworth's professional background includes her legal experience from 2002–present as Mecklenburg County Senior Associate Attorney; Attorney for Legal Services of Southern Piedmont 2001-2002; Assistant Staff Attorney for Gaston County Department of Social Services 1998-2001; handled cases before the NC Court of Appeals and the NC Supreme Court. In addition, Ms. Hollingsworth participates in many civic organizations including The Park Ministries and New Birth Charlotte.

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The Honorable Jena Culler, District Court Judge

Jena Culler obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1986 and her law degree from Campbell University in 1989. Jena was in private practice for eighteen years in Mecklenburg County, practicing in every area of District Court. She was appointed to the bench in 2008. As a judge, she has primarily presided in Family Court. She has been selected as Lead Judge in the area of child support. She presides in civil and criminal courts. She lives in Charlotte with her husband and three children, and is actively involved in the community.



Donald Cureton, Assistant Public Defender

Donald is a Mecklenburg County Assistant Public Defender working in District and Superior Court. His extensive legal experience includes working for Bush & Powers (now Powers McCartan, PLLC) and Black Entertainment Television, Inc. Donald is a mentor through the County Bar's Lunch with a Lawyer Program, a board member for the Larry King Clubhouse (the Mecklenburg County Courthouse daycare), and an executive member of the John S. Leary Bar Association.

Donald is a graduate of Winston-Salem State University and the Howard University School of Law. He and his wife, Deanna, have been married for 6 years.

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The Honorable Tyyawdi Hands, District Court Judge

Judge Tyyawdi Hands is diligent, dedicated and knowledgeable. She was first in her family to attend college and graduated magna cum laude from Winston-Salem State University. She earned her Juris Doctor from UNC School of Law. After two Supreme Court clerkships, she worked in a large and small law firm. Judge Hands then built a thriving law practice representing clients in district court almost daily for several years before Governor Perdue appointed her to the district court. Judge Hands speaks fluent Spanish and volunteers countless hours in the community. She is married to David Hands and they have one son.



Sean Smith, Attorney at Law

Sean Smith was born in Charlotte and grew up in Mint Hill and South Charlotte. He graduated from Charlotte Latin School, received his undergraduate degree in business administration from the University of Notre Dame, and received his law degree from Villanova University. After working in federal and local prosecutors' offices in Philadelphia, Sean returned home to Charlotte where he prosecuted criminal cases as an Assistant District Attorney in the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office from 2004-10. Sean resides in the Elizabeth neighborhood, attends St. Gabriel Catholic Church, and spends his free time refereeing professional, collegiate, and youth soccer matches.

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Matt Osman, Assistant District Attorney

Matt Osman is an Assistant District Attorney, a former U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General (JAG), and a Charlotte native. As an Assistant District Attorney, he prosecutes a wide range of criminal matters, including homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence and driving while impaired. As a U.S. Navy JAG serving in Japan, Spain, Charleston, SC, and onboard USS ESSEX, he worked as a prosecutor, defense attorney, staff attorney, and advised sailors and their families on domestic and civil issues. Matt is a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill and Regent University School of Law.



The Honorable Tim Smith, District Court Judge

My Mecklenburg County roots go deep. I'm a West Charlotte and UNCC graduate. I attended NCCU Law School and have earned over 16 years public and private, criminal and civil district court experience in Mecklenburg County. I was elected to the bench in 2006 and I've presided in nearly all District Courts. As a husband and father, establishing the Pay or Stay program in Child Support Court - a program which greatly increases money received for children - is one of my proudest accomplishments. I strive to treat all who come before me in a patient, dignified and fair manner.

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The Honorable William H. “Bill” Constangy, District Court Judge

Currently serving 22nd year (6th term) as a District Court Judge in Mecklenburg County presiding over heavy dockets in Criminal, Civil, Family and Juvenile Courts (Certified Juvenile Court Judge); 18 years of law practice in Charlotte before becoming a judge; Author of law book on employment law and various legal articles; Duke University School of Law, JD; Wake Forest University, BA (Hankins Scholar, Student Body President, President, State Student Legislature of North Carolina). Marquis’ Who’s Who in America; Who’s Who in American Law; Who’s Who Among Emerging Leaders in the United States; Married for 40 years and father of two children.



The Honorable Hugh B. Lewis, District Court Judge

Judge Lewis has served 15 years as a judicial official in Mecklenburg County. Judge Lewis was the first Teen Court Judge and held that court for fourteen years. He was the first judge to hold Mental Health Court. He is nationally recognized for his work with addicts and alcoholics. Judge Lewis has a tradition of holding people accountable for their actions while helping those willing to accept the opportunity and responsibility of helping themselves become productive citizens. Judge Lewis does this work because to serve others is the greatest gift he can receive.

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The Honorable F. Lane Williamson, Superior Court Judge

Judge Williamson was appointed to the Superior Court bench in March of 2010. He is a 1978 honors graduate of the UNC School of Law, where he served on the Law Review. Prior to becoming a judge, he had a litigation practice focusing on general civil litigation and federal criminal defense. He has served as chair of the State Bar Disciplinary Hearing Commission, chair of the board of the Federal Defenders of Western North Carolina and as a member of several Mecklenburg County Bar committees. He is a frequent speaker at CLE programs on legal ethics and discipline.



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Justice Initiatives, Inc.
PO Box 472326
Charlotte, North Carolina 28247



www.justiceinitiatives.org

administration@justiceinitiatives.org