PENNSYLVANIA BAR ASSOCIATION
JUDICIAL EVALUATION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE FOR APPLICANTS
CURRENTLY ON THE BENCH

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AUTHORIZATION

As a candidate for the Pennsylvania Appellate Courts, I hereby acknowledge and authorize the procedures of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Commission, including the following:

1. The Pennsylvania Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Commission will make available to the public the Questionnaire and my responses to it, except for the questions and responses which are acknowledged to be confidential, which information shall remain available only to the Commission and an investigative panel.

2. The rating assigned to me by the Commission will be publicly announced and will be accompanied by an explanation of reasons for the rating.

3. Should I receive a Not Recommended rating, the Commission will endeavor to notify me prior to a public announcement. If I withdraw from the race, the unfavorable recommendation will not be announced during this current election cycle.

4. I hereby authorize the Pennsylvania Judicial Conduct Board, the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners to transmit my entire file and record, including confidential information contained therein, to the Pennsylvania Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Commission. I hereby specifically waive any confidentiality rights I may have in those records.

5. I hereby authorize the Judicial Conduct Board, the Disciplinary Board, and the Board of Law Examiners, or the equivalent, in any jurisdiction where I have practiced, been admitted to practice or have applied to either take a bar examination or for admission to the bar to transmit my entire file and record, including confidential information contained therein, to the Pennsylvania Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Commission. I hereby specifically waive any confidentiality rights I may have in those records.

6. The Pennsylvania Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Commission may change, during the course of my campaign for office, the original rating assigned to me for cause. Cause shall include a violation of the Judicial Campaign Advertising Guidelines. I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Guidelines.

Maria McLaughlin
Type or print name

Maria McLaughlin
Signature

Date 12/21/20
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

1. State your full name: Maria Charlene McLaughlin

Have you ever been known by any other name? If so, please list. No.

2. Office address (include zip code): 1515 Market Street, Suite 1420, Philadelphia, PA 19102

Office telephone (include area code): (215)496-4901

Name of law firm, if associated: N/A

3. Date and place of birth: 1966 (month and day removed by PBA JEC); Philadelphia, PA

4. Are you a naturalized citizen? If so, give date and place of naturalization: No.

5. Family Status:
   a) Are you married? If so, state the date of marriage and your spouse’s full name, including maiden name, if applicable:
   b) Yes. February 27, 2017 to Jonathan Saidel.
   c) Have you been divorced? If so, state the date, the number of the case and the court:

6. Have you had any military service? If so,
   a) Give dates, branch of service, rank of rate, and present status: N/A
   b) Have you ever been rejected or released from any of the armed services for reasons other than honorable? If so, give details: N/A

7. List each college and law school you attended, including dates of attendance, and the degrees awarded and, if you left any institution without receiving a degree, the reason for leaving. List scholastic honors:

   Oklahoma City University School of Law (1989)

   I left Oklahoma City University School of Law in 1990 to attend Delaware Law School-Widener University, where I earned my Juris Doctorate.

8. List all jurisdictions in which you have applied to take a bar examination, have applied for admission or have been admitted to practice. Include dates of admissions and if not admitted, give application dates and explain the outcome.

   Pennsylvania bar, admitted on December 7, 1992
New Jersey bar, admitted on December 22, 1992 (voluntarily resigned upon becoming Judge of Court of Common Pleas in Philadelphia)

US District Court for the Eastern District to PA (November 14, 2003)

US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (December 3, 2003)

Supreme Court of the United States of America (March 3, 2008)

9. Describe chronologically your law practice and experience after your graduation from law school and until you became a member of the judiciary, including:
   a) Whether you served as clerk to a judge and, if so, the name of the judge, the court, and the dates of the period you were a clerk: N/A
   b) Whether you practiced alone and, if so, the addresses and the dates: N/A
   c) The dates, names and addresses of law firms or offices, companies or governmental agencies with which you have been connected and the nature of your connection with each:
      
      2018-Present Superior Court of Pennsylvania
                            1515 Market Street, Suite 1420
                            Philadelphia, PA 19102
                           Judge of the Superior Court of Pennsylvania
      
      2012-2017 Philadelphia Family Court
               1501 Arch Street, Suite 1549
               Philadelphia, PA 19102
                           Judge in the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County
      
      1992-2011 Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office
                46 South 11th Street
                Philadelphia, PA 19107
                           Chief Assistant District Attorney (2003-2011)
                           Director of Family Justice Center Initiative (2010-2011)

   d) Any other relevant particulars:

      1991 Superior Court of Pennsylvania
               The Honorable Vincent A. Cirillo
               1 Belmont Avenue, Suite 800
               Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
                           Law Clerk 1991

      1988-1991 Senate of Pennsylvania
                 462 Main Capitol Building
                 Harrisburg, PA 17120
                           Legal Staff (1988-1989)
                           Research Staff (1988-1989)
a) What was the general character of your practice, dividing it into periods with dates if its character changed over the years?

I began my legal career in August of 1992 working for the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office as an Assistant District Attorney assigned to one of the only civil units in the office, the Child Support Enforcement Unit. Over the next 11 years in this position, I successfully prosecuted thousands of cases, which amounted to millions of dollars for children in Philadelphia.

In 2003, the Honorable Lynne Abraham appointed me Chief Assistant District Attorney of that unit, which made me one of the youngest female attorneys in Philadelphia history to ever hold the position. As Chief, I was responsible for the supervision and training of a staff of 18 employees, including attorneys, paralegals, law clerks, secretaries and legal interns. Additionally, it was my job to assign cases and handle all matters regarding personnel. When our office received particularly complex domestic relations cases, I handled the litigation at both the Common Pleas and Appellate Court levels. During my time as Chief, our unit continued in its path of success, annually collecting millions of dollars in child support arrears.

Throughout my years in the District Attorney’s Office, I participated in statewide educational programs as a member of the Domestic Relations Association of Pennsylvania. I also taught numerous continuing legal education courses, and in particular ethics courses, for the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers.

In addition to my primary role as Chief Assistant District Attorney of a civil division, I was appointed as Director of the Family Justice Center Initiative in the criminal division. I was the only one in the office appointed to these dual roles in different divisions. This appointment required that I travel to New York and other states, to meet with department chairs and determine the best course of action for the city of Philadelphia. I was moreover, solely responsible for creating a budget and plan for the initiative.

In my role as Chief, I worked with the court to develop and use a jobs program where unemployed parents could be matched with employers. Today this program remains a successful tool in allowing parents to have income to support their children.

Another program I was instrumental in starting with the court, is the court appointed attorneys program for defendants in domestic relations cases. Inasmuch as enforcement of child support is civil, not a criminal matter, there is no right to counsel. I thought it imperative that these defendants have the right to an attorney if their liberty is at stake, regardless of it being a civil penalty. This program also remains in effect today.
In 2011, I resigned from my position in the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office to campaign for Judge of Court of Common Pleas. Throughout that time, I represented a number of criminal defendants, family law clients and civil litigants in various matters with most matters being handled in the Philadelphia Court System.

I was also retained to handle real estate matters for the Philadelphia Sheriff’s Office. I drafted new personnel policies and assisted with the supervision of citywide real estate sheriff sales. This time permitted me to diversify my practice to other areas of the law. I continued working in the private sector and consulting with the Sheriff’s Office until I was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and sworn into office in January 2012.

b) Describe your typical clients and mention the areas, if any, in which you concentrated your practice: N/A

11. What judicial office do you hold now? State whether you have been appointed or elected and the dates thereto. Describe the jurisdiction of such court and any limitations thereon. Have you ever held any other judicial office? If so, please state the offices, courts and the periods of such service. Please describe the jurisdiction of each of such courts, with any limitations upon the jurisdiction of each court:

I am currently a Judge on the Pennsylvania Superior Court. I was elected to this Court in November 2017 and took the oath of office in January 2018. The Superior Court is a statewide intermediate appellate court and has jurisdiction over all appeals from the Court of Common Pleas, other than those cases designated to the Commonwealth Court. I am Chair of Appellate Advocacy on our Court, which is the liaison between the Superior Court, the Pennsylvania Bar Association and all local bar associations throughout the Commonwealth. In this position, I have been extremely busy meeting virtually with members of our bar discussing Covid related issues. I am also a member of our Internal Operating Procedures Committee on the Superior Court.

Additionally, I was elected to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas in November 2011 and took the oath of office in January 2012. As a Judge on the Court of Common Pleas, I served in the Family Law Division and presided over both family law and criminal cases.

12. For the last five years or portions thereof during which you have held judicial office, indicate,

a) The nature of typical matters which came before you:

Since taking my oath of office to the Pennsylvania Superior Court in January 2018, I would not describe any of the cases I’ve handled as typical in nature. I have the amazing privilege of ruling on various types of cases, including civil, criminal and family law. These cases are appealed from the courts of common pleas in our state’s 67 counties. I also review and rule on wiretapping applications presented by the Pennsylvania Attorney General and district attorneys throughout the Commonwealth.
Prior to the Superior Court, I was a judge on the Court of Common Pleas in Philadelphia where I presided over family law and criminal cases.

b) The percentage of your time devoted to (as a Superior Court Judge):

1. Civil: 20%
2. Criminal: 60%
3. Other: 20% Orphan’s Court, Domestic Relations and Juvenile Court cases.

These percentages are based on Superior Court statistics. Our cases are randomly assigned to judges on our Court.

As a judge on the Court of Common Pleas:

1. Civil: 80%
2. Criminal: 20%
3. Other:

c) The percentage of your time devoted to (as a Superior Court Judge):

1. Jury: 0
2. Non-jury: 0
3. Appellate argument: 90% This includes the time spent researching, writing and editing all Opinions/Memoranda which are submitted on briefs. It also includes time spent preparing for oral argument.
4. Other: 10% This includes teaching/attending Continuing Judicial Education and Continuing Legal Education. It also includes time spent lecturing/attending other law-related programs.

As a judge on the Court of Common Pleas:

1. Jury: 0
2. Non-jury: 90%
3. Appellate argument: 0
4. Other: 10% This includes teaching/attending Continuing Legal Education programs.

d) Five of the more significant opinions you have rendered and citations thereto if the cases were reported:

_P.J.P. v. M.M., 1586 MDA 2017_

_Freeman Maurice Vaughan, Jr. Administrator of the Estate of Janice Vaughan, Deceased v. Olympus America, Inc., Olympus Corporation of the Americas, Olympus Medical System Corp. and Custom Ultrasonics, Inc., 3101 EDA 2017_

13. If a substantial portion of your practice had been before administrative boards, commissions or agencies during the five years before you became a member of the judiciary, identify the boards, commissions or agencies before which you practiced and estimate percentages of practice time devoted thereto: N/A

14. If a substantial portion of your practice had been before Appellate courts during the five years before you became a member of the judiciary, identify the Appellate Courts before which you have practiced and estimate percentages of practice time devoted thereto:

   Superior Court of PA (10%)

15. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? If so, give details, including the office involved, whether elected or appointed, and the length of your services, giving dates: No.

16. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates: No.

17. Have you ever been engaged in any occupation, business or profession other than the practice of law or the holding of judicial or other public office? No. If so, give details, including dates: N/A

18. Are you now an officer or director or otherwise engaged in the management of any business enterprise? No. If so, give details, including the name of your enterprise, the nature of the business, the title or other description of your position, the nature of your duties and the term of your service. N/A

19. Have you ever been arrested, charged with or convicted of violating any federal law or regulation, state law or regulation, or county or municipal law, regulation or ordinances? No. If so, give details. Do not include summary or traffic offenses: N/A

20. Are you under any ongoing federal state or local investigation or indictment for possible violation of criminal statute? No. If so, give particulars: N/A

21. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state or local authorities? No. If so, give particulars: N/A
22. If requested, will you submit certified copies of your latest tax returns (including Federal Income Tax)? Yes.

23. Prior to taking the bench, were you ever sued by a client? No. If so, give particulars: N/A

24. Have you ever been a party or otherwise involved in any other legal proceedings? If so, give the particulars. Do not list proceedings in which you were merely a guardian ad litem or stakeholder. Include all legal proceedings in which you were a party in interest, a material witness, were named as co-conspirator or a co-respondent and any grand jury investigation in which you figured as a subject or in which you appeared as a witness:

My personal divorce and family court proceedings.

I was a plaintiff in a personal injury suit in July 2019, and approximately 23 years ago, I was a plaintiff in a personal injury suit involving an automobile accident. I was also a plaintiff, along with my brother and mother, in an estate matter regarding my deceased father in 2001.

25. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct or has any complaint against you been filed with the Court of Judicial Discipline? No. If so, give the particulars: N/A

26. What is the present state of your health? (If any medical condition or issue exists, you may be requested to execute a medical record authorization form as part of the interview process.)

Excellent.

27. Do any circumstances exist that would affect your ability to perform the function of the position you seek or fulfill the term of office? No. If so, please explain: N/A

28. Furnish at least five examples of legal articles, law review articles, briefs, or other legal writings which reflect your personal work. If briefs are submitted, indicate the degree to which they represent your personal work:

29. List all bar associations and professional societies of which you are a member and give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups. List chairmanships of any committees in bar associations and professional societies and memberships on any committees which you believe to be of particular significance (e.g., judicial selection committee, disciplinary committee, grievance committee).

Pennsylvania Bar Association:
Member (1993- Present)

Section 3 Business Law
Section 4 Criminal Justice
Section 5 Family Law
Section 7 Civil Litigation
Section 13 Real Property and Probate

Philadelphia Bar Association:
Member (1992-2012), (2015-Present)
New Jersey Bar Association:
Member (1992-2012)

National Association of Women Judges:
Member (2013-2018)

Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas FYI Educational Committee:
Member (2012-2017)
Co-Chair (2014-2017)

Nicholas A. Cipriani Family Law American Inn of Court:
Member (2012-2018)
Vice President (2015-2018)

The Justinian Law Society of Philadelphia:
Member (2016-present)

Breton Law Society (1993-2000), 2016-Present

30. List your experiences in teaching and lecturing, including a law school, continuing legal education, both for the legal community and the judiciary, and to non-legal audiences.

“Serial Killers and How to Handle the Sensationalized Case”, Superior Court In-House CLE, 2020

“Appellate Law for Pennsylvania Family Lawyers”, Philadelphia Bar Association, Family Law Section, 2020

“The Impact and Legacy of COVID-19 on our Courts”, Pennsylvania Bar Institute, 2020

“Order in the Court: Balancing Civility and Zealous Advocacy”, Pennsylvania Bar Association, Family Law Section Winter Meeting, 2020

“Personal Style and Professional Image”, Philadelphia Bar Association, 2019

University of Pennsylvania School of Law – Preside, Mock Trial Program 2019, 2018

“Best Practices Regarding Batson Challenges and Other Juror Diversity Issues, Pennsylvania Bar Association, 2019

“Effective Practice in the Superior Court”, Philadelphia Bar Association, 2019

“Federal and State Civil Procedures”, Pennsylvania Bar Association, 2019

“A New Norm, Third Parties in Custody”, PBI Family Law Institute, 2019

“Lawyers Never Lose their Appeal”, Pennsylvania Bar Association, 2019

“Family Feud Style Plenary”, Philadelphia Bar Association, Bench Bar Conference, 2018
“Appellate Practice in Child Welfare”, PA Children and Youth Advocacy, 2018

“Appellate Advocacy in State Courts”, Montgomery County Bar Association, 2018

“As Family Court Judges See It”, National Business Institute, 2017


“Support/Paternity”, Pennsylvania Bar Institute CLE, 2015


“Dirty Tricks and Domestic Relations”, Bench Bar Program, 2014


“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: How to recognize and understand PTSD and best practices for litigation when your client/witness suffers from PTSD”, Pennsylvania Bar Institute CLE, 2013

“Philadelphia County Domestic Relations”, Pennsylvania Bar Institute CLE, 2013

As an attorney, I have appeared on local radio and television shows to discuss various family law issues.

As both a judge and attorney, I have taught at numerous elementary and high schools throughout the Commonwealth about a variety of legal topics.

As an appellate court judge, I always have both law students and undergraduate students intern in my chambers.

31. List all organizations other than bar associations, professional associations or societies of which you are or have been a member, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social and fraternal organizations;

Delaware Law School-Widener University Alumni Board of Directors
Member (1995-Present)

“Do the Write Thing” National Youth Anti-Violence Campaign
(Member 1993-2013)

Central High School of Philadelphia Home and School Board:
Executive Member (2000-2015)

Sons and Daughters of Italy, Roxborough Lodge #2217:
Member (2009-Present)
32. List any honors, prizes, awards or other forms of recognition which you have received (including any indication of academic distinction in college or law school) other than those mentioned in answers to the foregoing questions.

2019 Leading the Way Award – Philadelphia Public Record.

2018 Lackawanna County Women’s Award

2013 Alumna of the Year Award, Delaware Law School – Widener University Alumni Association.

2008 Outstanding Service Award, Delaware Law School – Widener University Alumni Association.

Citation for Recognition of Service, House of Representative, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (2014).

42nd Annual Person of the Year Award, Order of the Sons and Daughters of Italy, Greater Roxborough Lodge #2217 (2014).

33. State any other information which may reflect positively or adversely on you or which you believe should be disclosed in connection with consideration of you for an election/retention to an Appellate Court of Pennsylvania.

34. Why do you wish to become a Justice or Judge? What special strengths do you feel you possess that would particularly well qualify you for the position of Justice or Judge?

As a Justice on our Pennsylvania Supreme Court, I would bring with me over 28 years of legal experience, along with my life experiences, which make me who I am today. During these trying times with COVID, I felt the safest way to announce my intention to seek a seat on our state’s highest court, was with a video message. In that video, titled “My Father’s Words”, it describes why I felt I would be a perfect addition to our Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Real life experiences are an invaluable asset when deciding cases of any nature. I was the first in my family to attend college. If it was not for a partial scholarship and three part-time jobs, I would not have a college degree.

I was a single mom and judge for many years and still never called out sick from work. When I campaigned for Superior Court, I travelled to all 67 counties, listening to concerns and what was important to those in each and every county. I attended bar association events and forums all over our Commonwealth. I felt an obligation to do this if I was going to be deciding cases from all 67 counties in our state. This has been a tremendous asset while deciding cases on our Superior Court, I will do it all again, even if only virtually now, because it provides great insight into cases effecting our diverse state of Pennsylvania. I know this will help as a Justice on our Supreme Court.

As a Superior Court judge, I decide cases in every area of the law discussed previously in this questionnaire. I issued hundreds of Opinions/Memoranda each year I have been a member of this Court. These are all strengths I would bring with me, if honored to sit as a Justice on our Pennsylvania Supreme Court.
Moreover, as a judge on the Court of Common Pleas in the First Judicial District, I am proud of my record of never having a decision overturned. I managed voluminous caseloads in both domestic relations and criminal matters. I handled high income divorce cases, which I considered commercial litigation with emotion.

My 19 years in the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office provided me with both litigation and administrative skills which would also benefit me as a Justice.

Throughout my entire legal career both on and off the bench, I have maintained an impeccable work ethic and an unwavering compassion for all people. I can think of no better way to continue fulfilling my lifelong passion for serving my community and rendering fair and just decisions than as a Justice on our Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

35. Did you sign the PBA Judicial Campaign Advertising Guidelines? (Please return signed pledge with completed questionnaire.) Yes.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

The undersigned certifies that all of the statements made in this questionnaire are true, complete and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief and are made in good faith.

Maria McLaughlin

Signature

12/21/20
Date