

Supreme Court Position 8 incumbent Steve Gonazalez enjoys position

By DAILY RECORD STAFF | Posted: Saturday, July 28, 2012 7:50 am



Why are you running?

I love the job and it is an honor to serve. I want to continue to serve as a Supreme Court justice because I bring valuable superior court trial experience that is unique on the court. I also bring administration experience as former chair of the Access to Justice Board. Finally, I enjoy mentoring my law clerks and speaking to students about the importance of civics and service.

What experiences best qualify you to serve as judge?

My experiences as a lawyer, as a judge, and in life — especially my years as a trial court judge, a prosecutor, and a business attorney — best qualify me to continue serving as a justice on the Supreme Court.

Those experiences prepared me to make thoughtful, careful decisions that respect precedent and provide guidance for the lower courts and the future.

How involved will the court need to be in the education funding process for it to implement the ruling in McCleary v. State?

The Supreme Court has this issue before us and the Canons of Judicial conduct prohibit us from commenting on decisions that might come before the court. This is for good reason, as the public should not feel — nor should it actually be the case — that judges have ruled on a matter before all the evidence is before them. We will speak about the issue in our opinion.

What is your view on special interest group contributions to judicial races?

Thankfully we live in a state where the bar association has been very active in protecting judicial independence. Special interest groups are limited in how much they can contribute to campaigns, and judges are prohibited from directly asking individuals or organizations for money. While I am not completely shielded from knowing who supports my campaign — I do, for example, know that the members of my campaign committee are raising money for me — I am grateful to live in a state where judicial independence is respected and encouraged.

Steve Gonzalez

Age: 48

Occupation: Supreme Court Justice

Experience: Before joining the Supreme Court, I served for 10 years as a trial judge on the King County Superior Court hearing criminal, civil, juvenile and family law cases. Prior to that, I practiced both criminal and civil law as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Western District of Washington, a domestic violence prosecutor for the city of Seattle, and an associate in the business law department at the local law firm Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson.

I was named "Outstanding Judge of the Year" by the Washington State Bar, the Washington Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates, and three other professional organizations over the decade I served on the Superior Court. I have been rated "exceptionally well qualified" for the Supreme Court by nine civic and professional organizations and "well qualified" by two more.

City of residence and years in that city: Seattle, 22

Full candidate list

Not all candidates running for Supreme Court responded to a Daily Record candidates questionnaire. A primary voters' guide with more information is available online at www.sos.wa.gov/elections/. Supreme Court justice positions are nonpartisan and terms are six years. The full list of candidates:

Position 2

- Douglas W. McQuaid
- Susan Owens (incumbent)
- Scott Stafne

Position 8

- Bruce Danielson
- Steven Gonzalez (incumbent)

Position 9

- Bruce Hilyer
- Sheryl Gordon McCloud
- Richard B. Sanders
- John W. Ladenburg