

King County Democrats

2020 Candidate Questionnaire: Judicial Level

Candidate Name	G. Helen Whitener	
Position Sought	Washington Supreme Court Pos 6	
Home County and Legislative District	Pierce 28 th LD	
Campaign Contact Information	Mailing address: PO Box 23037, Seattle, WA 98102	Phone: 253-222-3673 Fax:
	Website: www.keepwhitenerforjustice.com Email: keepwhitenerforjustice@gmail.com Twitter: @ Facebook: Justice G. Helen Whitener	
Campaign manager or point of contact	Lynn Rainey	
Consultant(s)		

Please answer the following questions.		Yes	No
1	Have you ever been a member of another political party?		x
2	Have you ever failed to pay any taxes or court ordered judgments?		x
3	Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?		x
4	Does your campaign have a code of conduct for staff and volunteers? If not, are you willing to implement one?	x	

Part I – Candidate Background (*maximum of 200 words per question please*)

Please briefly describe your education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation, and other relevant experience.

Justice G. Helen Whitener on April 13, 2020 was appointed to the Washington State Supreme Court by Governor Jay Inslee. Justice Whitener is a former Pierce County Superior Court Judge, a former Judge on the Washington State Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals, and a former Pro-Tem Judge in Pierce County District Court as well as the City of Tacoma Municipal Court. Justice Whitener also previously worked as a Prosecuting and Defense Attorney. https://www.helenwhitener.com/about_g_helen

Describe your history of political involvement, if any, in the Democratic Party, particularly in Washington state politics. In what offices have you served or previously sought to be elected or appointed?

Supreme Court Justice: Appointed April 2020; Seeking Re-election
Pierce County Superior Court Judge: Appointed 2015; Re-elected 2015; Re-elected 2016

Describe the progress of your campaign and campaign goals. What is your plan to win? If you have received endorsements, please list them here.

Endorsements too numerous to list: Please see endorsement list at www.keepwhitenerforjustice.com
We plan to win the I-5 Corridor, Western Washington Coastal counties, and democratic/progressive districts of Eastern Washington, specifically Spokane.

Part II – Ratings and Endorsements

Bar Association <i>ratings</i> received to date:	Rated Exceptionally Well Qualified by the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association
<i>Endorsements</i> received to date:	Endorsements too numerous to list: Please see endorsement list at www.keepwhitenerforjustice.com

From what other organizations are you planning to ask for an endorsement?

Victory Fund
NWPC
Unions
PACs
WA State Minority Bar Associations

Part III – Free Response Questions (*maximum of 200 words per question please*)

What law firms or public law offices (i.e. King County Prosecutor's Office) have you worked for? Have you served as a prosecutor or a public defender? Please include dates, and title for each position that you have held, as well as areas of law practiced.

Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals Judge: Sep 2013-Jan 2015
Law Firm of Whitener Rainey Writt PS. Feb 2005 – Sep. 2013
Pierce County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney: Aug 2003-Feb 2005
Pierce County Department of Assigned Counsel: Mar 2001-Aug 2003
Island County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney: Feb 2000-Mar 2001
Assistant City of Olympia Prosecutor (temporary hire): Aug-Oct 1999
https://www.judgehelenwhitener.com/about_g_helen

What *pro bono* work have you done in the last five years? What accomplishments are you most proud to have made as a member of the legal profession?

Justice Whitener was a Superior Court judge during the last 5 years and she has an extensive and consistent history of extra-judicial activities.
In 2017, then Judge Whitener initiated WA state's first Color of Justice program in Pierce County. It is now held three times a year throughout the state. Her extra-judicial activities have been recognized by the legal community with the following awards

- WA State Bar Association's C.Z. Smith "Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion" Award, 2019
- King County Washington Women Lawyers President Award, 2019
- King County Washington Women Lawyers President Award, 2019
- Seattle University School of Law, Woman Of the Year Award, 2019

- Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association’s Diversity Award, 2019
- Pierce County Washington Women Lawyer’s Woman of the year Award, 2018

Justice Whitener since 2016 has taught a “Street Law” civics class at Lincoln High School in Tacoma.
<https://www.judgehelenwhitener.com/photos>

Have you served as a judge or justice? What did you learn from that experience, and what do you believe are the most important qualifications for judges or justices?

Justice Whitener has served as a Judge for seven years before her appointment to the Supreme Court. She believes the most important qualifications for both positions are the ability to listen, to be impartial and to make well-reasoned decisions based on the rule of law. Justice Whitener has been very active locally, nationally, and internationally and speaks often on human rights, access to justice, and the rights and responsibility of the judiciary in ensuring the rights of all that appear before the court to basic dignity and respect in judicial proceedings.

How would you advocate for more equity in our State’s justice system?

Justice Whitener is co-chair of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission. She serves on the Office of Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee (OCLA) and is a former chair and co-chair of the Washington State Superior Court Judges’ Association (SCJA) – Equity and Fairness Committee. Justice Whitener is a judicial member of the Advisory Council for the QLaw Association of Washington and is also a judicial member of the Washington Women Lawyers. In 2016 then Judge Whitener did a TedxPOS Talk titled “Claiming your identity by understanding your self-worth” where she discussed different labels of disenfranchisement that are used to limit a person's potential.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57FMau290_g

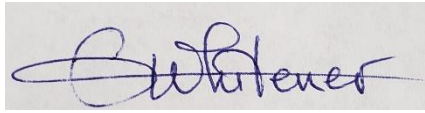
What ideas do you have to make our judicial system more open, transparent, and responsive?

Justice Whitener continues to speak at professional educational seminars on Implicit and Explicit Bias, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Judicial Philosophy, Sexual Orientation and the Legal Profession, Judicial Ethics, Overcoming Intolerance, and Diversity in the Law. Promoting and encouraging creating a diverse judicial system requires having different voices at the table.

How do you balance the judicial principle of *stare decisis*, or adherence to precedent, with a rapidly changing society and transformations in our society’s understanding of justice?

Justice Whitener believes in just treatment because JUST TREATMENT is Justice. Education is key in addressing precedent and when it is appropriate to have it adapt to changing times. Technology is one area that has allowed the legislature and the judiciary to address disproportionalities embedded in our current system. Technology has allowed others to make the case for change as problems can be seen in real time making it difficult to discredit the information.

I affirm that all the information provided in response to this questionnaire is true, complete and correct, to the best of my ability, and that no relevant matter has been omitted.

Signature		Date: May 6, 2020
Printed Name	Grace H. Whitener	