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July 20, 2021

TO:  
Whatcom County Council Members  
*VIA EMAIL – [CHalka@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:CHalka@co.whatcom.wa.us)*

FROM:  
Jennifer Slattery  
Chair of Whatcom Women Lawyers  
Judicial Evaluation Committee

**RE: Judicial Evaluation Ratings – Whatcom Women Lawyers**

Dear County Council Members,

I am the chair of the Whatcom Women Lawyers Judicial Evaluation Committee. We were asked to conduct judicial evaluations of the seven applicants for the appointment to the Whatcom County District Court. I am pleased to share with you the applicants and their ratings.

Before deliberating and selecting the ratings, the committee members reviewed the applicant's materials and the reference letters to the council; we contacted references and asked questions related to our rating criteria; and we conducted interviews of each candidate. Our deliberations are confidential and cannot be shared with the County Council. However, the criteria for the ratings, which was also shared with the applicants, is enclosed.

The committee rated each applicant as follows:

Lisa Keeler	Exceptionally well qualified
Melissa Nelson	Exceptionally well qualified
Kimberly Thulin	Well qualified
Jeffrey Lustick	Qualified
Angela Anderson	Exceptionally well qualified
Shoshana Paige	Exceptionally well qualified
Royce Buckingham	Exceptionally well qualified

Sincerely,

Jennifer Slattery

## **WWL's Criteria for Judicial Ratings**

WWL uses the following criteria for rating candidates for judicial office:

### **A. No Rating. A candidate shall be given no rating:**

1. If insufficient information is available for Committee evaluation at the time the candidate is being considered for rating, or
2. If the candidate has not made timely application for a rating, including timely submission of materials requested by the Committee, or
3. If the candidate has served as a member of the WWL Evaluation Committee or parallel chapter committee within one year of application for rating.

### **B. Unqualified. A candidate shall be rated unqualified if:**

1. Candidate is not a member in good standing of the Washington State Bar or not a member in good standing of any other state's Bar Association to which he or she has been admitted, or
2. Candidate is currently a member of the judiciary and, during his or her current term of office, has been reprimanded or disciplined by the State Judicial Conduct Commission, or
3. Candidate has failed to meet the mandatory criteria for a Qualified rating.

### **C. Qualified. Candidate must possess the following attributes:**

1. Candidate is a member in good standing of the Washington State Bar and every Bar in which the candidate is an active member.
2. Candidate has a reputation for integrity, good character, courtesy, common sense, and respect for all persons.
3. Candidate demonstrates respect for the law, for the judicial process, and for the dignity of the court.
4. Candidate is fair and has a reputation for fairness and freedom from bias against any group or class of citizens.
5. Candidate possesses the ability to make difficult decisions under the stress.
6. Candidate has good legal ability and good writing skills.
7. Candidate has the temperament and courtroom practice appropriate to the judicial position for which the candidate is being considered.
8. Candidate has the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with attorneys, litigants, and other participants in the courtroom.

9. Candidate has the ability to command respect from the attorneys, litigants, and other participants in the courtroom, and has the energy and capacity for hard work.

**If the Candidate seeks a trial court position:**

10. Candidate has the ability to manage pretrial and trial proceedings. This includes the ability to weigh conflicting testimony, to make factual determinations, to handle a wide variety of issues and situations likely to be presented at court, and the ability to handle the demands of trial and motions calendars.

**If the Candidate seeks an appellate court position, additionally:**

11. Candidate has objectively demonstrated excellent legal analytical skills regarding basic legal knowledge of constitutional, civil and criminal law by the Candidate's work, professional experience, scholarly endeavors, professional writings or other such professional activities.

**D. Well Qualified. Candidate shall meet the criteria for "qualified" and must have the following:**

1. Candidate has demonstrated a commitment to equal justice under the law and is sensitive to issues important to women both within the profession and under the law. Such commitment and sensitivity may be evidenced by the candidate's courtroom practice, personal and professional background, professional and community activities including pro bono work, professional employment practices, mentoring and other support of women in the profession, or advocacy of legal issues important to women, including active participation in efforts to protect the rights of minorities.

2. Candidate either has judicial experience or experience as a neutral decision-maker or a demonstrated commitment to serving in the role of neutral decision-maker.

**If the Candidate seeks an appellate court position additionally:**

3. Candidate has experience or has objectively demonstrated through scholarly writings, professional activities, outside professional work, prior professional licensure an in depth knowledge of multiple of areas of legal knowledge and practice in addition to any area of practice that the Candidate has primarily worked.

**E. Exceptionally Well Qualified. Candidate shall meet the criteria for "qualified" and for "well qualified" and must have the following:**

1. Excellent legal ability and writing skills, which may be evidenced by excellent legal analysis and an excellent ability to deal with legal problems, by proven legal scholarship and writing, or by a reputation for excellence in legal work and practice.

2. Candidate has demonstrated exceptional litigation, judicial or administrative experience. Candidate also has a reputation for outstanding personal and professional integrity, personal and professional independence, personal courage, and an excellent ability to make difficult decisions in demanding situations.

3. Candidate has consistently demonstrated commitment to equality and to access to justice.

**4. Candidate shall have demonstrated some or all of the following:**

a. Significant public service.

b. Potential for leadership on the bench.

c. An interest in and commitment to working with other judges and court administrators to improve the administration of justice.