

LIBERTY CITY LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER DEMOCRATIC CLUB

2009 JUDICIAL PRIMARY ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name Robert Coleman Office Sought Judge Court of Common Pleas Date April 3, 2009

- 1) What is your experience with the LGBT community both generally and/or professionally?
Several of my friends are members of the LGBT community and I have been to several events. I work with members of LGBT on a regular basis as a lawyer defending Toxic Tort cases

- 2) How have you advanced, through professional and personal achievements, the rights of the LGBT community, racial and ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities? My wife has MS and I have actively tried to assist those with disabilities. I have worked with the MS society and helped institute there law day program where individuals with disabilities can consult with a lawyer at no cost to discuss any legal issues they might have. I have also participated in there telephone conference programs so that individuals who are home bound can participate in legal lectures.. In 2001 I received the MS Society's award for my contributions.

- 2) Do you support the rights of LGBT people to the following: Yes
 - a. Marriage?
 - b. Civil Unions?
 - c. Domestic Partnership?
 - d. Second-parent adoption?
 - e. Protection from workplace discrimination?
 - f. Protection from housing discrimination?
 - g. Protection from acts of violence based on their sexual orientation or gender identity?

- 3) Do you consider transgender rights a civil rights issue? Explain your answer. As a prospective jurist I do not believe it is appropriate to answer under the Code of Judicial Ethics. Issues such as the one posed could easily appear before a sitting judge and I therefore I can not comment

- 4) How should a judge support public accommodations for transgender individuals appearing before them or otherwise within the criminal justice system? Anyone who should appear before me would be treated in an equal and unbiased manner. To the extent necessary, I could envision the need for what our commonly refereed to as "Family Bathrooms" to insure the comfort and safety of individuals who feel threatened.

- 4) LGBT youth sometimes act out because of harassment at school or in the home due to their gender/sex identity. When ADAs prosecute cases against these members of our community,

what will you do to prepare your staff to be sensitive to their issues? Additionally, LGBT youth who spend time in juvenile detention facilities face many dangers. What alternative sentences might you seek in their cases?

As a prospective jurist I do not believe it is appropriate to answer under the Code of Judicial Ethics. Issues such as the one posed could easily appear before a sitting judge and I therefore I can not comment. Additionally, I would hope to retain a staff that is already sensitive to the issues and would like to believe that those that our intolerant of others based on preconceived notions of race, color, creed or sexual orientation would either accept sensitivity training or face dismissal. I can also envision situations where instead of incarceration Dan Anders novel approach to match troubled youth with big brothers or little sisters would be a viable alternative in helping individuals cope with personnel issues.

6) What has been the general nature of your practice and particular areas of concentration? Please describe any changes throughout the years? I have been a civil litigator for 27 years and have tried or handled almost every type of case imaginable on behalf of defendants. I routinely try cases in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas before both Judges and Juries. Currently I am active in trying Toxic Tort matters.

7) Describe a few of the most significant cases you have litigated. Please give a summary of the substance of the cases, the citations if available, and why you believe they were significant. Over 27 years I have tried thousands of cases. Of interest would be would be the Hollbrook v Garlock case wherein plaintiff had mesothelioma which he claimed was the result of asbestos exposure. After a great deal of investigation we were able to prove that plaintiff was present during atomic testing in the pacific and it was the radiation that caused his mesothelioma. Although not headline grabbing, I am proudest of the simple cases of having businesses comply with the ADA and assisting individuals with disabilities with their legal difficulties.

8) State briefly why you are seeking the Democratic nomination to be a judge in Philadelphia, and what qualities you believe you possess that would serve you especially well if you were elected to the Court. I am a seasoned trial attorney with 27 years of extensive litigation experience. I have appeared before countless judges in many Jurisdictions. I believe that I would bring to the bench the best attributes of the many judges I have appeared before through out my career. I am intimately familiar with court procedures and rules and have the experience to be an effective presence on the bench. Additionally, I am fair and unbiased and have always had the desire to serve the community as a Judge and believe that I would be a valuable asset to the bench.

9) What are the most pressing needs of reform in our judicial system in your opinion? Clearing up the back log of both criminal and civil cases and ensuring that dangerous repeat offenders be kept off the street. I also believe that public confidence in the Judiciary needs to be restored in light of public perception arising out situations similar to those developing in Luzerne County where innocent children were incarcerated to enriching several corrupt judges.

10) For what organizations have you done pro-bono work? MS Society and on one occasion I handled a workers Compensation Case at the request of Rhonda Goldfein of the Aids Law Project on a pro bono basis.,

11) Do you support a woman's right to choose?
Yes

12) Have you ever been sanctioned for any alleged breach of ethics or professional conduct

by any court, administrative agency, bar association, disciplinary committee, judicial conduct committee, or other professional group? If so, please explain the nature of the sanction.

No

13) Have you been recommended by the Philadelphia Bar Association?

Yes and I was endorsed by both the Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO

Please return by Friday April 3rd via e-mail to matt@libertycity.org

Or via mail to:

Liberty City Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club

C/o Matthew Woodcock

2302 Fitzwater Street, #1

Philadelphia, PA 19146