

Larsen leading in Snohomish County Superior Court race

By [Diana Hefley](#)

Everett Herald

Wed Nov 9th, 2016 12:48am



Cindy Larsen (left) and Rico Tessandore

[ELECTION 2016: RESULTS • STORIES • DATA DASHBOARD](#)

EVERETT — A deputy prosecutor was leading the race Tuesday to become the newest judge on the Snohomish County Superior Court bench.

In the first count Cindy Larsen was leading with 51.1 percent of the votes. Rico Tessandore was close on her heels with 48.6 percent. Another update is expected Wednesday evening.

The winner will take over for Judge Thomas Wynne, whose term is up this year. The longtime jurist filed for re-election in May but withdrew his name when a Seattle public defender challenged him in the primary.

That sent Larsen and Tessandore scrambling to file at the last minute.

They knew that Wynne had hoped to serve another two years, until he was 75. At that time, because of his age, the state Constitution would have forced Wynne to leave office. They had made plans to seek an appointment by the governor.

Wynne endorsed Larsen, a Snohomish County deputy prosecutor and his former law clerk.

Tessandore has hoped to secure a win in his second judicial campaign. In 2009, he made a strong showing, finishing second in a four-way race, losing out to Judge Joseph Wilson.

Tessandore, 45, has campaigned on his breadth of experience, including his time as a Snohomish County deputy prosecutor and private civil attorney and his years serving as a pro tem judge in multiple courts.

He finished out front in the Snohomish County Bar Poll and earned endorsements by both political parties, although the position is nonpartisan. He also earned high marks in several judicial evaluations conducted by various legal groups, such as the Washington Women Lawyers and the Joint Asian Bar Association.

Larsen, 46, has been with the prosecutor's office since 1997. She's prosecuted numerous murders, sex crimes and other felonies. She served as the supervising deputy prosecutor at Denney Juvenile Justice Center. Larsen also has worked in the civil division, handling public records, municipal matters and representing the county during involuntary treatment cases.

Larsen, whose husband is a Snohomish County sheriff's deputy, secured endorsements from multiple police unions and Sheriff Ty Trenary.

She led in the August primary.

Her campaign hit a snag a short time later. Larsen's involvement with a sales tax initiative geared toward hiring more sheriff's deputies came under fire. She and her children were photographed for one of proposition's mailers, although it didn't identify Larsen as a judicial candidate. The proposition failed but complaints were filed with the Public Disclosure Commission, alleging Larsen didn't claim the mailer as an in-kind contribution.

A Moses Lake lawyer who is also Tessandore's friend filed a citizen action notice with the Attorney General's Office leveling the same allegations. In keeping with state law, Attorney General Bob Ferguson had to act in some fashion and filed a complaint against Larsen.

Larsen said her participation in the mailer was last minute.

"Had I had more time to really study campaign finance law, I would have stayed away from what I perceive is a gray area," she said. "I'm typically a cautious person. I tend to steer clear of what could be perceived as contrary to the law."

Tessandore spent more than \$145,000 during race — more than five times his opponent.

The winner will be sworn in early next year. The position will pay \$165,870.

Diana Hefley: 425-339-3463; hefley@heraldnet.com.