

**2019 Civil and Surrogate's Court Judicial Candidate Questionnaire**  
*Completed questionnaires will be public documents.*

<b>Personal and Employment History</b>	
<p>How long have you lived in New York City? What neighborhoods have you lived in?</p>	<p>I have resided in Brooklyn for 33 years and lived in the East Flatbush and Mill Basin section of Brooklyn.</p>
<p>Please list all of your employers and your job titles for the past 10 years.</p>	<p>Supreme Court, Kings County, Civil Term-Court Attorney Referee, Nov. 2012-Present. I preside in a quasi-judicial role over bench trials, hearings, settlement conferences, renders decisions and issue reports to Supreme Court Justices.</p> <p>Supreme Court, Kings County, Civil Term-Principal Law Clerk/Legal Advisor to a Supreme Court Justice and an Administrative Judge-Jan. 2005 to Nov. 2012. I assisted with the daily management, operations and in the establishment of internal policies and procedures of the Supreme Court; advised the judge on the law; conducted extensive researched; drafted decisions and orders on various pre-trial and post-trial matters; conferenced and settled cases with attorneys and the self-represented and assisted with motion calendars, hearings and trials.</p> <p>Civil Court and Criminal Court, Kings County-Court Attorney to a Judge-Jan. 2002 to Dec. 2004. I assisted in all phases of the civil trial process and all aspects of the criminal process, including Arraignment Parts, All-purpose Parts, Domestic Violence Parts and, Trial Parts.</p> <p>From June 1998 to Sep. 2002, I worked in private practice handling cases involving employment discrimination, civil rights violation, housing, residential foreclosures, contracts, and criminal matters.</p>
<p>Please list all courts you have appeared in front of as an attorney, and if applicable, all courts you have presided over as a judge, or worked in as an employee.</p>	<p>As an attorney, I appeared in Supreme Court, Civil Court, Criminal Court and the Housing Court.</p> <p>As an attorney, I worked in the Supreme Court, Kings County; the Civil Court, Kings County; the Housing Court, Kings County, and the Criminal Court, Kings County.</p>
<p>Please describe the types of clients you have represented in your</p>	<p>While working in private practice, I represented clients in matters involving employment discrimination, civil</p>

practice.	rights violation, landlord-tenant issues, contracts, and criminal law.
If you are running for reelection, please point us to one or two decisions you are most proud of. If not, please point us to one or two cases you litigated that you are most proud of.	I handled several residential foreclosure cases resulting in the homeowner being able to keep their home. In one particular case, the homeowner had lost his job, and his tenant stopped paying rent. Through diligent work, I was able to help the homeowner saved his home by working out an agreeable loan modification with his lender.
<b>Personal Values</b>	
Please list any civic, professional, or community-based organizations with which you are a member, volunteer, or otherwise affiliated.	Brooklyn Women Bar Association (Vice President) Women's Bar association of the State of New York (Member) Brooklyn Bar Association (Member) New York State Academy of Trial Lawyers (Member) The Association of Law secretaries to Justices of the Supreme and Surrogate's Courts (Corresponding Secretary) NAACP, Brooklyn Chapter (Member) Bring your Child to Work Day Committee (Member) Smalls Claims Court (Arbitrator) Church Organization Thanksgiving Day Volunteer Read Across America Event (Volunteer) Summer Youth Employment Program (Volunteer) Serves on Community and church-sponsored panels on mortgage foreclosures, living wills and healthcare Youth mentor and speaker at Career Day and Youth Forums.
Please tell us a story from your professional or personal life about an instance when you were wrong, and how you learned from it.	In 2017, I was a candidate for Civil Court Judge. I campaigned tirelessly and thought that because of the hard work that I put into the campaign, I was going to be successful. Unfortunately, I lost the race and later learned that sometimes it takes much more than hard work to succeed and that failure is a good learning experience.
Do you think the current makeup of the bench in New York City is representative of the City's residents? If so, in what ways? If not, what, if anything, could and would you do as a judge to make the bench more representative?	The current makeup of the bench in New York continues to improve, but more can be done to include the City's minority population. I often encourage attorneys from diverse background to join different community-based organizations and bar associations and to avail themselves to committees that participate in the vetting process of judicial candidates. It is important to know the judicial candidates and to have a say in the selection process. I also encourage intelligent, experienced and conscious minded attorneys from diverse background

	to consider running for judicial office.
What qualities do you think voters should be looking for in a judge?	A judge should have the experience, good character, integrity, compassion, humility, fairness, good temperament, legal scholarship and have the intellectual capacity to be able to interpret the law, to apply the law to the facts of the case and be able to write clear and concise decisions. Further, a judge should be (1) even-tempered but firm, (2) open-minded, (3) impartial, dignified, and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, and others with whom the judge will deal within the judge's official capacity, (4) give the reasons for any rulings, (5) be patient with an excited or terrified witness; and (6) not let a case "slip through the cracks." The usual and expected method of doing justice – to be diligent, prompt, and well organized – rather than being extreme or peculiar in making judgments, or spectacular or sensational in the conduct of the courtroom.
Please name one judge, current or past, from any jurisdiction, who you admire, and explain why.	I admire many current and past judges. In particular I admire Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, and the late Justice Thurgood Marshall for their intelligence, inspiring work on the bench, relentless optimism, and fight in giving voice to the voiceless.
<b>Your Campaign</b>	
Please list any websites or social media pages for your campaign.	My campaign website is as follows: www.NecklesforJudge.com My facebook is as follows: @NecklesForJudge2019
Please list all members of your campaign staff and their roles. Were any of your staff members or consultants chosen or recommended by officials or staff of the Kings County Democratic Committee? Please indicate that information for each staff member.	Greg Mayers - Campaign Manager Samuel Clarke - Field Consultant Annette Alleyne Merrit and Alma Neckles - Fund Raising Committee  None of my campaign staff were recommended or chosen by officials or staff of the Kings County Democratic Committee.
Please list any elected officials, political clubs, or any other notable individuals or organizations who have endorsed your campaign.	So far, I have been endorsed by the following <i>elected officials</i> : <b>Assembly Members:</b> Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte, Assemblywoman Mathylde Frontus, Assemblyman Nick Perry and Assemblywoman Maritza Davila. <b>District Leaders:</b>

	<p>Lou Fidler, Lori Maslow, Josue Pierre, Rodneyse Bichotte, Geoffrey Davis, Shirley Patterson, Douglas Schnieder, Lori Citron-Knipel, Ari Kagan, Margarita Kagan, Charles Ragusa, Nancy Tong, David Schwartz, Joseph Bova, Victoria Kelly, Nick Rizzo, Linda Minucci, Felix Ortiz, Arelis Martinez, Josh Skaller, Joan Millman, Anthony Jones, Annette Robinson, Robert Cornegy, Jr., Melba Brown, Frank Seddio and Sue Ann Partnow.</p> <p><b>Organizations:</b>  Independent Neighborhood Democrats  Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats  North Brooklyn Progressive Democrats  Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club  Brooklyn Young Democrats  Kings County Democratic Executive Committee  Vanguard Independent Democratic Association  Lambda Independent Democrats  Jim Owles Liberal Democratic club  41<sup>st</sup> AD Democrats Club  50<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Committee</p>
<p>Who or what are the major sources of fundraising for your campaign? Are there any types of donors you won't accept donations from, and if so, what types?</p>	<p>I am the major source of funding for my campaign. I had one fundraising event which was handled by my fund-raising committee. I am not permitted to know the identity of anyone who donated to my campaign.</p>
<p><b>Your Judicial Philosophy</b></p>	
<p>Why do you want to be a judge?</p>	<p>(1) To make real and positive differences in the lives of the people who will bring their complaints and disputes before me.  (2) To ensure that everyone gets a fair opportunity to be heard and that justice is served daily.  (3) To apply the "mindfulness" approach to resolving legal issues -- the same approach I have applied as a court attorney referee serving in a quasi-judicial role. My dedication to public service and my experience in private practice, as a Court Attorney Referee, Principal Law Clerk/Legal Advisor, Court Attorney and as an Arbitrator has provided me with the knowledge and the qualifications necessary to be a Civil Court Judge.</p>
<p>What qualities or experiences have you taken or will you take into account when hiring your judicial employees?</p>	<p>(1) Diversity. Any court or other institution serving the public must reflect the composition of the general population. (2) Intelligence (3) Experience that's not limited to the field of law. (4) Excellent oral and written communication skills. (5) Patience and (6)</p>

	compassion.
What qualities or experiences have you taken or will you take into account when appointing fiduciaries?	Integrity, responsibility, accountability, plus legal and business acumen. I will also make sure the person fulfills the statutory requirements.
How, if at all, can the courts address issues of institutionalized racism? How, if at all, could and would you address these issues as a judge?	Racism is not native to the court system; it is endemic to the society at large. Some ways in which the courts as a community can address issues of institutional racism is by continuing to promote (1) programs that afford indigents better access to justice (2) programs that raise awareness about the existence of implicit bias and that encourages inclusiveness and diversity within the legal profession and within the court system. As a Judge, I will lead by example. Just as I do in my role as a Court Attorney Referee, I will ensure that every litigant who appears before me gets a fair and full opportunity to be heard and is treated with the utmost respect and dignity regardless to race, gender, sexual origination, ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic status and further I will also make accommodations for litigants with a disability to the extent that it does not create a level of unfairness to others.
<b>The Judicial Selection Process</b>	
Do you think that the current system of electing Civil and Surrogate's Court judges is transparent and accountable to the voting public? If so, how? If not, how can the system be improved?	In my view, proper screening of candidates by diverse judicial nominating committees is essential.
Would you be willing to publicize the completed questionnaires you submitted to the New York City Bar Association and the Kings County Democratic Committee? If not, why not? If so, please submit these completed questionnaires along with your responses to this questionnaire.	The questionnaires submitted to the New York City Bar and the Kings County Democratic Committees are intended to be strictly confidential.

I have reviewed this questionnaire and agree that the responses set forth in this document are accurate:

Candidate Signature: D. Bernadette Neuders

Date: 4/29/19

**You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please e-mail your**