

# King County Democrats 2010 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name	Edsonya Charles
Position sought	Seattle Municipal Court Judge Pos. 1
Residence LD	37 <sup>th</sup>
Are you the incumbent?	Yes
<b>Campaign Information</b>	
Campaign Name	Reelect Judge Edsonya Charles
Web page	Reelectjudgeedsonyacharles.com
Campaign Email address	Reelectjudgecharles@gmail.com
Manager	In hiring process; committee co-chairs Former Mayor Greg Nickels, Dr. Constance Rice
Campaign mailing address	P.O. Box 12683 Seattle, WA 9811
Campaign phone number	(206) 245-4907
Campaign FAX	

Candidate Background: Community service, education, employment and other relevant experience.
Which undergraduate and law schools have you attended? Include Graduation date, degrees.
Vanderbilt University, B.A. Communications 1985
University of Washington, J.D. 1995

Hours and types of pro bono work performed.
None currently. The Code of Judicial Conduct prohibits judges from practicing law.

Have you ever been a prosecutor for any government entity? If yes, where and how long?
Yes, U. S. Attorney's Office , 4 years

Have you ever defended a person accused of a crime? If yes, where and how many cases?
University of Washington Law School Criminal Law Clinic

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Have you ever served as an arbitrator or Mediator? If yes, where and how many times?  
No.

How many times have you participated as a judge or attorney in:	
Municipal Court	100s, judge since 2005
District Court	0
Superior Court jury trials	0
Arguments in Court of Appeals	6
Arguments in State Supreme Court	0
Federal District Court trials	4

What ratings and endorsements have you received?	
Municipal League	Not yet rated
King County Bar Association	Not yet rated
Washington Women Lawyers	Not yet rated
Loren Miller Bar Association	Not yet rated
QLAW: the GLBT Bar Association	Not yet rated
Latina/Latino Bar Association	Not yet rated
Joint Asian Judicial Evaluation Committee	Not yet rated

Which organizations and individuals have endorsed you in this race?  
No organizational endorsements sought to date. Individual endorsements include: Greg Nickels, Dr. Constance Rice, Jerry Hillis, Diana Gale, Paula Boggs, Michelle Gonzalez, Judge Paris Kallas, Judge Kimi Kondo, Judge Veronica Galvan, Judge Kim Walden, Sarah Mack, Bob Watt, Pramila Jaypal, Marianne Bichsel, Lynn Claudon, Charles Royer, Helen Howell, Carol Hudson, Marie McCaffrey, Patricia McInturff, Mary Jean Ryan, Sheila Stickel, Tim Ceis, Suzanne Thomas, Gail Gray, Linda Walton

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Which judicial candidates have you endorsed in the past five years?

Judge Jean Retched, Judge Rebecca Robertson, Judge Michael Spearman, Rebecca Graham

Have there ever been any successful claims made against you or your malpractice carrier? If "yes" please attach explanation.

No.

List any complaints you have received through any Bar Association, Judicial Conduct Committee or Board, or private insurance carrier. (Attach on a separate sheet of paper.)

None.

What is your strongest area of legal expertise?

Criminal Law

What recommendations do you have for improving court system funding and administration?

A long-term, stable, secure funding source must be identified to adequately fund the court system. It is inappropriate to fund courts with court fines, fees, and other penalties. A judge must make a decision on which fees to apply in a give case based on what's appropriate for that case, not what's necessary to fund the Courts. The Court is a branch of government and must be funded as such.

What actions have you taken in the last five years on issues regarding access to the judicial system?

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It is critical that defendants understand their rights and their rights be protected at every stage of the proceeding. I explain pretrial conditions of release and post-adjudicative conditions in detail. I make sure that the Court's expectations and consequences of violations of Court conditions are clearly communicated. At Seattle Municipal Court, we have worked to improve access in a number of different ways: Court Public Information (online access through the Court's website to information on cases and tickets filed in the SMC); ability to view red light camera citation video online; improved technology access for public defenders to get allegations of probation violations filed by probation officers; provision of FTR Gold (the Court's digital recording software) to defense agencies so they can access digital recordings of hearings without having to request from the Court; holding infraction hearings in community service centers; development and selection of a Conflict Attorney Panel (and CAP Oversight Committee) to handle cases for indigent defendants who appear in SMC who cannot be represented by one of the three public defense agencies due to a conflict of interest.

What recommendations do you have for increasing access to the judicial system (Civil and Criminal)?

In criminal proceedings, it is imperative that defendants be represented by attorneys at every stage of the proceeding. In civil matters, it is important that poor and vulnerable individuals have competent representation. A long-term, sustained, financial source must be identified for these critical services.

If a sitting Judge, what committees have you been appointed to and what are the significant accomplishments of those committees or yourself? If not, which committee assignments would you seek?

I am currently Presiding Judge of the Seattle Municipal Court. I was elected to that position by the members of the SMC Bench in 2008. Although the Court and the rest of the City have experienced significant budgetary reductions in the last biennium, we have maintained the high standards of the Court and continue to be nationally recognized problem-solving court.

From 2006-2008, I served as Acting (Assistant) Presiding Judge.

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I am Vice-Chair of the King County Regional Law Safety and Justice Committee. Committee members include: Judges; prosecutors and public defense attorneys; members of law enforcement; health and human services professionals; mayors; city and county council members; and line staff; from King County, the City of Seattle and suburban cities. We work collaboratively to address common issues of concern, implement new ways to coordinate services to better serve our community and better utilize limited and shrinking resources.

I am also a member of the King County Trial Court Coordinating Council, a group with a mission similar to RLSJ but comprised of judges and court professionals from Superior, District, and Municipal Courts in King County. Significant achievements include: better coordination of services and information between SMC Mental Health Court and King County District Court Mental Health Court; developing a process to identify and quash bench warrants from other jurisdictions; establishing minimum standards and standardized reporting from treatment providers.

Have you reviewed the General Rule Definition of the Practice of Law, and the Practice of Law Board's Work? – Do you have comments or ideas? Would you be in favor of the proposed Legal Technician Rule? This rule allows trained, tested and licensed non-lawyers to provide specifically defined legal services without supervision by a lawyer. Please explain.

Yes. I would be in favor of the rule. I think it would be an excellent tool to help the poor and vulnerable access legal services. I don't think it eliminates the need for the provision of some civil legal aid at public expense.

Have you been appointed as a guardian or Guardian Ad Litem? If "yes", please give the details?

No.

How have you promoted diversity within your staff?

I view diversity quite broadly. Some people focus solely on race and ethnicity. For me, diversity also includes, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation and identity. Vacant positions in the Court are widely advertised locally (and nationally, when appropriate). We place job advertisements in publications specifically targeted to reach a diverse workforce. We have partnered with North Seattle Community College to provide course work to our

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employees to help them obtain skills necessary to move to different positions in the Court. Similarly, we have an in-house bailiff relief program in which we train Court employees to become bailiffs.

What are the main messages of your campaign? What is your campaign plan? How many doors have you knocked on to date, pieces of mail planned, budgeting, staffing? What is the fundraising goal for your campaign? How much have you raised to date? Why will you win?

It is imperative that the independence of the judiciary be preserved. I am committed to preserving public safety, and swift, therapeutic and restorative justice: justice to court clients and offenders; justice to actual and potential victims; and justice to the Community. I have the experience and integrity needed to insure defendant's important constitutional rights are protected; defendants are treated as individuals and given access to needed service. I have the skills and experience needed to help navigate the Court through this climate of significantly declining resources. My fundraising goal is \$100,000. I have raised \$20,000 to date (with no declared challenger). I will win because the citizenry will recognize my experience, dedication, and commitment to service and justice.

I have read this questionnaire and understand and approve the content and all provided information.		
Printed Name	Edsonya Charles	Date
Signature	/s/	6/13/10