

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
Karen	Matson	Donohue

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

Seattle Municipal Court

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

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

I am a life-long resident of Seattle

5. How long have you resided in King County?

I am a life-long resident

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: **Karen Donohue for Judge**

Address: **P.O. Box 15406**

City/State/Zip: **Seattle, WA 98115**

Campaign Phone: **206 227-8249**

Campaign Fax: **TBD**

Campaign E-mail: **TBD**

Campaign Website: **TBD**

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)
Judge Pro-Tem, Seattle Municipal Court	Appointed	1994 – 97, 2001 – 06, 2007 – present	
Judge Pro-Tem, King County District Court	Appointed	2009 – Present	
Judge Pro-Tem, Des Moines Municipal Court	Appointed	2008 – Present	
Assistant City Attorney, Seattle Law Department	Appointed	1990 - 1994	Member of Hiring & Training Committees. Wrote case law updates for the staff

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.)

I believe in our system of justice and I care deeply about Seattle Municipal Court (SMC). I love serving as a Judge Pro-Tem and would like to bring my set of skills to the court in a full time capacity.

We need judges who are willing to step forward and bring improvements to the court system. The following are just some of the types of changes I would like to implement: 1) reduce the amount of paper used by the court and try to implement an electronic system similar to the system used in King County; 2) reduce court costs by improving technology in the courtroom. Many courts use video conferencing for minor hearings. I would work to change court rules as necessary to allow for interpreter matters to be held via video conferencing. Police officers often spend hours in court waiting to testify. I would investigate the possibility of allowing police officers to testify without coming to court, which would cut down on the amount of overtime the officers are paid and would increase trial efficiency.; 3) link the information systems used by the various courts in the state. Currently, SMC uses a propriety technology (Municipal Court Information System or MCIS), while almost every other court uses the Judicial Information System (JIS). An accurate flow of information would help all courts.; 4) increasing the stipend that jurors are paid for their service. The current amount of \$10 a day is ridiculously out of date and creates a hardship for many of the citizens called to jury duty.; 5) renegotiate the terms of Electric Home Monitoring (EHM) contracts. EHM provides a much needed alternative to confinement, yet the cost to defendants in SMC to enroll in this alternative is much higher than in other jurisdictions.

My background as a small business owner, a director of a private company, general counsel to an international telecommunications firm, an attorney in private practice, an assistant city attorney, a community volunteer and finally as a Judge Pro-tem for approximately 16 years will help me implement these changes.

Finally, we need judges who are fair, ethical, and energetic. I have earned a reputation as being fair and well-reasoned and I believe I treat everyone who appears before me with respect regardless of their background, what they look like or what their sexual preference is. I have the leadership, fiscal responsibility and administrative skills to make a difference in SMC and will work intelligently and diligently for the citizens of Seattle.

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

It is important that every party before the court have a fair and impartial hearing. I listen closely to each party and treat everyone with respect. I make sure that each party – especially the defendant – understands what we are doing and that he or she has an opportunity to be heard or ask questions, if appropriate. I believe that a judge should never stop learning and should always be prepared. I work diligently to be prepared for each case or type of hearing before me. A judge should maintain a professional demeanor and be highly ethical. A judge needs to be cognizant of public expectations but should never allow those expectations to interfere with the essential rights of individual liberty. A judge needs to balance the needs of rehabilitation and public safety and be willing to impose an appropriate sentence while paying attention to public resources. It is also really important to maintain a sense of humor. I believe I possess all of these skills and attributes and that I have demonstrated this in court.

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.

- 1. In 1994, I presided over a three week jury trial in Seattle Municipal Court in which the president of a Ballard oil company was convicted of creating a fire hazard in violation of the Seattle Municipal Code. This case was unusual, not only for the length of the trial, but also because this may have been the first time that anyone had been tried criminally for failing to install an automatic fire-control device. This was essentially a civil case in a court that hears almost exclusively criminal misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor charges. I was required to make rulings on expert testimony and over 200 exhibits. As part of the sentencing, the defendant was required to get in compliance with the Fire Code. The estimates for doing so ranged between \$30,000 and \$60,000. Despite the high cost of compliance, the case was not appealed; the defense attorneys told the defendant that there were no appealable issues. This was the longest and most complex case that I have been involved in as a neutral decision maker.**
- 2. I also presided over a case in which five advocates for the homeless were tried for criminal trespass. Three of the defendants were represented by counsel and two were pro-se. While the legal matter was not terribly complex, the case was a test of my ability to maintain control and decorum in the courtroom and ensure that each of the five defendants left the court feeling that they had received a fair trial.**
- 3. In 1988, one of the partners in my firm turned a sexual discrimination suit that he had been working on over to me. The claim that he was trying to pursue was that the client had been wrongfully fired because of her pregnancy. After researching the law and the facts of her case, I determined that she did not have a claim after all, and it was left to me to contradict my boss's assurances that she did. I could have gone ahead and filed the suit because she was willing to pay me. In my opinion, that would have been unethical and dishonest and I was unwilling to engage in that type of practice.**

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.

- * **Laurelhurst Beach Club Board Trustee - 2005 to present. Immediate Past President**
- * **Member Woodland Park Zoo Board of Directors – 2004 to 2008. Executive Committee; Chair Board of Governance Committee; Chair of Public Affairs Committee.**
- * **Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences (SAAS) Mock Trial Volunteer – 2010**
- * **SAAS Parent Association (Grade Parent Representative) – 2009-10**
- * **SAAS Graduation Planning Committee for Class of 2011**
- * **Seattle Preparatory School Parent Board – 2004–06**
- * **Captain, USTA and Emerald Cup Tennis teams**
- * **Pacific Northwest Ballet Parent Volunteer**
- * **Youth Soccer, Softball and Basketball Coach**
- * **Assumption-St. Bridget School Parent Volunteer**
- * **Volunteer Northwest Harvest Food Bank**
- * **Laurelhurst School PTA Board Member**
- * **Friends of Laurelhurst School Board Member**
- * **Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center Guild Member (Hutch Holiday Gala)**
- * **President – Perkins Parent Association 1994-95**
- * **Examiner – Seattle Police Department Sergeant Oral Examination – 1995**
- * **President – U.W. Young Alumni Club – 1989-90**
- * **Vice President – U.W. Young Alumni Club – 1988-89**
- * **Neighborhood Legal Clinic Volunteer – 1989-1991**
- * **Member North Bend Chamber of Commerce 1988–89**
- * **Queen Anne Community Council Board of Trustees 1989-90**

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

A judge in Seattle Municipal Court hears arraignments, pre-trial hearings, motions, trials, probation revocation matters and other sentencing and post sentencing hearings in criminal misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor cases. A judge may also hear traffic mitigation, contested traffic hearings and occasionally, civil code infractions. Trials may be either bench trials or jury trials.

It is important for a judge to apply the law, be fair and impartial and treat each party respectfully, allowing them to be heard and making sure that they understand the court's ruling. Every judge has a duty to promote access to the justice system.