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## **Candidates for Superior Court judge outstanding**

But we give a slight edge to Scott Wolfram over Richard Wernette.

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Local voters will elect on Aug. 7 an outstanding candidate to serve as Superior Court judge. Both candidates are extremely well qualified.

Scott Wolfram and Richard Wernette have decades of solid legal experience in all facets of the law. The candidates also have extensive service as judge in either Superior Court or Municipal/District Court.

While each candidate has different legal and judicial experiences, we are confident those individual experiences -- as well as their sharp legal minds -- make both men top-notch choices to replace retiring Judge Donald W. Schacht.

Wolfram, who has been an attorney since 1979 working in the Prosecutor's Office and in private practice, has served as the Superior Court commissioner since 2003. In the role of commissioner, Wolfram performs some of the duties of the Superior Court judges. He also fills in for the judges when they are away.

Wolfram's current law practice focuses mainly on personal injury and civil litigation.

Wernette, who has served as the part-time College Place Municipal Court judge, has filled in as Superior Court commissioner. Wernette has 26 years of experience as a lawyer. His current practice focuses mainly on criminal law and family law.

The candidates each make a case that their experiences make them more qualified than the other person to serve full time as Superior Court judge. We see both of their experiences as excellent -- but not necessarily better in total than each other's.

Wolfram and Wernette have both used their knowledge and experience to better this community. They have volunteered for local boards and charities, although Wolfram's record of volunteering is more extensive.

In the end, we expect that if you know Wolfram or Wernette personally or through these organizations, you would see that person as the better choice for judge.

There is much to like about these two candidates.

In addition, we believe both candidates will be fair and thoughtful in making their rulings and handing out sentences.

This makes it difficult to endorse one candidate over the other. Yet, since voters must make a choice when they fill out their ballots, we believe it is important to make a choice.

Our pick is Wolfram.

We give him the slight edge in this close race because his people skills seem to be stronger. We see Wolfram as better able to command and manage a courtroom full of emotional people.

The campaign has forced Wolfram and Wernette to play up their strengths, giving the impression no further learning is required. Wolfram sold this approach hard.

If elected, we expect Wolfram to be open to building on his skills and knowledge to grow into an outstanding judge.

If Wernette is elected, we would expect no less of him.

In this nearly even race, we endorse Wolfram.