

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR APPLICANTS CURRENTLY ON THE BENCH**

I am seeking a rating for the following court:

- Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas
- Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court
- Pennsylvania Superior Court
- Pennsylvania Supreme Court
- United States District Court for Western District of Pennsylvania
- United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

1. State your full name:

Elliot C. Howsie

Have you ever been known by any other name? If so, please list.

No.

2. Office address (include zip code):

Allegheny County Courthouse
436 Grant Street
Room 533
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Office telephone (include area code): Name

of law firm, if associated: 412-350-3769

3. Date and place of birth:

April 30, 1968 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

4. Are you a naturalized citizen? If so, give date and place of naturalization:

N/A

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:

Yes, I am married. I got married to Melissa J. Arnold on August 15, 2020, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

b) Have you been divorced? If so, state the date, the number of the case and the court:

Yes, I have been divorced. My divorce was final on November 25, 2013, in

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at F.D. 11-008436-009.

6. Have you had any military service? If so,
a) Give dates, branch of service, rank of rate, and present status:

No.

- b) Have you ever been rejected or released from any of the armed services for reasons other than honorable? If so, give details:

No.

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:

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, August 1986 – May 1990, B.S. Criminology
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, August 1991 – May 1993, M.S. Criminology
Duquesne University School of Law, August 1994 – May 1998, J.D.

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, 1999
United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, 1999

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:

Superior Court of Pennsylvania, Judicial Law Clerk,
September 1998 - September 1999

Honorable Justin M. Johnson
310 Grant Street, Suite 1700
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

As a judicial law clerk, I was responsible for analyzing, researching, and writing Memoranda and Opinions for the Honorable Justin M. Johnson. My position further required me to have a working knowledge of state and federal statutory and common law, judicial procedures, the rules of evidence, as well as the methods, practices, and procedures of civil and criminal pleadings. Law clerks were also tasked with reviewing all memos and opinions prepared by the Judge and the other law clerks, before the documents were circulated to the other Judges on the Superior Court and ultimately filed.

Law Clerk
September 1999 – October 1999

The Law Office of Peter Georgiades
3600 Gulf Tower
707 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Mr. Georgiades' law firm represented clients in various aspects of Civil Litigation, Commercial Litigation, and Corporate Law. As a law clerk with Mr. Georgiades' firm, I was primarily responsible for conducting legal research and writing.

Assistant District Attorney – General Trial Unit
July 2000 – March 2002

Allegheny County District Attorney's Office
Allegheny County Courthouse
436 Grant Street, Room 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

As an Assistant District Attorney, I was responsible for prosecuting felony and misdemeanor cases up to and including Assaults, Burglaries, Robberies, Thefts, Homicides, Narcotics and Firearm violations, as well as Driving Under the Influence offenses. As a prosecuting attorney, I was responsible for conducting interviews and preparing witnesses to testify at trial. Additionally, my responsibilities as an Assistant District Attorney required me to prosecute cases and represent the Commonwealth in jury and nonjury trials and to possess a competent understanding of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, the Rules of Criminal Procedure, and the Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence.

Assistant District Attorney – Child Abuse Unit
March 2002 – June 2005

Allegheny County District Attorney's Office
Allegheny County Courthouse
436 Grant Street, Room 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

As an Assistant District Attorney in the Child Abuse Unit, I prosecuted crimes involving the physical and sexual abuse of children as well as cases involving neglect of children. Additionally, I conducted victim interviews and prepared witnesses to testify at trial. My responsibilities also required me to represent the Commonwealth in jury and nonjury trials and to possess a competent understanding of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, the Rules of Criminal Procedure, and the Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence.

Solo Practitioner
June 2005 – March 2012

The Law Offices of Elliot Howsie

428 Forbes Avenue
Suite 1800
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

In my law practice, I represented clients accused of committing felony and misdemeanor crimes ranging from Homicides to Driving Under the Influence offenses. As a solo practitioner, I met with clients; conducted jail visits; interviewed witnesses; prepared witnesses to testify at trial; and conducted legal research and writing. Also, when appropriate, I negotiated with the prosecution to obtain favorable plea agreements on behalf of my clients. Finally, I managed the day to day operations of my law office including supervision of my staff.

Director of the Office of the Allegheny County Public Defender
March 2012 – June 2019

Allegheny County Public Defender Office
542 Forbes Avenue 4th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

In March 2012, the Allegheny County Executive, Richard Fitzgerald, appointed me to become the Director of the Office of the Public Defender of Allegheny County. The Public Defender's Office is responsible of providing competent, effective legal representation to any person that lacks sufficient funds to obtain legal counsel in proceedings where an individual's life or liberty is at stake. As the Director of the Office of the Public Defender, I was responsible for the oversight of an annual budget of \$10.3 million dollars as well as the management of over 120 employees, including nearly ninety attorneys. I was responsible for implementing practice standards, policies and procedures and ensuring that there was proper training for all of the employees. Additionally, the responsibilities of my position required me to work collectively with various stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System.

b) Whether you practiced alone and, if so, the addresses and the dates:

My law office was located at 428 Forbes Avenue, Suite 1800, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Although I practiced alone, I shared office space with Turahn Jenkins, Esquire, and Frank Walker, Esquire.

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:

September 1998 thru September 1999- I worked as a Judicial Law Clerk for the Honorable Justin M. Johnson of the Pennsylvania Superior Court, located at 310 Grant Street, Suite 1700, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

September 1999 thru October 1999- I worked as a law clerk for the Law Offices of Peter Georgiades, located at 3600 Gulf Tower, 707 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

July 2000 thru June 2005- I worked as an Assistant District Attorney in the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office, located in the Allegheny County Courthouse, 436 Grant Street, Room 400, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

March 2012 thru June 2019- I was the Director of the Allegheny County Public Defender's Office, located at 542 Forbes Avenue, 4th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

d) Any other relevant particulars:

My employment as the Director of the Public Defender's Office was a significant achievement in my legal career. I was the first African American in the history of Allegheny County and the first African American male in the history of Pennsylvania to become the director of a Public Defender's Office. Furthermore, when I was appointed to serve as the Public Defender, the ACLU was threatening to file another lawsuit against Allegheny County and the Public Defender's Office. The ACLU alleged that the Public Defender's Office violated the civil rights of its clients due to ineffective legal representation, including the failure of some attorneys to meet with clients prior to trial or to prepare properly for trial. Moreover, many of those clients spent inordinate periods of time in jail. In some instances, clients were forced to plead guilty simply to get out of jail despite the fact that they had viable defenses to their charges. The office failed to provide training for the attorneys or support staff. Due to budgetary constraints, there was an inadequate number of attorneys employed in the office resulting in excessive caseloads and high turnover.

Through the County Executive's support, I obtained a significant budget increase for the office. The added resources enabled the office to hire additional attorneys and create seven additional managerial positions. Furthermore, we became the second office in Pennsylvania to hire a full time Manager of Training to assist with developing performance standards, for the attorneys and provide ongoing mandatory training for the entire office. Consequently, attorneys were required to meet regularly with their clients and participate in case reviews as a method of supervision. I also established a recruiting program to attract more qualified attorneys. In turn, the attorneys' caseloads were drastically reduced, and the overall quality of client representation improved tremendously.

Additionally, I developed a Pretrial Division, which requested bail modifications on behalf of clients of the office. As a result of those efforts, the Public Defender's Office consistently filed approximately 100 motions to modify bail each month with an 80% success rate. Consequently, we were able to get approximately 80 clients out of jail each month, preventing them from languishing in jail for an average of 6-8 months for low level nonviolent offenses due to their inability to post nominal bonds. These efforts enabled individuals to return to their families and jobs and also resulted in significant taxpayer savings. Also, for the first time in the history of the Public Defender's Office, we began representing clients during Preliminary Arraignments, when bond is initially set. We hired full time Social Workers to work with the preliminary arraignment attorneys to identify resources for the clients and get the clients involved in drug and alcohol treatment, and mental health counseling. This approach resulted in an 18% reduction in jail admissions by allowing people to obtain the services that they needed instead of being incarcerated. Lastly, we began an expungement program to assist clients with expunging their records following the resolution of their legal matters.

10. a) What was the general character of your practice, dividing it into periods with dates if its character changed over the years?

I started my law practice in June 2005, and during that time I primarily represented clients in criminal court proceedings. I represented clients in nonjury trials and jury trials for a multitude of offenses including low level offenses, traffic violations up to and including more serious offenses like homicides. In 2007 I began representing clients in personal injury cases. Typically, I was able to negotiate settlements on behalf of my clients and I never had the opportunity to try any cases in civil court. Shortly thereafter in 2008, I began representing clients in Federal Court. During that time, I represented a number of clients in criminal matters involving multi-level narcotics offenses. Although I have represented clients in family court proceedings involving Protection from Abuse Orders, divorce, contempt, and child support, the general character of my practice was primarily focused on state court criminal matters.

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

In my law practice, I represented clients from different ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, the clients from the Office of the Public Defender were individuals from low income communities with different ethnic backgrounds.

11. What judicial office do you now hold? 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:

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, Family Division Judge
June 2019 – Present

In April 2019, I was nominated by Pennsylvania State Senator, Jay Costa; subsequently confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate; and appointed by Governor Tom Wolf to fill a vacancy on the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas. Following my appointment, I was assigned to the Family Division. As a judge in Family Division, I preside over trials involving divorces, relocation, custody, school choice, and issues related to equitable distribution of marital assets. I also have the responsibility of conducting trials regarding Protection from Abuse Orders, as well as contempt proceedings concerning the alleged violation of court orders. I address emergency motions regarding trial issues, as well as issues related to custody and divorce. I participate in Judicial Conciliations in order to address and resolve custody issues and issues related to divorce.

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, Criminal Division Judge
October 2020 – Present

In October 2020, I was assigned to the Criminal Division of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas. As a judge in the Criminal Division, I am responsible for presiding over the Phoenix Court Docket, which is a diversionary court with the highest number of cases in the entire court system. On a daily basis, I am assigned approximately thirty cases involving low level felonies, misdemeanors, and Driving Under the Influence offenses. Additionally, I am responsible for conducting guilty pleas and imposing sentences, presiding over jury and nonjury trials, and resolving pretrial motions, as well as suppression motions. Finally, as a judge in the Criminal Division, I also address alleged violations of probation. While it is common practice for Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judges to work exclusively in one division, I have opted to resolve my current caseload in the Family Division in order to reduce the likelihood of uncertainty and delay for the litigants.

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 being sworn in as a judge in June 2019, I have served as an Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judge. While assigned to the Family Court Division, I have been responsible for presiding over divorce actions, custody actions, cases involving Protection from Abuse Orders, emergency motions, and contempt proceedings.

Since October 2020, I have also been assigned to the Criminal Division, where I am responsible for presiding over the Phoenix Court Docket. Phoenix Court is a diversionary court that addresses low level felonies, misdemeanors and Driving Under the Influence offenses. I am also responsible for addressing pretrial motions, conducting nonjury trials, jury trials, and guilty pleas.

- b. The percentage of your time devoted to:

- i. Civil: N/A
- ii. Criminal: 45%
- iii. Other: Family 55%

- c. The percentage of your time devoted to:

1. Jury: There are no jury trial in the Family Division. As of October 2020, I have been assigned to the Criminal Division but due to the COVID 19 pandemic, there have not been any jury trials.
2. Non-jury: 50% (Family Division/Criminal Division)
3. Appellate argument: N/A
4. Other: Judicial Conciliations regarding custody, and equitable distribution 50%

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

I have included copies of the opinions that I authored in custody cases.

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:

The vast majority of my practice was in the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania and the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas. However, on one occasion I did argue before the Superior Court of Pennsylvania in a support matter. This was the only time that I practiced before an Appellate Court.

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:

Yes, I previously held public office. In March 2012, I was appointed by the Allegheny County Executive, Richard Fitzgerald, to become the Director of the Office of the Public Defender Allegheny County Office. I resigned from the position on June 1, 2019, when I was appointed to the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.

16. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates:

Yes, I previously ran for Judge in 2017, and 2019. However, I withdrew from both political races prior to the primary election.

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? If so, give details, including dates:

Yes, I was the owner of CTH Trucking, LLC, from May 2008 thru August 2012. CTH Trucking was a small trucking company that owned and operated three tri-axle dump trucks. The company had a contract with U.S. Steel as well as various asphalt and paving companies. As the owner, I was responsible for managing the company, interviewing and hiring drivers as well as obtaining contracts; scheduling maintenance for the trucks; and preparing invoices and payroll.

Additionally, I am currently the sole owner of Y.E. Property Management, LLC. As the owner, I have been responsible for managing a small number of rental properties, including preparation of rental applications and leases; collecting rent; attending landlord/tenant hearings; and scheduling routine maintenance and repairs. I began the business in June 2005.

18. Are you now an officer or director or otherwise engaged in the management of any business enterprise? 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.

I am the owner of Y.E. Property Management, LLC, which owns and manages a small number of rental properties. Prior to becoming a Judge, I was responsible for managing the daily operations of the company.

19. Have you ever been convicted of violating any federal law or regulation, state law or regulation, or county or municipal law, regulation or ordinance? If so, give details. Do not include summary traffic offenses:

No, I have never been charged or convicted of a crime, or a violation of a state law, regulation, or county or municipal law, regulation or ordinance.

20. Are you under any ongoing federal, state or local investigation or indictment for possible violation of a criminal statute? If so, give particulars:

No, I am not under any ongoing federal, state or local investigation or indictment for possible violation of a criminal statute.

21. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state or local authorities? If so, give particulars:

Yes, during the dissolution of my marriage, there were several tax liens filed against my property management company, my ex-wife, and myself. After finalizing the divorce, I assumed the sole responsibility of satisfying the tax liens and outstanding tax obligations and to date they have been completely satisfied.

22. Prior to taking the bench, were you ever sued by a client? If so, give particulars:

Yes, I along with a number of county officials, and judges were sued in Federal Court by a client, alleging that the Public Defender's Office violated his rights in a criminal proceeding. The case was dismissed.

23. 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:

Yes, I have been a party in a legal proceeding. I was the plaintiff in my divorce proceedings and the defendant in additional related court matters. I have also been the plaintiff in the several landlord/tenant hearings. During the process of closing my law practice, I contracted with a storage company to store my files. The company failed to update its records with my forwarding address and mailed the invoices to my previous address. When I received notice regarding the outstanding invoices, the company had already filed a complaint with the local magistrate. I contacted the company and completely satisfied the claim, and the case was dismissed without a hearing.

24. 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? If so, give the particulars:

No, I have never been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct. However, I have been the subject of complaints to the Disciplinary Board regarding my representation in criminal proceedings. All of the complaints were unfounded and subsequently dismissed.

25. Currently or within the past five (5) years have you suffered from any medical or other condition which could affect or impair your judgment, reliability, or ability to perform the essential functions of the judicial position you are seeking? If so, describe.

No, I have never suffered from any medical conditions or other conditions which could affect or impair my judgment, reliability, or ability to perform the essential functions of the judicial position that I am seeking.

26. Do any circumstances exist that would affect your ability to perform the function of the position you seek or fulfill the term of office? If so, please explain:

No circumstances exist that would affect my ability to perform the functions of the position that I am seeking or fulfill the term of office.

27. Furnish one (1) example of a legal article, law review article, briefs, or other legal writing which reflects your personal work. If a brief is submitted, indicate the degree to which it represents your personal work:

I have submitted a brief that I previously filed on behalf of my client in a criminal case. My client was accused of possessing a substantial amount of a controlled substance with the intent to distribute. A confidential informant made representations to the police officers regarding his personal observations of controlled substances in my client's home. The officers used the information as a basis to establish probable cause and applied for a search warrant. Although confidential informants typically are not required to appear in court, the court required the confidential informant to testify due to material misrepresentations contained in the warrant. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Judge directed the attorneys to file briefs. While I do not condone my client's decision to possess a controlled substance, as a defense attorney, I did have an obligation to protect his constitutional rights. In this case the evidence was suppressed, the charges were ultimately dismissed, and justice was served. Furthermore, my client completely changed his life, got married, started a family, and has been gainfully employed to this very day. More importantly, he has not been arrested or charged with any crimes since the dismissal of his cases. I submitted this case because I believe as attorneys, we have an obligation to advocate for our clients and protect their constitutional rights even when they may be guilty or have engaged in behaviors that society deems reprehensible.

28. 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).

I am currently a member of the Allegheny County Bar Association, as well as the Family Law Section. In the recent past, I was a member of the Criminal Litigation Section of the Allegheny County Bar Association. From 2011 to 2012, I was a member of the Jail Oversight Board. In 2015, I was appointed by Pennsylvania's Attorney General, Josh Shapiro, to serve on the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a committee formulated for the purpose of reforming the Criminal Justice System statewide. In 2016, the University of Pittsburgh's Chancellor, Mark Nordenberg, appointed me to serve on the Institute of Politics Committee. Additionally, in 2016, I was appointed to the Criminal Justice Advisory Board of Allegheny County and both of these committees worked collectively to identify methods for improving the Criminal Justice System in Allegheny County.

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

I have been employed as an Adjunct Law Professor at Duquesne University's School of Law since 1998. I currently teach a tutoring and mentoring program for first year law students. Additionally, I have assisted with teaching the Public Defender's Clinical Course to second and third year law students, since 2016. In 2012, I was appointed by Senior District Judge Arthur J. Schwab, of the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania to serve as member of the faculty at the University of Virginia School of Law, Trial Advocacy Program. The Dean of the Dickinson School of Law of the Pennsylvania State University invited me to serve on the faculty of the Trial College at the Dickinson School Law. The Trial Advocacy Program and the Trial College are annual weeklong trial advocacy programs which teach attorneys about the various aspects of trial.

30. 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:

I am currently the Vice President of the Board of Directors for Macedonia FACE. Macedonia FACE is a community based social service agency that serves the needs of families in Allegheny County, focusing on housing, and food insecurity, and socioeconomic issues related to health and wellbeing.

31. 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.

In 2012, I received the Homer S. Brown Award from the NAACP Pittsburgh Chapter. I also received the 2012 New Pittsburgh Courier Man of Excellence Award, and I received The Legal Intelligencer, 2015 Diverse Attorney of the Year Award.

32. 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 a Court of Pennsylvania.

While attending law school, I worked two full time jobs in the social service field. During the day, I provided intensive home-based family therapy and support services to families that were active with Family Court. The families were experiencing varying degrees of dysfunction due to drug addiction and mental health issues. Additionally, I worked overnights and weekends as a residential counselor at the Family Links Independent Living Program. As a residential counselor, I worked directly with troubled adolescents, accepted for treatment within the residential shelter. These positions enabled me to develop an understanding of the issues that typically result in people becoming involved with the court system. I learned firsthand about the impact that the courts have on the lives of people in our communities and these experiences became the foundation for my work in public service.

I began my legal career as a judicial law clerk for the Pennsylvania Superior Court.

Working as a law clerk requires you to possess a thorough understanding of the law and the ability to think analytically. As a law clerk you are required to apply the law to the facts in a particular case without allowing your personal beliefs or feeling to influence your decision. Every judge must possess these skills.

I have also had the unique opportunity of working as a prosecutor, a private defense attorney, and a public defender. Given my history of prosecuting people accused of committing crimes as well as my history of defending the rights of the accused, I am fair and impartial when dealing with parties with differing views and objectives. Throughout my legal career, I have been required to analyze cases from various perspectives. This approach has enabled me to develop the ability to remain open-minded, even-handed, and considerate of the positions and perspectives of the plaintiff and the defendant, regardless of their background, or socioeconomic status. Judges are required to utilize a fair, impartial, and balanced approach when resolving cases. I believe that my legal career has helped me to develop these characteristics.

Furthermore, my position as the Director of the Public Defender's Office had a profound effect on my ability to serve as a member of the judiciary. As the Director of the Public Defender's Office, I had to make difficult decisions, rely on legal precedent, and established policies and procedures, while considering the impact that my decisions would have on others. My position required me to work collectively with employees, organizations, and agencies which typically had opposing goals and objectives. I had to be reasonable, patient, compassionate, and open-minded while managing the office.

Additionally, I have informally mentored attorneys and other professionals by assisting with internships, job placement, and career development. I also assisted with formalizing the internship program in the Public Defender's Office for law students and developing a yearlong Externship Program with the Duquesne University School of Law. I participated in the development of an Expungement Clinic in the Office, in order to assist the clients with removing negative information from their criminal records. These initiatives required me to have the ability to work collaboratively with other stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

Therefore, I believe my ability to recognize the needs of others; work well with others and take the initiative in developing and implementing appropriate programs; all while remaining fair and impartial, makes me an excellent candidate for the judiciary.

33. 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?

I would like to remain a Judge because of my commitment to ensuring that every person has equal access to the courts and the process is fair for all litigants that appear in court, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. While assigned to the Family Division, I learned that people frequently fail to exercise their rights due to their lack of knowledge about the court system or their inability to afford an attorney. Similarly, in the Criminal Division I have found that people routinely plead guilty to offenses without fully understanding the nature of the charges, the evidence being offered against them, or the consequences associated with their guilty plea. Although Court can be very intimidating to litigants and witnesses, I believe that we, as Judges, have the obligation to

exercise patience and compassion. Judges must take the time to answer questions, whenever possible, and explain the process to the participants so that everyone has the ability to make informed decisions. I believe that this approach increases the likelihood that the parties will have more of an understanding and appreciation for the outcomes. Also, I believe that our Criminal Justice System has failed in its efforts to address crime. Jail and prisons continue to be overcrowded, recidivism rates continue to increase, and the costs associated with our Criminal Justice System continue to increase exponentially. In order to begin the process of reforming our Criminal Justice System, I believe that Judges are duty-bound to utilize a different approach when imposing bail, sentences, and addressing violations of probation. Notwithstanding the fact that change does not occur overnight, I would like to remain a Judge in order to participate in the process of reforming our Courts.

I believe my background, including growing up in a low income community, and working in the social service field, has given me a perspective and understanding of the issues that typically result in members of our communities becoming involved in the court system. My experience working as a prosecutor and a defense attorney has taught me the importance of listening to both sides of the story before making a decision. As the Director of the Public Defender's Office, I had to develop the ability to work well others and work with groups of people with competing goals and objectives. I also had to make informed decisions, while understanding and appreciating the consequences associated with those decisions. Finally, as a Judge assigned to the Family Division and the Criminal Division, I have had to remain fair and impartial while making difficult decisions that impact people's lives. I believe that my work ethic, my temperament, my perspective, and my life experience as well as my work experience have prepared me to serve as a member of the Judiciary.

34. Did you sign the ACBA Judicial Campaign Advertising Guidelines Pledge? (Please return signed pledge with completed questionnaire.)

Yes, I signed the ACBA Judicial Campaign Advertising Guidelines Pledge.

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.

Elliot Howsie

Type or print name



Signature

January 7, 2021

Date

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

JUDICIAL CANDIDATE PLEDGE

I, Elliot Howsie, a candidate for judicial office, have familiarized myself with the Code of Judicial Conduct and the Code of Civility, as promulgated by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. I have directed special attention to Canon 4 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, including Rules 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4. I agree to conduct my judicial campaign consistent therewith and further consistent with *Republican Party of Minnesota v. White*, 536 U.S. (2002). I further pledge that all campaign advertising will be done fairly, accurately, truthfully, and will maintain the dignity appropriate to the judicial office which I am seeking.

Amended 11/18/2014



Signature of Candidate

January 7, 2021

Date