

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OKLAHOMA
2010 Ballot Retention Information and Questions for Voters

Judge Deborah B. Barnes, District Two, Office One, Court of Civil Appeals

1. List college(s), and law school(s) attended including any academic distinctions received in law school and your legal employment since becoming a member of the state bar.

Oklahoma City University School of Law, Juris Doctor Degree, with Distinction (1983) (first in the class); University of Oklahoma, BA Degree, Journalism (1976); Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals, Judge (appointed by Gov. Brad Henry); Crutchmer, Browers & Barnes, Attorney; ONEOK, Inc., Vice President & Associate General Counsel; Transok, Inc., Attorney; Stack & Barnes, Attorney; Supreme Court of Oklahoma, Staff Attorney; Crowe & Dunlevy, Attorney.

2. What do you believe would be your most important contribution to the court?

My most important contribution to the court is my diverse legal background — 27 years in public service, private practice and as corporate counsel. I bring a broad blend of skills, experiences and knowledge in areas of family, corporate, employment, energy, regulatory, property, commercial, contracts, intellectual property, and tort law. My broad background uniquely prepared me for a civil appellate judicial position and instilled in me a critical appreciation of high quality and responsive legal work. As a wife, mother, and lawyer, my independent judgment and understanding of a wide range of issues benefit my service as an appellate judge.

3. State any achievements or activities in which you have been involved which demonstrate your commitment to equal justice under the law.

I was raised in a small Oklahoma community. My father was a public servant devoted to fairness, so early on, I gained critical understanding of how laws bring equity to situations burdened with injustice and prejudice. After graduating college, I worked for a state agency assisting disadvantaged children, and later as staff attorney for the Oklahoma Supreme Court. I am privileged to serve on the Court of Civil Appeals and committed to a high standard of public service and equal justice under the law. My public and private background brings broad insight to resolve disputes impacting individuals, families and corporations.

Judge John Fischer, Court of Civil Appeals

1. List college(s), and law school(s) attended including any academic distinctions received in law school and your legal employment since becoming a member of the state bar. (60-word limit)

Judge Fischer received bachelor's and master's degrees in English Literature and his Juris Doctor from the University of Oklahoma. During law school he received academic recognition as a Faculty Honor Student, member of the Deans Honor Role and was awarded the Liberty National Bank Research Scholarship. From 1976 to 1980 he was as Assistant Attorney General for the State of Oklahoma, and in private law practice from 1980 until 2006.

2. What do you believe would be your most important contribution to the court? (100-word limit)

The use of my training, experience, education, energy, judgment and intellect to carefully, fairly and thoroughly consider the arguments and positions of each party involved in the cases I am called on to decide, regardless of their means, circumstance or station in life, in order to render a judgment in every one of those cases, without prejudice or delay, that is consistent with the applicable law and while not always resulting in the outcome desired by a particular party will, nonetheless, convince that party that they were given a full and just consideration of their case.

3. State any achievements or activities in which you have been involved which demonstrate your commitment to equal justice under the law. (100-word limit)

I firmly believe that each case in which I have been involved has been decided with equal justice under the law as the Oath of Office I took required me to do. The opinions which reflect the decision in those cases are matters of public record and can be examined by anyone. Publication of those opinions provides transparency into the judicial decision making process in which I have participated. There is no better demonstration of my commitment to equal justice under the law than the written decisions in the cases I have decided.

Judge Doug Gabbard II, Court of Civil Appeals

1. List college(s) and law school(s) attended including any academic distinctions received in law school and your legal employment since becoming a member of the state bar.

Education

Lindsay High School, Lindsay, Oklahoma, 1970
B.S., Psychology, University of Oklahoma, 1974
J.D., University of Oklahoma, 1977
National Judicial College, 1987
University of Kansas Law & Organizational Economics Institute,
1996

Legal Experience

Private Practice, Atoka, 1978-1980
City Attorney, Wapanucka, 1979
Municipal Judge, Atoka, 1979
First Assistant D.A. and Asst. D.A., 25th District, 1980-1985
Presiding District Judge, 19th District, 1985-2005
Presiding Judge, Southeastern Oklahoma, 1992-2005
Presiding Judge, State Court of Tax Review panel, 1985-2005
Presiding Judge, State Court of Criminal Appeals Panel, 1993-1994
Vice-Presiding Judge and member, State Court on the Judiciary,
1998-2005
Presiding Judge, Division IV, State Court of Civil Appeals, 2005-
present

2. *What do you believe would be your most important contribution to the court?*

I am committed to the concept of equal justice for all. I also believe that the law can, and should be, applied strictly and in a commonsense manner. I work hard and have consistently been one of the top three judges on our appellate court in terms of case production. I work hard to complete cases in a timely manner because justice delayed is justice denied.

3. *State any achievements or activities in which you have been involved which demonstrate your commitment to equal justice for all.*

During my 20 years as a District Judge in two small rural counties, I had a reputation for being fair to everyone who came into my court, both the rich and the poor. In fact, I was elected without opposition my last four terms in office. Also, my fellow judges elected me as Presiding Judge of Southeastern Oklahoma for 13 consecutive terms.

During my 5 years as an appellate court, I have decided every case fairly and in accordance with the law-----without regard to who the parties or their attorneys may be.

Accomplishments/Honors

National Merit Finalist, 1969
OU National Debate Team, 1972-1973
OU Law School National Mock Trial Team, 1976
Outstanding Service Award, Oklahoma Disabled American Vets,
1979
Nominated as Outstanding Young Oklahoman, 1985
Appointed District Judge, 25th District, 1985, and re-elected 5 times
32nd Degree Mason, Scottish Rite, 1997-present
Director, Oklahoma Trial Judges Association, 1998-2005
Chairman of Board, Atoka First United Methodist Church, 2002-2004
Chairman, Ethics Commission, Chickasaw Nation, 2003- present
Member, Oklahoma Uniform Civil Jury Instruction Committee, 2003-
present
Nominated to Oklahoma Supreme Court, 2004
Nominated and Appointed to Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals, 2005

Personal History

Married to Pethi Gabbard, Atoka attorney (OCU Law School, 2005)
Five Children: Resa (36), David (32), Doug (27), Michael (23) &
Zach (16)

Judge Larry Joplin, Court of Civil Appeals

1. List college(s), and law school(s) attended including any academic distinctions received in law school and your legal employment since becoming a member of the state bar. (60-word limit)

Bachelor of Arts, University of Oklahoma, 1968. Juris Doctorate, OU College of Law, 1971. Special Prosecutor, Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office. Private practice, Wheatley & Joplin, Yukon, Oklahoma; Crowe & Dunlevy, Oklahoma City. General Counsel, Oklahoma Insurance Department. Adjunct Professor, OU College of Law, 1996-2006. Judge, Court of Civil Appeals, 1994 to present.

2. What do you believe would be your most important contribution to the court? (100-word limit)

Having been an appellate judge for 16 years, and having taught the subject at the OU College of Law, I fully understand the relationship between the legislature and the courts. It is the role of democratically elected representatives to make law and for courts to decide cases by interpreting that law rather than making new law. Serving on an intermediate court of appeals, our primary role is as an error-correcting court. I am dedicated to performing that role in a fair and impartial manner.

3. State any achievements or activities in which you have been involved which demonstrate your commitment to equal justice under the law. (100-word limit)

Before becoming a judge, I represented individuals on many sides of various legal issues. I have both prosecuted and defended those accused of crimes. On the civil side, I have represented both plaintiffs and defendants – individuals and corporations. My entire legal career, as a lawyer and a judge, has been devoted to fair and equal representation for all. On our court, all of the judges are constantly on the lookout for ways to streamline and simplify our procedures in order to provide opinions in the shortest time reasonable. We realize that justice delayed is, at times, justice denied.

Justice Stephen Taylor, Supreme Court

1. List college(s), and law school(s) attended including any academic distinctions received in law school and your legal employment since becoming a member of the state bar. (60-word limit)

B.A. Oklahoma State University.

J.D. University of Oklahoma.

Served active duty in the United States Marine Corps (1974-1978).

Youngest judge in the U.S. Armed Forces in 1977.

1978-1984: Private law practice.

1984-1995: Associate District Judge Pittsburg County.

1995-2004: Chief Judge Pittsburg/McIntosh Counties.

Presided over more than 500 jury trials, including the Terry Nichols Oklahoma City Bombing trial.

2004-present: Supreme Court

2. *What do you believe would be your most important contribution to the court? (100-word limit)*

My contribution is based upon life experience and dedication to the law and public service. My first job was a Department of Defense bomb assembly line during Vietnam War. After college and law school, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps and was trained as an infantry platoon commander. Returning home, I was elected the youngest Mayor in McAlester history; then served as a trial judge for 21 years and on the Supreme Court for the past 6 years. All this experience and service prepares me for the everyday test of reaching a just decision in every case before the Court.

3. *State any achievements or activities in which you have been involved which demonstrate your commitment to equal justice under the law.*

My proudest achievement is the 21 years as a trial judge. Over those years I heard thousands of cases involving thousands of issues that touched the lives of thousands of people. Every day I worked to make fair decisions based upon the law and the facts of each case. The culmination of that service was my presiding over the OKC Bombing trial from which there was no appeal. For my lifelong dedication to my state and to the law, I was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2009. Today my enthusiasm for my work is stronger than ever.

Justice J. Winchester, Supreme Court

1. List college(s), and law school(s) attended including any academic distinctions received in law school and your legal employment since becoming a member of the state bar. (60-word limit)

University of Oklahoma – bachelor of art in political science, 1974
Oklahoma City University – juris doctorate, 1977
Private practice, 1977-1983
Associate District Judge – Caddo County, 1983
District Judge – Caddo and Grady Counties, 1983- 1997
Named outstanding Trial Judge, 1986
Judicial Conference President, 1995
U.S. Administrative Law Judge, 1997-2000
Justice of the Supreme Court of Oklahoma, 2000 – current
Chief Justice 2007 – 2008

2. What do you believe would be your most important contribution to the court? (100-word limit)

On a daily basis, I believe my most important contribution to the Court is in exercising independent judgment. The Oklahoma judiciary is the only branch of government unburdened by the influence of party politics. My decisions are based on the facts of each case and the rule of law. A majority of five decides the outcome of each case, even when in the minority, my differing opinion is valuable in the pursuit of justice.

As Chief Justice, I made a concerted effort to reach out to trial judges and court clerks to make a unified computer system a reality.

3. State any achievements or activities in which you have been involved which demonstrate your commitment to equal justice under the law. (100-word limit)

Trial by jury is the foundation of our justice system. During my 15 years as a trial judge, I had the honor of presiding over hundreds of jury trials and watching citizenship in action. As I often tell school and civic groups, my current role is to ensure that the rule of law has been followed, no matter where the case was tried. I never miss an opportunity to educate the public

about our court system because justice depends on the participation of our citizens. I am proud to be a member of Oklahoma's judiciary.