

2010 Candidate Questionnaire

SECTION I

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Ed		McKenna

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

Seattle Municipal Court, Position 1

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes XX No

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

49 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

49 years

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: **Ed McKenna for Judge Committee**

Address: **10115 Greenwood Avenue N, #253**

City/State/Zip: **Seattle, WA 98133**

Campaign Phone: **206-963-2004**

Campaign Fax: _____

Campaign E-mail: edmckennaforjudge@comcast.net

Campaign Website: **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)

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?

-
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 want to restore confidence in our judicial system, bring new ideas to bear on old problems and change lives. There is growing dissatisfaction and lack of confidence in our legal system, and it's especially true in Seattle Municipal Court. Attorneys lack confidence in the court as evidenced by recent judicial evaluations. Lack of court efficiency, trial delays and inconsistencies result in dissatisfaction among both defendants and victims. Unfortunately, Seattle Municipal Court still lacks a true "restorative justice" system.

For nearly eight years, I have worked with police, community groups, business organizations and individuals to bring creative problem-solving ideas to reduce crime and long-term livability concerns. I now want to bring those same skills to Seattle Municipal Court. Many misdemeanor crimes are "quality of life" offenses. Although small in terms of damage injury or monetary value, they have significant impacts on victims and defendants. Short stints in jail or unsupervised probation fail to address the underlying causes of crime and leave victims feeling as though they have been left from the process. We can, however, make changes to treat underlying causes of crime, address the concerns of victims and expand the role of our community in reducing recidivism.

I want to bring major change to Seattle Municipal Court. By establishing a Misdemeanor Drug Court, we can hold offenders accountable while allowing them the opportunity to make positive changes in their lives. A study conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy concluded that, on average, a 10.7% reduction in recidivism was realized for drug courts. Despite many other cities having successful misdemeanor drug courts to address drug-fueled crimes such as shoplifting, vehicle prowls, prostitution, and other offenses, Seattle has no such program. For offenders with significant criminal histories, I'm proposing cognitive-behavioral probationary treatment to address anti-social behavior that leads to crime. The City spends more than \$100 per day for each offender with little prospect of rehabilitation. Program candidates should be allowed to divert from jail in order to reduce recidivism.

Other reform proposals include a Victim Resource Center to address the needs of victims, a court efficiency study to instill confidence in attorneys, defendants *and* taxpayers and expansion of community court to "give back" to the community while offenders gain insight into their offense. With new court direction I'm confident we can change the lives of offenders and benefit our community.

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

I'm proud of my reputation for creative problem solving and innovative solutions. I'm unafraid to take risks if it means doing the right thing. I'm willing to share my knowledge and skills with others without expectation of credit. I'm willing to exercise professional courage where warranted by the situation. I'm willing to mentor and build teams to enhance everyone's knowledge. I'm also willing to work long hours to ensure success.

My current job requires or allows me to exercise all of the above traits and characteristics for the benefit of our community. The same characteristics, when exercised as a judge, will enhance the experience of all who come before the bench.

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 once volunteered with an organization called "Christmas in April" (now called Rebuilding Together). The premise of the organization is to assist elderly and disadvantaged homeowners by volunteering with others, on one day in April, to provide needed home repairs. I intended to be just a worker volunteer, but it quickly became apparent that there simply were not enough skilled persons necessary to evaluate the needs of the elderly homeowner and coordinate the significant rebuilding project. Though I only had amateur home remodeling skills, I volunteered to be a team leader and coordinator. Because of the scope of the project, Bank of America offered to sponsor the project and provide an "army" of volunteer employees (nearly 75 persons) dedicated to assisting the homeowner. I was able to effectively coordinate the project and we were able to completely remodel the home in just one day. The result exceeded everyone's expectations, including my own. The overwhelmed homeowner repeatedly sent me thank you notes, followed by phone calls for many months following.

I was in Lowes hardware store one day when a person suddenly yelled "Hey, you're my prosecutor" and walked toward me. Expecting a confrontation, I received the opposite response. The person had his young son with him and asked him to wait several feet away while he explained his situation to me. He told me that he was a hard-core alcoholic and drug addict and had done terrible things in his past. He had been furious at having been convicted and at my sentencing recommendation. Although I had requested the maximum jail sentence (one year) I had agreed to request the court allow him to spend a portion of his sentence in an intensive in-patient treatment program. He went on to explain that having been convicted and receiving the treatment portion of his sentence was the best thing that happened to him. He claimed to have turned his life around and actually thanked me for prosecuting him.

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.

For the past eight years, I have been assigned as a “community-based prosecutor”. In other words, my office has been located directly within the communities assigned to me. This provides greater access to local information and provides community members with direct access to a community problem solver. The premise behind community prosecution isn’t necessarily to prosecute (although that’s an option) but rather work with the community and the problem to produce long-term solutions. By resolving community safety problems, we can conserve police, prosecution, court and jail resources for those who truly deserve it. I am committed to the program and recognize that community problems don’t resolve themselves during the standard “nine-to-five” work hours.

Plagued by narcotics dealing, a neighborhood group contacted me to request assistance regarding a notorious “drug house”. Neighbors explained that they were afraid for their children’s safety because of IV drug users coming from the neighboring home. Working with neighbors, we scheduled a neighborhood meeting of impacted residents. An overwhelming number of persons attended to provide information and expressed a willingness to “take back” their neighborhood. After documenting the nuisance activities, I scheduled a meeting with the homeowner and representatives of the neighborhood group. During the informal “mediation” the homeowner explained that she was unable to control her drug addicted son who was selling narcotics from the basement and backyard trailer. With the assistance of relatives, we were able to negotiate a neighborhood agreement whereby the son was excluded from the home for an extended period of time (with certain exceptions) in exchange for the neighbors forbearing the initiation of coordinated neighborhood small claims court actions. The result was extremely successful (http://www.seattlepi.com/local/286340_drughouse25.html) and has now been replicated in numerous other neighborhood actions.

Crime-plagued low-cost motels create immeasurable problems for surrounding communities. In an effort to bring long-term solutions, I created a strategy to educate motel owners. On a bi-yearly basis, I initiate the Aurora Motel Training Program, designed to educate motel owners and managers regarding the law, rights, obligations, crime prevention and community impacts. This program has been tremendously successful, in reducing criminal activity along Aurora Avenue North. Unfortunately, not every motel owner has taken initiative to reduce public safety problems. In one such instance, I initiated prosecution against the motel owner (a corporation) as well as their corporate officers and negotiated a successful resolution. That agreement entailed closing the motel or converting to low-income housing. Unfortunately, prior to the closing date in the agreement, the defendant motel owner declined to pay the utility bills resulting in the water being shut off. To avoid the emergency eviction of 15 identified low-income or disabled persons, I worked with the mortgage holder to pay the utility bill, which allowed additional time to find relocation services for those remaining tenants.

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

The primary duty of the office is the position of criminal trial court judge. Secondary duties of the court include overseeing the civil infraction section of the court and personnel matters involving court staff and court security.

The most important duty, however, is instilling confidence in those who come before our judicial system. Judicial confidence is paramount to our democratic process. Unfortunately, recent surveys have indicated a serious loss of confidence in Seattle Municipal Court.

As an experienced trial court prosecutor, I have tried more than 200 cases before juries and the bench. I have also decided more than 50 cases as a State hearing examiner. I am well known and respected for not only my trial skills, but my demeanor as well. People appearing before the court need assurance that those hearing their cases are experienced in the law, their arguments will be given fair consideration and that justice will be dispensed after full and careful consideration. Within the legal system, I am also known for consensus and team building skills. The court and each of its judges need to work together. Whether its courtroom scheduling or offender programs, Seattle's judicial system can't initiate beneficial reform unless the judges work together.