



Cleveland Heights City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate:

This questionnaire is a prerequisite for consideration for endorsement by the Cleveland Heights Democrats at our endorsement meeting at 7:00 p.m. on September 13, 2017 at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, One Monticello Boulevard, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. You are encouraged to attend this meeting, and if you choose to do so, you will be given an opportunity to speak to the Club prior to the voting on endorsements.

With respect to the endorsement meeting, only club members who are in good standing and on the official membership roster for thirty or more consecutive days prior to September 13, 2017 may vote on the endorsements. A majority of those members in good standing present and voting make an endorsement for office.

Please complete and return this questionnaire to Screening Committee Chair Katura Simmons at katuras414@yahoo.com, 1736 Wood Road, Cleveland Heights, 44121, no later than September 4th at 5:00 PM. This is a Word Document, and we request that you insert your responses in the appropriate spaces in the questionnaire.

Name: [Nadeen Hayden](#)

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Please answer all of the following questions.

1. What do you hope to accomplish on behalf of the community as a judge in Cleveland Heights?

[I am really eager to help bring the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court into our modern era and make the Court more accessible to the public. Individuals should be able to access their up-to- date case information online. They should also be able to reach the appropriate personnel to help them resolve their issues and answer their questions more readily by having a complete court directory listing all of the court's support staff and contact information.](#)

The Supreme Court of Ohio offers 2.5 million dollars annually to lower courts for technology grants. However, Cleveland Heights Municipal Court has never applied for funding. We could utilize these funds to update the Court's entire operating system, website, etc.

We also have to specialize the way in which cases are handled: from taking advantage of Drug Court programs for non-violent offenders, to reorganizing a Housing Court, and finally to moving away from a cash bail system. The court should evolve with society, both from the administrative side to the way in which justice is administered.

2. What qualities, skills, insights, or perspectives do you possess which would be of value as a judge in Cleveland Heights?

My family and I are a part of the community of Cleveland Heights and understand the complexity, diversity, and culture of our city. My husband and stepson both graduated from Cleveland Heights High School, we own a small business in the city, and we are active parents in the high school athletics for CHUH.

Raising my 18 year-old stepson alongside my husband has given me a first-hand insight into the value of good parenting and role models for young black men, who are the most susceptible to finding themselves in the legal system. My understanding and compassion for many of these young men (and women) who were not as fortunate to have positive influences in their lives will play a large role in the type of judge I will be.

3. What education, employment, and/or life experiences have prepared you to serve as a judge in Cleveland Heights?

My background in litigation and as a judicial staff attorney makes me comfortable handling the docket of a municipal court. I have represented individuals, businesses, and the State of Ohio and have presided over nearly 100 restraining order hearings and several hundred post judgment execution hearings.

As staff attorney to Judge Nancy A. Fuerst from 2010-2013, I helped manage the largest court docket in Ohio. I also mediated over 100 cases. At the time, Judge Fuerst was the County's Administrating & Presiding Judge with many responsibilities outside of the courtroom, therefore I handled many of the mediations exclusively.

Having served as a leader in the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and the William K. Thomas American Inn of Courts, I am surrounded by remarkable mentors with broad legal backgrounds and plan to continue to utilize them as I

continue my career, whether that be from in front of or behind the bench. I understand that there will always be instances where I may not have the answer, but I am comfortable asking questions and doing the due diligence required to find the answer.

4. Describe your recent community, professional and charitable, and involvement. Is there one situation where your participation made a difference?

Professionally I have been active in the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBA) and the esteemed William K. Thomas American Inn of Courts. I served as Chair of the Young Lawyers Section of the CMBA and on the board for the Bar Foundation. As chair and board member I was on the committee planning the Foundation's largest annual fundraiser, Rock the Foundation, and played a key-role in boosting engagement and attendance by younger lawyers.

I also was among the youngest member of the William K. Thomas American Inn of Courts to serve on the executive board. In my second year on the board, I was nominated by President Larry Zukerman as membership chair and was responsible for promoting diversity and inclusion in our membership.

In the community I volunteer as a yoga teacher for school aged children. I donate my time to the Cleveland Heights High School varsity hockey team; the Shaw High School girls' basketball team, and the Boys and Girls Club. While yoga benefits students on an athletic/physical level, I am always encouraged by how often students respond positively to the mindfulness and stress-relieving aspects of the practice. In today's fast-paced, competitive society, I think yoga is a priceless tool to help our youth in their success, and is effective because ANYONE can do it as yoga is inclusive, accessible, and it is not cost-prohibitive. I've had many students say they used what I taught them in yoga in their everyday lives and especially at home to deal with stress.

5. How do you ensure your campaign is sustainable?

My campaign is sustainable because of hard work. Although funds do play a role, and I have raised funds and will continue to do so, I am not focusing on a money-driven campaign. Rather, I think my campaign is reliant on a grass roots, door-to-door, word of mouth, and community support- type effort.

6. What do you see as a priority of issue(s) in Cleveland Heights? Pick your top three and briefly describe.

- a. While this isn't the biggest issue for the residents in the city, this is the biggest issue for individuals in our court system: low-income individuals and minorities are disparately impacted by being underrepresented. There are ways to administer justice more equitably so that low income individuals are not impacted more harshly- from how we sentence, to bail reform, to drug court programs that benefit all nonviolent drug offenders regardless of type of drug.
- b. Housing. The size and structure of our mostly residential city is such that we have a multitude of rental properties and our older-homes can easily fall into disrepair. We need a judge who is willing to put in the time with home owners and landlords; to use effective and creative sentencing; to work efficiently with housing programs; and to think outside of the box to tailor her response to each violation that comes before the court. Preserving our homes and neighborhoods is part of preserving the rich diversity of Cleveland Heights.
- c. We also have insufficient funding for programming that would help to reduce recidivism. This is an issue for every court and every community, and reducing recidivism is important in keeping our city safe. It will be up to the next judge to actively seek funding from Federal and State programs to aid in the implementation of judicial programs.