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| **Candidate Name** | Maureen McKee | |
| **Position Sought** | Seattle Municipal Court Judge | |
| Home County and Legislative District | King – 34th LD | |
| **Campaign Contact Information** | Mailing address:  Committee to Elect Maureen McKee  PO Box 23125  Seattle, WA 98102 | Phone: 425-466-0619  Fax: |
| Website: [www.electmaureenmckee.com](http://www.electmaureenmckee.com)  Email: [electmaureenmckee@gmail.com](mailto:electmaureenmckee@gmail.com)  Twitter: @  Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Maureen-McKee-2280880901937501/> | |
| Campaign manager or point of contact | Mary Ann Ottinger – 425-466-0619 | |
| Consultant(s) | Same | |

**Part I – Candidate Background**

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| Please briefly describe your qualifications, education, employment, community and civic activity, past union affiliation, and other relevant experience. Attach a resume with more complete history. |
| In 1994, I received my B.A. degree from Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio where I majored in African American Studies. In 2002, I received my J.D. degree from Cornell Law School in Ithaca, NY where I also participated in the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs.  Since 2002, I have worked as a Public Defender for The Defender Association where I have been a Staff Attorney, an Investigation Supervisor, and now the Supervisor of the Misdemeanor Unit. I manage a team of ten attorneys who practice in Seattle Municipal Court. As a Staff Attorney, I represented both juveniles and adults charged with misdemeanors and felonies, juveniles and adults facing psychiatric hospitalization under the Involuntary Treatment Act, adults facing civil commitment under the Sexually Violent Predators law, and parents and children involved in dependency matters.  As a Staff Attorney, I was a member of SEIU 925, and as a supervisor, I have been a member of Teamsters Local 117.  I have also worked for the American Refugee Committee Legal Aid Center in Mostar, Bosnia providing legal advocacy to displaced persons assisting them in reclaiming property lost during the conflict there, and for Legal Services for Prisoners with Children in San Francisco. There I provided referrals, advocacy and other support services for individuals in prison.  See accompanying resume for detail. |

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| Describe your history of involvement in Washington state politics. What offices have you previously sought election or appointment to? What campaigns have you worked on? |
| None |

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| What prompted you to run for this office? |
| It is my belief that at this point in my career, given my lifetime of experience working with disadvantaged communities, my in-depth understanding of the justice system and strong ability to work with all players in the system, I am in a position to make a meaningful contribution to the judiciary and to the City of Seattle. Since two seats on that bench have become vacant in 2018, the time for me to run is now. |

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| Describe the progress of your campaign so far. What kind of reception is your campaign getting? Are you running unopposed, or do you have an opponent? How will your campaign appeal to the voters? |
| I have hired a campaign manager/consultant who specializes in judicial campaigns, we have launched a campaign website and Facebook page, and I have been visiting all the Democratic Legislative District meetings seeking support. In a very short period of time, I have accumulated many endorsements (see current endorsement list here: [www.electmaureenmckee.com](http://www.electmaureenmckee.com)) and we are already raising money and planning fundraising events. I have a campaign kickoff event scheduled for March 27 and enthusiasm for my campaign is building. To date, I am the only declared candidate for this position.  My campaign will appeal to the voters of Seattle because they know that racial and economic disparities exist in our justice system (a fact that is absolutely indisputable). Because voters of Seattle are largely progressive and fair-minded, they condemn this type of disparity and will support me in changing it. While I currently run unopposed, I am confident that I will remain the most vocal and credible advocate for truly equal justice and significant and effective changes in the Seattle Municipal Court. |

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| **Please answer the following questions.** | | **Yes\*** | **No** |
| 1 | Have you ever failed to pay any taxes or court ordered judgments? |  | X |
| 2 | Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation? |  | X |

\* If you answered “Yes” to either of the above, please explain your answer:

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**Part II – Ratings and endorsements**

What endorsements and ratings from bar associations have you received to date?

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| Bar Association ratings: | I have submitted my materials and request for ratings to the following Bar Associations and am scheduled for interviews in March and April, 2018:  King County Bar Association  Joint Asian Judicial Evaluation Committee  Latina/o Bar Association of Washington  QLaw  Loren Miller Bar Association  Washington Women Lawyers  Cardozo Society |
| Endorsements: | See attached endorsement list. The most up-to-date list of my endorsements can be found at: [www.electmaureenmckee.com](http://www.electmaureenmckee.com) |

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| If you have previously sought elected office, what notable endorsements did you receive? |
| N/A |

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| What other organizations are you planning to ask for an endorsement? |
| All Democratic LD organizations in King County  NW Women’s Political Caucus  MLKing County Labor Council and all major Labor organizations in King County  Other organizations as opportunities present themselves. |

**Part III – Legal experience, technology, and court costs**

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| Please describe your pro bono activities over the last five years. |
| The work of a Public Defender is, by its very nature, pro bono. However, I have dedicated myself so completely to this work that I spend many evenings and weekends working on the cases of those who cannot afford counsel. Because I insist that the attorneys I supervise provide the highest quality legal representation to the clients we represent, I have always felt compelled to do the same. This demand I make of myself has left little time for any additional “pro bono work.” |

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| 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. |
| Since October 2002 to the present, I have worked for The Defender Association which is now part of the King County Department of Public Defense.   * From October 2002 to December 2014, I was a staff attorney practicing in the areas mentioned immediately below. * From January 2015 – April 2016, I was the supervisor of investigation unit at The Defender Association. * From May 2016 to the present, I supervise the attorneys who practice in Seattle Municipal Court.   The areas of law I have practiced while an attorney at The Defender Association (and now The Defender Association Division) include:   * Dependency Court: I represented parents when Washington State’s Department of Social and Health Services filed a petition requesting court intervention into parenting matters. * Juvenile Court: I represented children who were charged with misdemeanors and felonies. * King County District Court: I represented adults charged with domestic violence misdemeanor offenses. * King County Superior Court: I represented adults charged with Class A, Class B and Class C felonies. * King County Superior Court: I represented both juveniles and adults whom Washington State petitioned to civilly commit them under the Involuntary Treatment Act. * Superior Court (in King County and other counties): I represented adults whom Washington State petitioned to civilly commit under the Sexually Violent Predators Act. * Seattle Municipal Court: I represent adults charged with misdemeanors. |

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| Have you ever served as a mediator or arbitrator? (If so, please describe your experiences.) |
| No |

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| What do you believe are the most important qualifications for a judge or justice? |
| The most important qualifications for a judge are: 1) the willingness and ability to listen to each party carefully and fairly; 2) a strong understanding and knowledge of the law; and 3) insight, empathy and compassion. It is also important for judges to be able to balance the protection of individuals’ constitutional rights (i.e., right to effective representation) with the reality of resource constraints by ensuring that hearings and trials are fair but efficient. Lastly, a judge – especially one sitting in a municipal court – should have a strong and deep appreciation for the responsibilities and resource constraints that both the prosecution and defense face. |

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| Have you been a judge pro-tem? If so, what was that experience like? What did you learn from it? Have you completed the pro-tem training in King County? For which judges do you regularly pro-tem? |
| No. Public Defenders in King County are prohibited from sitting pro tem in King County Superior Court, King County District Court or Seattle Municipal Court. Furthermore, we are expected to be extremely conscientious about recusing ourselves as a pro tem judge on cases where the Department of Public Defense currently or previously has represented the client. As a result, this poses an obstacle to serving as a pro tem in most municipal and District Courts within King County. I have, however, begun working with Judge Linda Coburn in the Edmonds Municipal Court where I hope to be able to serve as a Judge Pro Tem soon. |

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| Do you support making it easier for Washingtonians who are not members of the bar to access public records, particularly at the Superior/District court levels, where per-page fees are charged? |
| Absolutely. It is essential for the public to have access to documents that have been filed in our courts. If there is a barrier, especially a barrier to those who cannot afford to pay for the documents, access is neither full nor equal. While it is understandable that there are associated costs with identifying, finding, accessing and copying requested documentation, that financial cost is outweighed by the importance in a democratic society for transparency of the court. |

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| Do you have any thoughts on how our courts should address the growing use of smartphones during court proceedings, particularly by jurors? |
| Fairness is the touchstone of our court system. In order to be truly fair, it is imperative that the jury consider evidence presented by the parties *and only the parties* during a trial. A fair trial requires the complete attention of all jurors, not only during the trial, but also during deliberation. First, accessing information from a smartphone is not only easy but also extremely tempting. It is important for courts to address the use of smartphones directly and repeatedly during a trial, emphasizing that researching trial-related issues independently results in an unfair process and will most likely result in a mistrial, which is costly for everyone involved. An additional way to address smartphones is prohibit jurors from even turning on their phones unless they ask the Court for permission during the trial and during deliberations. |

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| Is Washington relying too much on court fees to cover the cost of operating our judicial system? How do you believe our courts should be funded? |
| Yes. Courts must be funded by taxpayers. On the one hand, it is understandably difficult to obtain funding to run a court system well if the funding comes solely from the taxpayers. On the other hand, the Court must make the necessary connections (i.e., with City Council, community-based social service agencies, the Department of Public Defense, the City Attorney’s Office, etc.) and persuade these entities that taxpayer investment, while large, will result in overall financial savings and overall greater protection of the public. It is up to the Court to understand and to explain why greater investment into connections with community-based social service agencies will result in better mental health treatment offered to defendants, more effective chemical dependency treatment offered to defendants, greater stability in terms of employment and housing retention, etc. These connections require an investment in the Court system by taxpayers but the result will be a decrease in criminal behavior. |

**Part IV – Access to justice**

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| If elected, how will you work to improve access to justice, particularly for communities and constituencies that do not understand the American legal system? |
| There are a number of ways to improve access to justice:     * First, it is imperative that people who do not speak English as a first language receive interpreters not only during hearings (which is the present practice in Seattle Municipal Court), but also during each and every exchange with a probation counselor (which is *not* the present practice of SMC). Because interactions with probation counselors could most certainly result in requests for warrants and/or jail, a defendant who does not speak English as a first language and does not receive the assistance of an interpreter, does not receive access to the same justice as a person who speaks English fluently. * Second, the Court must ensure that hearings and trials occur at a pace that a defendant is able to comprehend. There are a number of reasons why judges must tailor the pace including language barriers, cognitive delays, lack of education, mental illness, unfamiliarity with justice system, etc. Once a judge identifies an appropriate pace of a hearing or trial, it is imperative to maintain control of the courtroom so as to enforce that pace during the proceedings. These might seem like obvious and easy steps to take, but throughout my career as a public defender, I have observed altogether too many proceedings in which these steps were not taken.      * Third, bail practices must be reformed – particularly for those who are arrested and charged with petty offenses (i.e., criminal trespass, theft, property destruction, etc.). Even though the Court imposes a relatively low amount of bail, these individuals remain jailed *simply* because they are poor and therefore cannot afford even the low amount of bail. Due to the incentive to just get released, many of these individuals will plead guilty because that is the fastest way to get out of jail. Poor defendants often collect many convictions -- not because they are any guiltier than their wealthy counterparts -- but because they do not have the financial resources that their wealthy counterparts do. * Fourth, courts must play a role in advocating for reduced caseloads for public defenders. Indigent defendants, a large percentage of whom are not highly educated, rely upon their public defenders to be their voices. If public defenders, due to high caseloads, do not have adequate time to learn about their clients’ backgrounds, understand their clients’ perspectives, and fully advise their clients, the gulf between access to justice for poor people and wealthy people widens. |

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| What does the phrase *Black Lives Matter* mean to you as a judicial candidate? |
| The Black Lives Matter movement is an incredibly important movement. For far too long and far too often, we, as a society, have ignored the way that law enforcement has targeted people of color and specifically, Black individuals. The justice system has too often looked away as this has occurred. While it is uncomfortable and even painful to identify and to focus on the way that Black individuals have been treated historically by the justice system, we are only perpetuating an unequal system if we do so. Only by looking hard at history and current unequal practices, can we better understand why Black individuals and other people of color may distrust law enforcement, defense attorneys, prosecutors, juries, and judges. |

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| What do you see are the legal issues in the #timesup and #metoo movements? |
| The #metoo is a powerful movement that has empowered women and men to talk about their painful pasts. The movement has been both motivating and illuminating. The #timesup movement, a movement that seeks to be both inclusive and protective of women from more vulnerable communities, is also a desperately needed movement. The courage of both women and men coming forward to talk about their painful histories is admirable. The plan to shift the focus from a population that is more privileged (in the #metoo movement) to one that addresses a systemic system much more broadly is an excellent one. There must be aggressive and innovative ways to address sexual assault that remains uncovered by the media and sexist practices that remain unchecked.  The movement, however, does not come without a cost. With the (very understandable) desire to believe and to support those coming forward with their painful pasts and to protect women in more marginalized populations oftentimes comes with a refusal to listen to the accused and forgetfulness about the importance of context. The United States has adopted, embraced and upheld the notion of due process based upon the fundamental notion of innocent until proven guilty. The idea that an accused must be given an opportunity not only to know of the accusation but to be able to respond to it fully is the cornerstone of our criminal justice system.  There is tension – there *should* be tension – between providing the accuser of sexual abuse or gendered discrimination a platform upon which to speak and to be fully heard and ensuring the accused has an opportunity to defend himself. The goal should be to recognize this tension, acknowledge the value in both, and seek to strike a strong balance. Lawmakers should remain conscious of this tension and constantly mindful of the constitutional reasons behind it. |

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| What ideas can you offer to make our judicial system more open, transparent, and responsive? |
| The judicial system can be more open, transparent, and responsive if:   1. Courts make access to filed documentation truly accessible to the public; 2. Courts are proactive in developing a continuous open dialogue with the city council (if a municipal court), the Mayor’s Office of Civil Rights, and other entities that play a critical role in making funding, policy and program decisions; 3. Judges, especially those who are municipal court judges, are active in the community to inform the public of the Court’s current policies and programs as well as the policies and programs the Court is developing or exploring; and 4. Judges make an effort to get out in the community and interact with immigrant and non-English speaking communities to educate these important parts of our community about the way our justice system works. Too many judges are isolated. I intend to be a part of the community. |

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| **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: March 6, 2018 |
| Printed Name | Maureen McKee |