

MERCER COUNTY JUDICIAL CANDIDATES RATED BY ATTORNEYS

The Mercer County Bar Association (MCBA) recently polled its 105 active members to determine how they would rate this year's judicial candidates. The MCBA conducts judicial candidate ratings because it feels the public would like to know how fellow lawyers, who work more closely with the candidates than anyone else, would rate their qualifications to be judge.

In the poll, MCBA members were asked to evaluate and provide an overall rating for each candidate based upon the totality of his or her professional qualifications including competence, integrity, temperament, and experience.

An overall rating of "*Highly Recommended*" indicates the candidate possesses the *highest* level of competence, integrity, temperament, and experience, and would be capable of outstanding performance as a judge. A "*Recommended*" rating indicates the candidate possesses an *adequate* level of competence, integrity, temperament, and experience, and would be capable of satisfactory performance as a judge. A "*Not Recommended*" rating indicates that at this time the candidate does *not* possess the level of competence, integrity, temperament or experience, or any combination thereof, to be capable of satisfactory performance as a judge. If voting members do not know a candidate well enough to evaluate them, they are asked to indicate "*No Opinion*."

For a candidate to receive a rating of "Highly Recommended," more than 50% of the membership returning ballots must rate a candidate as "Highly Recommended." For a candidate to receive a rating of "Recommended," more than 50% of the membership returning ballots must rate the candidate as "Recommended. When determining whether a candidate is "Recommended" by more than 50% of the membership returning ballots, votes received in the categories of "Highly Recommended" and "Recommended" are combined. For a candidate to receive a rating of "Not Recommended," more than 50% of the membership returning ballots must rate the candidate as "Not Recommended." Where more than 50% of the membership does not rate the candidate as "Highly Recommended," "Recommended" or "Not Recommended", the candidate received no rating. The results are shown below.

OVERALL RATING

Candidate	Overall Rating	Highly Recommended	Recommended	Not Recommended	No Opinion
William G. McConnell, Jr.	Highly Recommended	37 (51.4%)	28 (38.9%)	6 (8.3%)	1 (1.4%)
Michael A. Joanow	Recommended	11 (15.1%)	36 (49.3%)	19 (26.0%)	7 (9.6%)
D. Neil McEwen	Recommended	10 (13.9%)	32 (44.4%)	23 (31.9%)	7 (9.8%)

In the same poll, MCBA members were asked to evaluate on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree") each candidate's competence, integrity, temperament, and experience. As such, the more strongly a member agreed that the candidate possesses such a quality, the higher the score. The more strongly that a member disagreed that the candidate possesses such a quality, the lower the score. "Competence" is defined as intellectual capability, judgment, legal writing and analytical ability, industry, knowledge of the law, scholarship and academic talent, and professional contributions. "Integrity" is defined as good moral character, ethics, honesty, and trustworthiness. "Temperament" is defined as compassion, decisiveness, open-mindedness, sensitivity, courtesy, patience, freedom from bias, and commitment to justice. "Experience" is defined as years in practice, diversity of legal experience, trial experience, work with administrative agencies and arbitration boards, teaching, and public service. The results are shown below:

COMPETENCE

Candidate	Average Score	No Opinion
William G. McConnell, Jr.	4.43	4
Michael A. Joanow	3.48	7
D. Neil McEwen	3.42	6

INTEGRITY

Candidate	Average Score	No Opinion
William G. McConnell, Jr.	4.29	4
D. Neil McEwen	3.72	6
Michael A. Joanow	3.47	7

TEMPERAMENT

Candidate	Average Score	No Opinion
William G. McConnell, Jr.	3.99	5
Michael A. Joanow	3.36	7
D. Neil McEwen	3.34	6

EXPERIENCE

Candidate	Average Score	No Opinion
William G. McConnell, Jr.	4.28	4
Michael A. Joanow	3.56	7
D. Neil McEwen	3.43	6

There were 105 ballots issued and 73 valid ballots returned, or a participation rate of 70%. The percentages and average scores above are based upon the total valid ballots returned. The ballots were tallied by Black, Bashor & Porsch, LLP, Certified Public Accountants.