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## Supreme Court challengers appear at Republican state convention

JOEL CONNELLY, SEATTLEPI.COM STAFF Updated 8:59 pm, Thursday, May 19, 2016



King County Superior Court Judge Mary Yu married Stephanie Lyon and Margaret Ryan on Dec. 9, 2012, the first same-sex ceremony performed in Washington State. Yu has gone on to sit on the Washington State Supreme Court. She is being challenged by Gonzaga law professor David DeWolf, a senior fellow at the conservative Discovery Institute. Photo: Casey McNerthney/seattlepi.com [less](#)

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All three incumbent Washington State Supreme Court justices up for re-election this fall now have opponents, and all three challengers appeared Thursday at the Republicans' state convention in Pasco.

The latest challenger is David DeWolf, a Gonzaga University law professor and senior fellow at the conservative Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. DeWolf is

running against Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu, who last ran unopposed in filling out the term of resigned Justice Jim Johnson.

The contests for seats on the nonpartisan high court look to be increasingly partisan.

The state Republican Party tweeted its pleasure earlier this week when Federal Way Municipal Court Judge Dave Larson filed to run against Justice Charlie Wiggins.

"Now all three incumbent WA Sup Ct justices have a challenge: It's time for new and diverse voices on our court," tweeted state Rep. Matt Manweller, R-Ellensburg, a scathing critic of recent court decisions.

The third challenger is Republican Kittitas County Prosecutor Greg Zempel, who is running against Chief Justice Barbara Madsen.

The ShiftWashington website, a caustic Republican voice, touted Larson's challenge to Wiggins, saying: "The far left activists on the court have done a lot of damage. And they threaten to do more.

"If liberal activist judges like Wiggins continue to sit on the State Supreme Court, a future state income tax is a real possibility," it added.

The Republicans are mad at the court for several decisions, including rulings that determined measures sponsored by initiative promoter Tim Eyman are unconstitutional, a pre-Labor Day ruling that threw out the financing formula for charter schools, and a decision requiring full state funding of K-12 education.

The political right is also mad at Wiggins, a low-key Kitsap County lawyer who in 2010 ended the judicial career of Justice Richard Sanders, an outspoken libertarian activist.

The Yu-DeWolf race looks like a particularly clear choice.

Justice Yu is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame Law School who once served as director of the Peace and Justice Office for the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago.

As a King County Superior Court judge, Yu was co-recipient of the "Judge of the Year" award from the Washington State Bar Association and was honored as "Public Official of the Year" in 2013 by the Municipal League Foundation.

She officiated at the state's first same-sex marriage, performed minutes after marriage equality became legal in December 2012.

By contrast, DeWolf has written extensively on so-called "intelligent design," a theory that features of the universe and its living creatures are explained by an intelligent creator and not an unplanned process such as natural selection.

Critics say "intelligent design" is unscientific and a disguised form of creationism, and hence should not be taught in public schools.

DeWolf coauthored "Intelligent Design Will Survive," a University of Montana Law Review piece on a federal court ruling in Pennsylvania. U.S. District Judge John E. Jones ruled against a York, Pennsylvania, school district that had required offering of the theory.

The article was a lengthy, step-by-step critique of Judge Jones' ruling. DeWolf teaches criminal law, torts, consumer law and product liability at Gonzaga.

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