

VOTER GUIDE – AUGUST PRIMARY ELECTION
DISTRICT COURT JUDGE – District 43
Tuesday, August 4, 2020
POLLS ARE OPEN 7:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OAKLAND AREA

Website: www.lwvoa.org **E-mail:** contact@lwvoa.org **Phone:** 248-594-6602

Go to www.LWVOA.org and

- 1) click on ‘Voter Guides’ then scroll down to ‘Judges’
for a link to additional candidate responses on www.OCBA.org website;**
2) click on ‘Candidate Forums’ then scroll down to see forum for judicial candidates on 7/7

6 Candidates for DISTRICT JUDGE for ONE 6-year Term; *Vote for no more than ONE*
District 43 includes the Cities of Ferndale, Hazel Park & Madison Heights.

<p>Question 1: Summarize your biography, including your education (degrees conferred, colleges and law school), career and employment experience, elected offices held, community service activity, organizational affiliations, and other pertinent information.</p>	<p>Question 2: Describe the general nature of your law practice or other legal work you have done, the typical clients you have represented, areas of specialty or concentration, and the geographic region of your practice.</p>	<p>Question 3: Why should voters elect (or re-elect) you to judicial office; what qualities (e.g. temperament, diligence, etc.) and experiences do you have that commend you to the judicial office you seek?</p>
<p>KELLY COLLINS</p> <p>A 1992 graduate of Hillsdale College and 2000 graduate of Wayne State Law School, I worked full time as a judicial clerk and secretary while attending the evening program. For the past 19 years, I have served the citizens of Oakland County as an assistant prosecuting attorney. I have appeared in every courtroom in Oakland County and handled everything from civil/traffic infractions to Murder. As a 20 year resident of Ferndale, along with my husband, Keith Binkowski, a Hazel Park elementary school teacher and our children, Joe and Katie, I now seek to serve as our District’s first female jurist on the bench. I am passionate about our youth and volunteer for Royal Oak Youth Football and Cheer Teams (ROYFT) and several booster clubs.</p>	<p>Throughout my service as an assistant prosecutor under two elected officials, I have practiced in the areas of criminal law as well as civil child protection law. I have concentrated much of my work prosecuting crimes committed against the most vulnerable in our communities, including domestic violence, human trafficking, child sexual assault and crimes committed against the elderly. My experience in the Juvenile Justice Division included civil cases involving issues of child abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency matters wherein a juvenile was charged with a crime. I have extensive litigation experience within our courts and familiarity with the rules governing every type of criminal case that will come before a District Court Judge.</p>	<p>Having worked for 19 years as an Assistant Prosecutor, I have the experience and knowledge necessary on day one to tackle the awesome responsibilities of a District Court Judge handling a criminal matter. I possess the ability to manage the necessary balance of flexibility and firmness in dealing with parties that come before the court with a temperament befitting a judge. I am compassionate and have perspective that comes from my experience in the courts and as a mother. I am approachable and respectful with those I encounter and have the humility necessary to the position of a successful and committed Judge. I am passionate about our communities, our youth and our courts and bringing them together as we move toward the future.</p>

DISTRICT COURT JUDGE - District 43 (Continued)

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<p>BRIAN CHRISTIAN HARTWELL</p> <p>I was born and raised in this district. I stayed here to practice law, give back to my hometown, and raise a family. I was appointed to serve as the 43rd District Court Judge in June 2020. This is my dream job and the culmination of my passions for public service and trial practice. BA, WMU, International Politics & Economics. Language Certificates, La Sorbonne. Juris Doctor, UDM School of Law. Creator of the free pro bono law clinic at the Madison Heights Senior Center. 13 years in local government as Mayor or Councilman. I have been a member of the following local organizations: Kiwanis Club, Men’s Club, Michigan Municipal League, Little League Baseball Umpire. I am married to Lingyu Chen.</p>	<p>I have handled 1000s of court cases in every area of law in the district court: civil, criminal, traffic, and landlord tenant. I have appeared in 100 courts before 200 judges. I handled civil rights cases fighting for families and individuals who were discriminated against, probate cases representing widows from our community, and bankruptcy matters. I respect my opponents who have incredible experience in criminal law. I, however, have done it all and come to the bench with an open mind without bias or favoritism to one side. My law practice was located in the district. My clients are from the district. If my time as a lawyer has made a difference to anyone, it’s the people of this community who I have helped.</p>	<p>When Governor Whitmer appointed me she selected me over the others for these reasons: First, I managed a government office as Mayor. On my first day as judge, I told the court staff I will empower them to love the law. Second, I have litigation experience in all areas handled by the court. I am not only a criminal or civil attorney. Third, I have the temperament to be a judge after years of public scrutiny as Mayor. I never lost my cool. It’s one thing to practice as an attorney, it’s another to lead while controlling emotions and making difficult decisions. Fourth, I am from this community and have devoted my career to public service. I promise to be kind, diligent, cooperative and fair.</p>
<p>MICHAEL G. MITCHELL</p>	<p align="center">DID NOT RESPOND IN TIME FOR INCLUSION</p>	
<p>JIM OSAK</p>	<p align="center">DID NOT RESPOND IN TIME FOR INCLUSION</p>	

DISTRICT COURT JUDGE - District 43 (Continued)

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<p>RUDY SERRA</p> <p>As a former District Judge who served two-and-a-half years on the 3rd busiest court in the U.S., I was rated “OUTSTANDING”. I am a former Oakland County Commissioner, and former Member of the Ferndale School Board. Presently, I serve as President of The FernCare Free Medical Clinic Board. B.S. in Psychology and Speech [double major], M.A. in Communication, CMU; J.D. Law, Wayne State. Post-Doctoral training in Dispute Resolution, Wayne State. I am also a Clinically Certified Forensic Counselor, and was a Licensed Social Worker 1980-2007. I was responsible for the first effort to enact a comprehensive local civil rights ordinance in Ferndale, and I got the Ferndale Schools to add “sexual orientation” protection to anti-discrimination policy.</p>	<p>It is difficult to describe any of my clients as “typical.” They include an array of criminal defendants, families struggling with divorce, housing, custody, mental health, injuries, and related challenges. I represent The Michigan Association of Professional Psychologists, and some health care providers, small business owners, and professionals. I serve as House Counsel in two district courts, and may represent twenty-five indigent people or more in one day. I contribute more than 30 hours annually in pro bono service. I represent prisoners (and their families) seeking pardons, commutation, and parole. All my present clients are individuals and unincorporated small and family businesses. I have been appointed to serve as Guardian Ad Litem for more than a dozen disabled minors across the state. Region: Southeast Michigan.</p>	<p>I am the only candidate with over two years of proven success as a District Court Judge, on the 3rd busiest court in the USA. My judicial temperament and hard work have been publicly acknowledged. The Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association said that I was among the very best qualified lawyers or judges available for judicial service in 2006. The Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association said my preeminence in the law and as a citizen was widely acknowledged by lawyers and judges. I am the only candidate who will be a ONE TERM Judge. I cannot run again in 2026, so I have no pressure to ever be concerned about re-election or popularity.</p>

DISTRICT COURT JUDGE - District 43 (Continued)

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<p>DENNIS G. WHITTIE</p> <p>I attended Hazel Park and Ferndale schools and earned the following college degrees: Juris Doctor, Master of Public Administration, Bachelor of Political Science, and Associate degrees in Criminal Justice and Liberal Arts. I established my solo law practice and practice in criminal defense and family law including as a public defender and a pro bono attorney. I am a retired police officer, Advanced EMT, former youth specialist, a mediator, and an arbitrator. As a lifelong resident, I have a record of serving—all three—communities that make up the 43rd District. My list of community service to all three cities can be found at www.denniswhittie.com or on Facebook: www.facebook.com/WhittieforJudge.</p>	<p>I concentrate in criminal defense and family law. I am a contracted public defender (36th District Court). I participate in "Functional Sentencing" cases where the court attempts to address the underlying issues that cause a person to become a criminal defendant. Areas of particular competence relative to criminal defense includes drinking and driving offenses, assault cases, and self-defense claims. I am also a volunteer attorney through the Family Law Assistance Project. I accept cases on a pro bono basis and represent domestic violence and sexual abuse survivors in their family law matters. I have also represented landlords and tenants in eviction proceedings and have handled civil matters at the district court level. I am a civil mediator and an arbitrator too.</p>	<p>I believe in “Fair and Smart Justice” and am not the “status quo.” The current system of justice is not working--for anyone. To change this, we must start at the most local levels including the district courts. I plan to establish a “Mental Health Specialty Court,” establish closer relations with our local schools, and treat all persons fairly and equitably. Moreover, a candidate should be judged by what they do and not merely by what they say. As a police officer, I reported violations of law by city and police officials and paid for it with my career. Even during times of great personal risk, I did the right thing, as a judge should do. Please see more at www.denniswhittie.com and www.facebook.com/WhittieforJudge.</p>

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