



Women’s Bar Association Releases Judicial Evaluations

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The Judicial Evaluation Committee (JEC) of the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys (GRAWA) convened recently to review the qualifications of four candidates running for seats on the Monroe County Surrogate’s Court and Rochester City Court. The Committee found all of the candidates to be qualified or highly qualified.

The GRAWA Judicial Evaluation Committee is a non-partisan group representing a cross-section of attorneys in the greater Rochester area. The attorneys on the Committee come from a variety of political backgrounds, purposefully balanced, and work for a variety of public and private firms and agencies which practice in the relevant courts.

GRAWA’s evaluation process includes reviewing a detailed questionnaire completed by the candidate, reviewing writing samples, conducting reference checks and holding an in depth interview with each candidate. Evaluation criteria include experience; integrity; professional competence; judicial temperament; and service to the law and contribution to the effective administration of justice and/or the community. Evaluation criteria for a candidate currently sitting as a judge also include: preparation, attentiveness and control over judicial proceedings; judicial management skills; courtesy to litigants, counsel and court personnel; public disciplinary sanctions; and quality of judicial opinions.

Candidates who participate in the evaluation process are rated “highly qualified,” “qualified” or “not qualified.” A rating of “commended” is also given to those candidates who have demonstrated outstanding sensitivity to issues of gender bias, women and minorities.

GRAWA’s ratings for the 2014 judicial candidates are as follows:

Monroe County Surrogate’s Court (one seat)

Hon. John M. Owens Highly Qualified

Rochester City Court (one seat)

Leticia Astacio, Esq. Qualified
William Gargan, Esq. Highly Qualified
Michael Lopez, Esq. Qualified

The Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys is a chapter of the Women’s Bar Association for the State of New York. Launched in October 1980 through an “informational meeting,” GRAWA brought together about 50 female attorneys (of 150 locally) in its initial months. Today the chapter has over 250 members – mostly women, but men are also encouraged to join. GRAWA’s mission is to promote the advancement of the status of women in society and of women in the legal profession; promote the fair and equal administration of justice; and act as a unified voice for its members -with respect to issues of statewide, national and international significance to women generally and to women attorneys in particular.