

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE April 23, 2018

TO Honorable Members of the Ad Hoc Judicial Nominations Committee:
B. Adam McGough (Chair), Phillip T. Kingston (Vice Chair), Mayor Pro Tem Dwaine R. Caraway, Council Member Jennifer S. Gates, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano, Council Member Sandy Greyson, Council Member Kevin Felder

SUBJECT Presentation of Ranked Nominees for the Municipal Court of Record, Full-time Judges; Associate (part-time) Judges; and Administrative Judge of Dallas Municipal Courts

Section 13-5.2 of the Dallas City Code designates the Ad Hoc Judicial Nominations Committee to receive the recommendations of the Judicial Nominating Commission (JNC) for municipal judges.

The JNC recently considered applications and interviewed candidates for the Municipal Court of Record full-time and associate (part-time) municipal judge positions, and for the Administrative Judge position. The JNC is required to submit a number of nominees equal to 150% of the full-time and associate positions to be filled (rounded up to a whole number) ranked in order of preference. Therefore, attached are 18 candidates for full-time municipal judge and 27 candidates for associate (part-time) municipal judge. In addition, the Judicial Nominating Commission is required to submit 3 nominees for the position of Administrative Judge ranked in order of preference. The JNC's rankings in each of these three categories, which were approved by unanimous vote on April 16, 2018, are attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Number of Applicants and Process

The JNC reviewed 105 applications. After the members of the JNC had an opportunity to independently review each application, the JNC convened to discuss the merits of each applicant. From the pool of applicants, the JNC selected 59 applicants for in-person interviews, which were conducted over the course of four days.

The Administrative Judge Position

The JNC recommends as its first choice for Administrative Judge, Judge Preston Robinson. Our second choice is Judge Julie Clancy. The JNC has also listed Judge Daniel Solis, the current Administrative Judge, as the third recommended choice. To be clear, however, the JNC did so only to fulfill the requirement that it submit 3 candidates for consideration. While the JNC acknowledges the contributions of Judge Solis since becoming Administrative Judge, the JNC believes that it is time for new leadership in that role.

Morale in the Court

Through interviewing each sitting Municipal Judge, the JNC determined that the court house is rife with petty personality disputes, which have resulted in marked decreases of collaboration and collegiality among the judiciary. This has led to both insufficient communication, a complete inability to resolve policy and procedural disagreements, and inconsistencies in how various judges deal with similarly situated defendants. It is the JNC's view that the citizens of Dallas are best served by a judiciary that works together toward the consistent application of justice. Accordingly, the JNC took into consideration collegiality in ranking candidates for the position of Municipal Judge.

Diversity

Section 13-5.2 requires that the JNC utilize evaluation guidelines that include appropriate goals for achieving sufficient racial, ethnic, and gender diversity within the municipal court of record. The JNC's understanding of this guideline is that its recommended slate must reflect, as closely as possible, the racial, ethnic and gender makeup of the city's population.

To determine the demographics of the city's populations, the JNC looked to the U.S. Census Bureau's ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates for 2016¹, which revealed that Dallas's population is 50.3% female and 49.7% male, and that 41.5% are Hispanic or Latino, 29.2% are white and 24.3% are black or African American. The current makeup of the Municipal Judges is 18.18% Hispanic or Latino, 36.6% white, and 45.45% black or African American.

If the number of Municipal Judges is reduced to 10, the JNC's top 10 candidates would result in a demographic makeup that is 40% female and 60% male, and 30% Hispanic or Latino, 20% white, and 50% black or African American. If the number of Municipal Judges remains at 12, the JNC's top 12 candidates would result in a demographic makeup that is 41.67% female and 58.33% male, and 25% Hispanic or Latino, 33.33% white, and 41.67% black or African American.

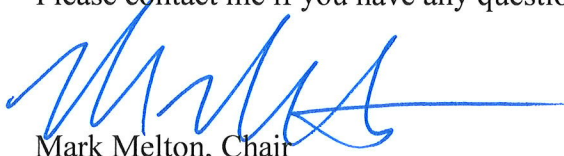
Factors Considered

The JNC considered many factors in selecting and ranking candidates for Administrative Judge, Municipal Judge and Associate Judge. Those factors included (in no particular order) judicial experience, with additional weight given to judges or former judges with experience hearing criminal cases, legal advocacy experience, with additional weight given to those with experience trying criminal cases over civil cases or lawyers with only transactional experience, judicial philosophy, temperament, familiarity with Dallas-specific municipal court operations, availability, historical job stability, and reasons for wanting to serve in the position. No single factor was dispositive, and each candidate was viewed holistically with an eye toward maximizing efficiency and justice for the citizens of Dallas. A summary of each candidate's experience is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

¹ This was the most recent data available.

On behalf of the JNC, thank you for the opportunity to be of service. The JNC respectfully submits its results as attached.

Please contact me if you have any questions.



Mark Melton, Chair
Judicial Nominating Commission

Attachments

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

T.C. Broadnax, City Manager

Larry Casto, City Attorney

Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor

Biliera Johnson, City Secretary

Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge

Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager

Jo M. (Jody) Puckett, Assistant City Manager (Interim)

Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager

Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager

M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer

Nadia Chandler Hardy, Chief of Community Services

Raquel Favela, Chief of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services

Theresa O'Donnell, Chief of Resilience

Directors and Assistant Directors

EXHIBIT A
Slate of Candidates

Recommendations of the Judicial Nominating Commission

Key
Sitting Municipal Judge
Sitting Associate Judge
* =Selected for Either Municipal or Associate Judge Positions

Administrative Judge			
Rank	Name	Gender	Ethnicity
1	Preston Robinson	M	BLK
2	Julie Clancy	F	UNK
3	Daniel Solis	M	Mexa

Municipal Judge			
Rank	Name	Gender	Ethnicity
1	Demetrius Blacklock	M	BLK
2	Jay Robinson	M	WHT
3	Michael Acuna	M	UNK
4	Cheryl Williams	F	BLK
5	Preston Robinson	M	BLK
6	Tonya Goffney*	F	BLK
7	Yolanda Julado-Gessein*	F	MEXA
8	Mark Murrell	M	BLK
9	Juan Renteria*	M	SPAN
10	Julie Clancy	F	UNK
11	Hollis Godfrey*	M	WHT
12	Marcia Tillman*	F	WHT
13	Kristen Kramer	F	UNK
14	Dalerie Moore	F	BLK
15	Stefanee Davis	F	BLK
16	Henry Wade	M	WHT
17	Victor Lander	M	BLK
18	Daniel Solis	M	MEXA

Associate Judge			
Rank	Name	Gender	Ethnicity
1	Melodee Armstrong	F	BLK
2	Tim Menchu	M	AMIN
3	Daniel Ryan	M	WHT
4	Roland Anderson	M	WHT
5	Kristine Primrose	F	WHT
6	Joselito Giron	M	OASI
7	Daniel McDonald	M	WHT
8	Desmond Cooks	M	BLK
9	Thaddeus Iwuji	M	UNK
10	Sandra White	F	BLK
11	Tonya Goffney*	F	BLK
12	Juan Renteria*	M	SPAN
13	Marcia Tillman*	F	WHT
14	Jonh McCall	M	WHT
15	Yolanda Jurado-Gesswein*	F	MEXA
16	Holis Godfrey*	M	WHT
17	Amar Thakrar	M	UNK
18	Marcela Evans	F	UNK
19	Amy Castle Gray	F	UNK
20	Erane LaSusa	F	WHT
21	Frances Crumpler	M	UNK
22	Yodit Tewolde	F	BLK
23	Sharon Sela	F	UNK
24	Mai Mullen Milton	F	BLK
25	Ashley White	F	TWO
26	Timon Watson	M	WHT
27	Raymond Hindieh	M	OTHR

EXHIBIT B
Summary of Qualifications of Full Time Candidates

1. Demetrius Blacklock

Judge Blacklock has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 4 years. Prior to taking the bench, he spent two years as an Assistant District Attorney in Harris County, and an additional two years in private practice.

2. Jay Robinson

Judge Robinson has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 23 years, and was an Associate Judge for 6 years prior.

3. Michael Acuna

Judge Acuna has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 14 years. Prior to taking the bench, he was a municipal prosecutor and assistant city attorney in both Dallas and Houston for 7 years.

4. Cheryl Williams

Judge Williams has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 19 years, and an Associate Municipal Judge for 4 years prior. She was also in private practice for 10 years with heavy exposure to criminal law.

5. Preston Robinson

Judge Robinson has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 6 years, and was an Associate Municipal Judge for 4 years prior. He was a criminal defense attorney for 6 years, and was an adjunct professor of criminal law & procedure for 2 years. Judge Robinson was able to articulate a vision for the Municipal Court that was collegial, collaborative, and focused on maximizing efficiency and consistent justice in service to the citizens of Dallas. The JNC recommends Judge Robinson for Administrative Judge, and believes he is by far and away the best candidate for the job.

6. Tonya Goffney

Judge Goffney has served as an Associate Municipal Judge for the last 8 years. She has taught law in DISD, and has been in private practice since 2003 with heavy exposure to criminal law. The JNC found her demeanor important, as well as her direct experience in Dallas Municipal Courts as an Associate Judge.

7. **Yolanda Julado-Gessein**

Ms. Julado-Gessein was an Assistant District Attorney for 3 years in Hidalgo County. For the last 32 years in private practice with a focus on criminal defense. Her demeanor and thorough knowledge of the law were important to the JNC.

8. **Mark Murrell**

Judge Murrell has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 2 years. He was a prosecutor in the Dallas City Attorney's office for the 7 years prior to that.

9. **Juan Renteria**

Judge Renteria has served as an Associate Municipal Judge for 2 years. He has two years of experience as a prosecutor in the Dallas City Attorney's office, and nine years in private practice with heavy exposure to criminal cases. The JNC found his demeanor and judicial philosophy important.

10. **Julie Clancy**

Judge Clancy has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 10 years. She was also an associate Municipal Judge for two years prior to that. Prior to taking the bench, she spent thirteen in private practice and three years in the Dallas Public Defender's office.

11. **Hollis Godfrey**

Mr. Godfrey has a long and storied career, primarily spent as in-house litigation counsel for large companies like CitiGroup and Ally Financial. He was an elected state court judge in Denton County for 6 years. He has spent the last four years in private practice with a lot of exposure to criminal defense work. The JNC found his demeanor and judicial philosophy important.

12. **Marcia Tillman**

Judge Tillman has served as an Associate Judge for 2 years. She has 10 years of experience as an Assistant District Attorney in Montgomery and Jefferson Counties, and worked as an Assistant City Attorney for 5 years in Conroe. The remainder of her career was in private practice with heavy exposure to criminal law. The JNC found her temperament and knowledge of the Dallas Municipal Court processes and procedures important.

13. **Kristen Kramer**

Ms. Kramer has been a Community Prosecutor for the city of Dallas for the last two years, working directly in our municipal court system. From 2007 to 2014, she was a Deputy District Attorney for Clark County, Nevada, where she worked in both the criminal division and the child support division. She also spent two years as a consultant with a firm that provides docketing software to courts. The JNC found her

broad knowledge of how other courts around the country manage their processes through IT solutions to be important.

14. Dalerie Moore

Ms. Moore was an Assistant District Attorney for Dallas County for 11 years, including 4 years as Chief Felony Prosecutor, and two years in private practice with heavy exposure to criminal defense work. The JNC found her demeanor and judicial philosophy important.

15. Stefanee Davis

Ms. Davis has been licensed to practice law since 2005. For the past year she has worked as an Assistant District Attorney in Dallas County. She has also served as an Independent Hearing Examiner for the Texas Education Agency. The remainder of her career has been in private practice, primarily in family law but with some criminal defense experience. Her poise and demeanor were important attributes to the JNC.

16. Henry Wade

Judge Wade has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 4 years. He was also a Dallas County District Court Judge for 11 years. He was in private practice for 7 years with heavy criminal law exposure, and was an Assistant District Attorney for 2 years in Dallas County.

17. Victor Lander

Judge Lander has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 22 years. He was an Associate Judge for 5 years prior, and also served as Administrative Judge from 2008 to 2012.

18. Daniel Solis

Judge Solis has served as a full-time Dallas Municipal Judge for 27 years. He was an Associate Judge for 14 years prior, and also served as Administrative Judge from 2014 to the present.