

PRESS RELEASE---2021 BUCKS COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION JUDICIAL PLEBISCITE

Recently, the Bucks County Bar Association (“BCBA”), an organization of attorneys dedicated to promoting and advancing the legal system and justice throughout Bucks County, conducted a judicial plebiscite to aid in the evaluation of three attorneys who announced their candidacy for one vacancy on the Bucks County Court of Common Pleas. The plebiscite was overseen and administered by the BCBA Merit Selection Committee (“Committee”), with the able assistance of BCBA Executive Director Greg Nardi and the BCBA staff.

The Committee itself was Chaired by two BCBA Past Presidents and was comprised of the BCBA Executive Committee and all Section, Committee and Division Chairs of the BCBA who were not otherwise actively involved in the campaign of any judicial candidate. Once established, the Committee followed a process that was similar, if not identical, to past plebiscites, most recently done in 2009, 2011, and 2019. The major differences with the current process for judicial candidates, as compared to past plebiscites, was the usage of the BCBA website to provide real-time information, and increase transparency, to aid BCBA members in their evaluations, as well as provide information access to interested members of the public.

The long-standing “Guidelines” for the Merit Selection of Judges by the BCBA includes the “stated purpose,” which is “...to promote “justice and the administration thereof.” The Committee’s “purpose” is “to provide a forum within which the membership of the Association can evaluate potential candidates for judicial office and vote on their qualifications.” The Committee is further charged with the duty of “providing information to the members of the Association and to the public to assist in evaluating candidates for judge, including the following qualities (not listed in order of priority):

- A. Integrity
- B. Judicial Disposition and Temperament
- C. Litigation Experience, Competency, Knowledge
- D. Intelligence, Education
- E. Efficiency, Industriousness
- F. Practical Experience
- G. Community Involvement and Service
- H. Common Sense

The Committee is also charged with the duty of educating the public regarding the merit selection process used by the Association.”

Adhering to these guidelines, the Committee, in mid-February, embarked on an ambitious process to complete the plebiscite in a fair, objective, and timely manner. Initially, judicial candidates were contacted, two of the three completed identical questionnaires, submitted to BCBA by March 22, and uploaded to the BCBA website, for member and public review and analysis. Simultaneously with the receipt of information from the candidates, ballots and voter eligibility paperwork was sent to Association Members in good standing. The deadline for submission of completed ballots to the Committee was April 14.

Said ballots provided four categories for BCBA Members to evaluate each candidate: “Highly Recommended,” “Recommended,” “Not Recommended,” and “No Opinion.”

A “judicial interview” or “Meet the Candidates Night” was also held on March 31, where two of the three candidates appeared at the BCBA and were asked identical questions to an audience of both BCBA members and the general public. Again, this process was similar to past plebiscite judicial interview sessions, the only significant difference being the greater number of participants than in previous years with the ability of the BCBA to “stream” the event on Zoom and place the recording on YouTube.

Then, on April 15, the Committee tabulated the returned ballots, insuring their legitimacy (i.e., verifying membership “in good standing”) and carefully reviewing all ballots to compute the final results. Those results were then released on April 19th to the BCBA membership and are now being provided below to the general public by way of this publication. Said results, the recording from the “Meet the Candidates Night”, and the judicial candidate questionnaires are also available for review on the BCBA website at [Judicial Candidates & Plebiscite Results | Bucks County Bar Association \(bucksbar.org\)](https://www.bucksbar.org/judicial-candidates-plebiscite-results).

It is the Committee’s goal and hope that the below results will be informative and of benefit to all members of the BCBA and the public in this important election, and that all those who review these results can be assured of the fairness, integrity and transparency of the Committee, the plebiscite process and the results of this evaluation.

2021 BCBA Plebiscite Results:

765 members of the Bar Association received a plebiscite or ballot with the names of all the judicial candidates. 244 ballots were tabulated.

The results of the Judicial Plebiscite, which evaluated the judicial candidates, have been released and are as follows:

Candidate	Highly Recommended	Recommended	Not Recommended	No Opinion
Stephen A. Corr	124	58	16	46
Amir M. Stark	18	21	83	122
Tiffany M. Thomas-Smith	59	43	48	94