



The Municipal League of King County
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2008 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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Staff

Saul Ettlin, Director

The Municipal League of King County requests every candidate who participates in the candidate evaluation process to **submit background information prior to his/her interview with a candidate evaluation committee**. The questionnaire is the basis of the League's research and interview process. The League's ratings are non-partisan; they are based on standards of Involvement, Effectiveness, Character, and Knowledge, all of which have been developed and refined over the past 90 years.

A printed version of the questionnaire is available for candidates who prefer to use the traditional format. To obtain a hard copy, please contact the League office. A copy of this questionnaire will be provided to Candidate Evaluation Committee members to help them prepare for your interview. Candidate responses, except the confidential section, will be available to the general public at the League website.

The Municipal League requests the following materials from candidates. Please check to make certain you have sent in your:

- Candidate Questionnaire**
Sent by: Email US Mail Fax Not Sending
- Resume (education, employment, and professional activities)**
Sent by: Email US Mail Fax Not Sending
 Check here if you DO NOT want your resume posted on the Municipal League website
- Campaign Materials**
Sent by: Email US Mail Fax Not Sending
- Constituent Newsletters and other publications**
Sent by: Email US Mail Fax Not Sending
- Photograph**
Sent by: Email US Mail Fax Not Sending

Note: Electronically submitted questionnaires are strongly preferred. All materials can be emailed to cec@munileague.org. They can be processed and made available on-line far more rapidly than handwritten or typed submissions.

For non-electronic submissions, please print clearly and legibly and return the application **as soon as possible in order to allow the committee the greatest amount of time to prepare a complete report on your skills and experience.**

**We request that you return the Candidate Questionnaire
by June 1, 2008**

If you have not yet been contacted to schedule an interview, or if you have questions about the candidate evaluation program, please contact the League office at 206-264-1070.

If you have a disability and require accommodation to participate in the candidate evaluation process, please contact the CEC Coordinator at the League office.

2008 Candidate Questionnaire

SECTION I

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
JAMES	M.	BEECHER

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

Supreme Court Justice --- Position 4

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

44 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

44 years

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan? Partisan Nonpartisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: BEECHER 08

Address: 1601 FIFTH AVENUE, SUITE 2200

City/State/Zip: SEATTLE, WA 98101-1651

Campaign Phone: 206-624-2200

Campaign Fax: 206-624-1767

Campaign E-mail: beecher@beecher08

Campaign Website: Beecher08.com

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)
Assistant Seattle City Attorney	Appointive	1964-1965	Prosecutor
Assistant Attorney General	Appointive	1966-1970	Senior Trial Attorney

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run

SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
 - **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
 - **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
 - **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?
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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

We don't have term limits in this state despite the fact that Washington voters passed a term limits initiative. Our Supreme Court held term limits to be an unconstitutional impediment to those seeking public office. Putting aside the soundness of the term limit's law and the judicial repeal of that law, most of us believe that an elected state office should not be a lifetime position. This is especially true for Justices because no part of state government is more isolated than the Supreme Court. The Court would be strengthened by electing a new justice instead of electing an incumbent for a fourth six-year term.

The Supreme Court has become increasingly fragmented in its rulings. Its decisions are too often composed of several separate opinions discussing degrees of concurrence and descent among its members. Descent should never be stifled, but the Court needs to look for areas of agreement and eliminate what looks to others as bickering or nodding to special interests. I would seek to reduce the scope of the Court's decisions to areas of agreement.

Through its rule making powers, the Supreme Court needs to do more to reduce the tremendous cost of litigation. Adopting Federal Court procedures such as electronic service and filing, and placing presumptive constraints on pretrial discovery practice would reduce costs.

The Court currently advises petitioners to expect an eight-month delay before the Court decides whether it will accept a case for review. The Court needs to reallocate its resources to speed the selection of the few cases that it will accept. Otherwise, finality is delayed for the 90% of cases that are not accepted for review.

My trial and appellate experience in courts across our state uniquely qualifies me to understand the concerns of litigants who are controlled from the isolated chambers of the Temple of Justice in Olympia. Unlike my opponents, I have handled cases all across our state, representing governments, businesses and individuals in cases as diverse as consumer protection, construction, civil rights, insurance and the environment. Because my practice is equally divided between representing plaintiffs and defendants, I am in a better position to understand the competing interests presented in cases to the Supreme Court.

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

Integrity, hard working, inquisitive and able to limit areas of disagreement in resolving disputes.

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

I'm proud to have played a key role in obtain in the release from prison of dozens of wrongly accused and convicted victims of the infamous "Wenatchee sex ring." As a pro bono lawyer, I pursued the release from long prison sentences of a mentally handicapped husband and wife through a lengthy trial ordered by the Court of Appeals. That trial shattered the sex ring myth and resulted in the release from prison of dozens of mentally and socially handicapped victims of police abuse.

I'm proud that my clients have trusted me with the responsibility of handling so many significant legal problems.

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

Trying hundreds of cases in dozens of state and federal courts throughout Washington.

Arguing scores of appeals in state and federal appellate courts.

Experience as an arbitrator and neutral umpire in a broad range of cases.

Service as a mediator.

Service as a high school mock trial coach and a frequent judge in the UW Law School Moot Court Program.

Management responsibility as senior partner in a nine-lawyer firm.

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

The Supreme Court is responsible for:

Correcting errors in lower court decisions.

Developing and clarifying the law of the state by reconciling conflicting or ambiguous questions of law.

Adopting Rules of Court that apply to all of Washington's courts.

Policing the legal profession.

Each of these duties is critical to the operation of the state's judicial system.

**EDUCATION BACKGROUND SUMMARY
FOR PUBLICATION IN CANDIDATE EVALUATION REPORT**

The Municipal League's Candidate Evaluation Report is distributed to voters in print and on our website. It includes a summary of the candidate's education. Please summarize your education in 120 characters (letters, punctuation, and space all combined). The League will delete material that exceeds the space limit by beginning with the last entry. Suggested order is (degree) (subject) (school) (year, if desired).

Note: *If this question is left blank the League will not include education information in your candidate profile.*

B.A. - University of Puget Sound

Juris Doctor - University of Washington Law School

**CIVIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY
FOR PUBLICATION IN CANDIDATE EVALUATION REPORT**

The Municipal League's Candidate Evaluation Report includes a summary of each candidate's civic involvement. Please summarize your civic involvement in the space below. We will make every attempt to include the information in the Candidate Evaluation Report as submitted. Due to space restrictions in the Report, your response is limited to 500 characters (letters, punctuation, and spaces all combined). It is important that you list your involvement beginning with the most important and ending with the least important. If you exceed the length of response permitted, or if the League should find it necessary to shorten responses for publication purposes, deletions will be made beginning with the last item listed.

Note: *This information will appear verbatim on the League's Candidate Evaluation Report. If this question is left blank, the Municipal League will not include information on your civic involvement in the Report.*

Check here if you would like the Municipal League to copy the first 500 characters from Question 4 to paste into this section.

Pro Bono suit that resulted in release from prison of dozens of innocent victims of imaginary "Wenatchee Sex Ring" prosecutions.

Coach of High School Mock Trial Teams

Judge of U of W Moot Court Competitions

Pro Bono mediation service