



The Municipal League of King County
810 Third Avenue, Suite 224
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 264-1070 • cec@munileague.org

2008 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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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
Les		Ponomarchuk

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

King County Superior Court Judge, Position #10

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes x No

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

Forty six years (my entire life)

5. How long have you resided in King County?

Forty six years (my entire life)

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Committee to Elect Les Ponomarchuk Superior Court Judge #10

Address: 800 Fifth Avenue, #101-182

City/State/Zip: Seattle, Washington 98104

Campaign Phone: 206.518.2383

Campaign Fax: 206.363.3037

Campaign E-mail: committee@lesforjudge.com (under construction)

Campaign Website: www.lesforjudge.com (under construction)

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)
Superior Court Commissioner	Appointive	1998 to present	Lead Commissioner since 2005
King County Superior Court			

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

Office Title	Year of Run
N/A	

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.)

I have had the privilege and honor of serving as a commissioner for King County Superior Court for nearly ten years, presiding over 15 different calendars in civil; criminal; juvenile and mental health. The experience that I have gained, coupled with my successful tenure trying cases as a substitute judge and hearing motions as a full time commissioner, have equipped me to take the next logical step in my career path, by serving full time as a trial judge.

Domestic violence protection should be a paramount concern for all members of our community. Judicial focus on making the system more accountable, balanced and streamlined for purposes of safety and justice have always been a sincere priority for me. The support of my judicial candidacy by domestic violence protection advocates, visitation supervisors, attorneys for respondents and perpetrators, batterer's treatment providers and evaluators attests to my career long commitment and dedication to the problems of domestic violence.

As a commissioner, I have taken the time and energy to work on making the court more accessible to all citizens. My work on interpreters committees; trainings for guardian ad litem; language forms committees and development of instructions for self-represented persons confirm this commitment.

For most non-lawyers, contact with the judicial system is infrequent, different and intimidating; but at the same time equally important and life impacting. Persons coming to court deserve to have judges who know the laws and procedures, have experience in dealing with a spectrum of issues, and have a demonstrated ability to effectively and fairly decide cases.

As commissioner and substitute judge for the superior court, I have the proven record in the past 10 years, of deciding cases efficiently, fairly and decisively. I have the requisite temperament, experience and ability to take on an even greater and more expansive role in serving the citizens of King County as a Superior Court Judge.

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

I try to treat people the way I would wish to be treated, with an open mind, the ability to accept people as they are and who they are, and I hold people accountable on the basis for what they have done.

A good judge has an inherent sense of fairness about them with a genuine commitment to dispense justice for all persons. Both in my career history, particularly my work on the King County Superior Court Bench, and in my personal history, I have a passion for the stability that is created when a system is fair for all persons regardless of their place in life. They should be secure in the knowledge that the decision that will be made about them will be solely based upon the merits of the case.

A good judge possesses a great store of common sense and practicality. My life experience, the professional choices I have made, the education I have received and the associations I keep with my community, organizations and individuals fuels my knowledge regarding human nature. This approach has served me very well during my tenure when dealing with issues from divorce and child custody from misdemeanor and felony trials to landlord tenant and probate.

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.

The King County Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Committee, charged with the investigation, interview and evaluation of judicial candidates, voted me as “Extremely Well Qualified” to serve as judge for King County. In the last two published surveys of court commissioners by the King County Bar Association, attorneys practicing in Superior Court recognized me as the highest rated Family Court Commissioner regarding my knowledge of the law, demeanor, courtroom efficiency and impartiality.

Earlier this year, to help with congested trial calendars I agreed, upon the request of an attorney and a self-represented litigant to preside as judge *pro tem* in a parentage action that involved the mother’s immigration status, domestic violence and complicated financial arrangements. The mother represented herself and because of her emotional status was a challenging litigant. The significance of the case involved ensuring that a *pro se* litigant was given every reasonable opportunity to present her case, even though she was emotionally unstable. I was very cognizant of the need for the appearance of fairness issue to the party being represented by competent counsel. Both sides felt that they had had their day in court.

Throughout my entire life, I have been an active member of my church. At an early age my parents ingrained in me and my siblings a strong sense of responsibility for community. It is a lesson I carry to this day. I have held many leadership positions in my church and I have been extremely involved in a multitude of volunteer organizations through the greater Seattle area.

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.

Since 2007, I have been on the faculty of the Washington State Judicial College providing instruction to the newly appointed and elected judges throughout the State, and for over 15 years, I have been a presenter at seminars and continuing legal education programs to attorneys on a wide variety of legal subjects. I was a contributor to the content revisions of *The Domestic Violence Manual for Judges, 2006* published by the Washington State Gender and Justice Commission.

I currently serve on the King County Oversight Committee for the Coordinated Response to Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment; am a member of the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence Family Law Workgroup and a member of the King County Regional Council for Domestic Violence and Firearms Safety. I am currently the longest serving member of the Judges Interpreters Committee overseeing interpreter services for the Superior Court system and I sit on the Judges Language Forms Committee developing a bank of bilingual court forms and pleadings to increase access to justice.

My upbringing in large part influenced me. My parents were displaced persons coming to the United States from Ukraine in the aftermath of the Second World War, escaping Nazism and Communism. They learned English only after landing on U.S. soil. My father served in the United States Air Force during the "Cold War" and faced hardships and prejudicial treatment because of his ethnic name. Because of the prejudice and stigmatization my parents experienced growing up in the United States, they endeavored to ensure that their children were free of prejudice. My parents reveled in the appreciation and recognition of diversity and ethnic origin. Having grown up as a first generation American, I have demonstrated the ability to deal with immigrants and the issues of persons that are new to our country and have experienced difficulty with English as a second language.

When I was a practicing attorney, I conducted volunteer settlement conferences for the Seattle King County Bar Association and was a *pro bono* mediator for Columbia Legal Services and offered free legal services to indigent parties.

From 1985 until 1998, I volunteered as a guardian ad litem for the King County Court Appointed Special Advocate program representing the best interests of indigent children in custody and visitation cases in divorce and parenting cases in court.

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

King County Superior Court is a court of general jurisdiction with responsibility for family law, including dissolutions, child support, adoptions, parentage and domestic-violence protection matters; civil matters; probate and guardianship matters; felony criminal cases; mental illness and involuntary commitment matters; juvenile offender matters and juvenile dependencies, including abused and neglected children and misdemeanor criminal cases.

A judge is responsible for hearing all of these types of cases and offering a fair, just, accessible and understandable forum for resolution.

The appropriate treatment of the people and cases with which they are involved is the most important duty of a judge.

All persons coming to court deserve to be treated with respect; receive careful and thoughtful consideration of their arguments and a well reasoned, legally appropriate ruling decided in a timely fashion. A judge must apply the law in a fair, consistent, open-minded and, where appropriate, compassionate manner truly guaranteeing that everyone's voice is heard.

**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.*

Juris doctorate, University of Puget Sound School of Law (now known as Seattle University School of Law), 1986.

Bachelor of Arts with Distinction in History, University of Washington, 1983.

High School Diploma, Ingraham High School, Seattle, Washington, 1979.

**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.