

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

JUDICIAL CANDIDATE PLEDGE

I, DENNIS R VEZY, a candidate for judicial office, have familiarized myself with the Code of Judicial Conduct and the Code of Civility, as promulgated by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. I have directed special attention to Canon 4 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, including Rules 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4. I agree to conduct my judicial campaign consistent therewith and further consistent with *Republican Party v. White*, 536 U.S. 765 (2002). I further pledge that all campaign advertising will be done fairly, accurately, truthfully, and will maintain the dignity appropriate to the judicial office which I am seeking.



Signature of Candidate



Date

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AUTHORIZATION

As a candidate or potential candidate for Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas the Pennsylvania Appellate or Federal Courts, I hereby acknowledge and authorize the procedures of the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee, including the following:

1. If I become a candidate, the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee will make available to the public the Questionnaire, and my responses, except for the questions and responses which are acknowledged to be confidential, which information shall remain available only to the Committee.
2. My responses are provided without breaching client confidentiality as embodied in Rule 1.6 of the Rules of Professional Conduct.
3. If I become a candidate, the rating assigned to me by the Committee will be publicly announced. Ratings remain valid for 2 years but are subject to reevaluation upon request.
4. Should I receive a *Not Recommended* rating the Committee will endeavor to notify me prior to a public announcement. If I withdraw from the race, the rating will not be announced, and the questionnaires will not be published.
5. I hereby authorize the Pennsylvania Judicial Conduct Board, the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners to transmit my entire file and record, including confidential information contained therein, to the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee. I hereby specifically waive any confidentiality rights I may have in those records.
6. I hereby authorize the Judicial Conduct Board, the Disciplinary Board, and the Board of Law Examiners, or the equivalent, in any jurisdiction where I have practiced, been admitted to practice or have applied to either take a bar examination or for admission to the bar to transmit my entire file and record, including confidential information contained therein, to the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee. I hereby specifically waive any confidentiality rights I may have in those records.
7. The Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee may change, during the course of my campaign for office, the original rating assigned to me for cause.

8/30/2024
Date

DENNIS R. VERY
Type or print name


Signature

ACBA JUDICIARY COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAWYER APPLICANTS

I am seeking a rating for the following court:

- Allegheny County Court of Common
Pleas Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court
 Pennsylvania Superior Court
 Pennsylvania Supreme Court

1. State your full name and list any other name by which you have ever been known.

Dennis Rocco Very

2. Date and place of birth.

October 26, 1968; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

3. Are you a naturalized citizen? If so, give date and place of naturalization.

No.

4. Family status:

- a) Are you married? If so, state the date of marriage and your spouse's full name, including maiden name, if applicable.

Yes, but separated; Divorce pending entry of decree.

- b) Have you been divorced? If so, state the date, the number of the case and the court.

Pending; Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County; FD 24-7518.

5. Have you served in the military? If so,

- a) Give dates, branch of service, rank of rate and present status;

N/A.

- b) Have you ever been rejected or released from the armed services for reasons other than honorable? If so, give details.

No.

6. List each college and law school you attended, including dates of attendance, any scholastic honors, and the degrees awarded. If you left any institution without receiving a degree, state the reason for leaving.

**University of Notre Dame; August 1987 – May 1991; BBA-Finance
University of Dayton School of Law; Aug. 1991 – May 1992; Transferred to
Duquesne University School of Law; Sept. 1992 – June 1995; JD; Cum
Laude**

7. List all jurisdictions in which you have applied to take a bar examination, have applied for admission or have been admitted to practice. Include dates of admissions and if not admitted, give application dates and explain the outcome.

**Pennsylvania; Admitted December 4, 1995
United States Court of Appeals (3rd Circuit)
U.S. District Court (Western District of Pennsylvania)
U.S. District Court (Eastern District of Michigan)**

8. List your professional mailing address and telephone number including the name of any associated law firm. Please also list any personal and professional social media usernames and/or handles and any websites you maintain or to which you know that your profile is shared.

**Leventry, Haschak & Rodkey, LLC
1397 Eisenhower Boulevard
Richland Square III, Suite 202
Johnstown, PA 15904
Telephone Number: 814.266.1799**

**www.lhrklaw.com
LinkedIn (Not updated)**

9. Describe chronologically your law practice and experience after your graduation from law school, including:

- a) Whether you served as clerk to a judge and, if so, the name of the judge, the court, and the dates of the period you were a clerk;

N/A.

b) Whether you practiced alone and, if so, the addresses and the dates;

N/A.

c) The dates, names and addresses of law firms or offices, companies or governmental agencies with which you have been connected and the nature of your connection with each; and,

- Leventry, Haschak & Rodkey, LLC; Sept. 2023 – Present (Sr. Counsel)
- Cafardi Ferguson & Wyrick, LLC; May 2020 – Sept. 2023 (Member)
- Whiteford Taylor Preston, LLP; Nov. 2017 – May 2020 (Partner/Senior Counsel)
- Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP; Oct. 2013 – Nov. 2017 (Partner)
- Mountaineer Keystone n/k/a Arsenal Resources; Jan. 2013 – Oct. 2013 (Manager of Legal Affairs and Chief Compliance Officer)
- Pepper Hamilton n/k/a Troutman Pepper; Jan. 2003 – Dec. 2012 (Of Counsel / Associate)
- DKW Law Group; 1996 – Dec. 2002 (Associate)
- Allegheny County Law Department; 1992 – 1995; Certified Legal Intern / Law Clerk

d) Any other relevant particulars.

During my legal career and litigation practice, I have had the opportunity to work on a wide range of litigation matters and for a wide variety of clients. I have represented clients in both the public and private sectors. I have experience as an in-house counsel for a regional company, as well as the solicitor for municipal corporations (city, borough, township, and school district). I began my career putting myself through night school while working at the Allegheny County Law Department as a law clerk and certified legal intern where I appeared in court on behalf of CYS. In addition to the great start to my career with the County Law Department, I am fortunate to have worked for a national litigation law firm, mid-sized firms, and smaller firms. Accordingly, I have represented clients from large corporations and public entities to small business owners and individuals and have learned from each. I have successfully represented clients in complex commercial litigation, bankruptcy litigation, lease and contract litigation, led an oil & gas firm subgroup, litigated construction actions, both for a general contractor and for individual home owners, employment litigation claims, wills and estate litigation, land/property disputes and zoning litigation, ejectment actions, actions in quiet title, an

action in mandamus, foreclosure actions, and property conservatorship actions. I am experienced in petition practice and litigation re vendor issues including vendors for school districts and municipal clients.

10. Regarding your practice:

- a) What has been the general character of your practice, dividing it into periods with dates if its character has changed over the years?

The general character of my practice has been litigation. Initially, I cut my teeth working on complex commercial litigation matters with DKW Law Group and then ten (10) years with Pepper Hamilton (Please see response to Question 9, above, for dates). After Pepper Hamilton, I went in-house to a new Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Company where I had a seat at the Board of Director and senior executive meetings. I worked with industry contracts and on dispute resolution strategies as well as managing employment and pre-litigation issues. I then continued to represent the Company in the private firm focusing on the land work. My practice's general character eventually turned to focus on smaller businesses, individual, and municipal clients with a broader and more general litigation practice which is, I believe, great training for a future judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

- b) Describe your typical clients and mention the areas in which you have concentrated your practice.

Please see my responses to Questions 9 and 10, immediately above.

11. Regarding the last ten years:

- a) Did you appear in court regularly, occasionally, or not at all? If the frequency of your appearances in court has varied during this period, describe each such variance, giving the dates thereof;

Over the past ten years, I have appeared in court more. As stated above, my litigation practice has become more generalized – working on a variety of court cases most focused on state court actions. In fact, over the past five months, I have been lead (only) counsel in two matters that have gone to trial – one in Allegheny County and the other in Indiana County.

- b) What percentage of these appearances was in:
1. Federal courts:

5%

2. State courts of record:

93%

3. Other courts:

2%

c) What percentage of your litigation was:

1. Civil:

95%

2. Criminal:

0%

3. Family:

0%

4. Orphans' Division:

5%

d) State the number of cases in courts of record you tried to verdict or judgment (rather than settled), indicating whether you were sole counsel, chief counsel or associate counsel.

Four Cases:

- **Federal Civil Rights Litigation: Second Chair**
- **Court of Common Pleas Upset Sale Matter; Chief and lone Counsel**
- **Court of Common Pleas Property Conservatorship Action; Chief and lone counsel (Final day of Evidence scheduled for late September)**
- **Court of Common Pleas Breach of Industrial Lease Action; Chief and lone counsel (Evidence is in – awaiting post-trial briefing schedule)**

e) What percentage of these trials were:

1. Jury:

25%

2. Non-jury:

75%

12. Summarize your experience in court the last ten years, indicating:

a) Whether your appearances in court were more or less frequent;

More frequent

b) Any significant changes in the percentages stated in your answers to question 11(b), (c) and (e); and,

No

c) Any significant changes in the number of cases per year in courts of record you tried to verdict or judgment (rather than settled), as sole counsel, chief counsel or associate counsel.

They have increased as of late.

13. Describe five of the most significant litigated matters which you personally handled (give the citations if the cases were reported and docket numbers if unreported) by providing a capsule summary of each case and a succinct statement of what you believe to be the particular significance of the case; the party or parties whom you represented; the name of the Court, Judge and contact information if known of counsel for any other party; your role in the litigation; and the final disposition.

- i. ***Hickenbottom v. Nassan, et al.* (Western District of Pennsylvania; Civil Action Number.: 03-2007, before Judge Conti). This was a civil rights case regarding two state troopers whom we (Pepper Hamilton) represented. This case was particularly significant as it progressed from start to finish through the entire Federal Court Judicial Trial Process. Although not as the lead attorney, I actively participated in this matter through verdict and even conducted the direct examination of defendants' expert (Dr. Cyril Wecht) during trial.**
- ii. ***New Pig v. Buchanan Ingersoll.* This was a professional malpractice case regarding a contract; This case was particularly significant as it was another**

matter while I was with Pepper Hamilton that progressed through jury selection prior to settlement before openings. On a personal note, I had to defend a deposition for this case in Scotland.

- iii. ***Misitit v. Labash*** (Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County; GD 20-004900), before Judge O'Brien); In this property conservatorship matter which is ongoing, I represent the Intervenor; This case is particularly significant because 11 days after evidence concluded, a Pennsylvania Superior Court Opinion was published addressing the exact issue before the Court in our case. The Court then asked for briefing as to whether the newly published Superior Court case applies to our case. My brief (which was filed with the Court) regarding this issue is attached hereto as a writing sample).
- iv. **ACM v. D & D Wood Sales, Inc.** (Court of Common Pleas of Indiana County; 11011-CD-2022, before Judge Force); In this breach of Lease action which is ongoing (trial completed, awaiting post-trial briefing schedule), I represented the Tenant of a piece of property where its facility is located. This case is significant as it presented another opportunity to try a case and present evidence to the court while also working to assist a hard working small business owner. It is an example and reminder of the system at work and the people that it effects.
- v. ***Whiteko v. Fayette County*** (United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania; No. 2:20-cv-881); In this wrongful termination case, I represented Fayette County regarding the termination of a former Public Defender. This case was significant in that I was able to interact with the County and court staff, including certain judges who were deposed by Plaintiff in this case. The case settled prior to trial on very favorable terms, in my opinion, for the County.

14. If a substantial period of your practice has been before administrative boards, commissions or agencies during the past ten years, identify the boards, commissions or agencies before which you have practiced and estimate percentages of practice time devoted thereto.

Although not a substantial period of time, I have represented an individual before the Pennsylvania Utilities Commission.

15. If a substantial portion of your practice has been before Appellate courts during the past ten years, identify the Appellate Courts before which you have practiced and estimate percentages of practice time devoted thereto.

N/A.

16. Have you ever held judicial office? If so, give dates and details, including the court involved, whether elected or appointed, periods of services and a description of the jurisdiction of each of such courts with any limitations upon the jurisdiction of each court indicating the time(s) that you were the subject of a Motion or Petition for Recusal.

No.

17. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? If so, give details, including the office, whether elected or appointed and the length of your service, giving details.

No.

18. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.

No.

19. Have you ever been engaged in any occupation, business or profession other than the practice of law or the holding of judicial or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.

No.

20. Are you now an officer or director or otherwise engaged in the management of any business enterprise? **No.**

- a) If so, give details, including the name of your enterprise, the nature of the business, the title or other description of your position, the nature of your duties and the term of your service.

N/A.

- b) Is it your intention to resign such positions and withdraw from any participation in the management of any such enterprises if you are elected and confirmed? If not, give reasons.

No.

21. Are you under any ongoing federal, state or local investigation or indictment for possible violation of a criminal statute? If so, give details.

No.

22. Have you ever been charged or convicted of any violation of a local, state or federal law, any misdemeanor or felony, court martialled, been granted immunity from prosecution, been held in contempt of court or been the subject of a final protection from abuse order? If so, give details. Do not include summary traffic offenses.

No.

23. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state or local authorities? If so, give details.

No.

24. Have you ever been sued by a client? If so, give details.

No.

25. Have you ever been a party to or otherwise involved in any other legal proceedings? If so, give the particulars. Do not list proceedings in which you were merely a guardian *ad litem* or stakeholder. Include all legal proceedings in which you were a party in interest, a material witness, were named as co-conspirator or a co-respondent and any grand jury investigation in which you figured as a subject or in which you appeared as a witness.

Yes. I have been involved in two legal proceedings. The first was approximately 30 years ago where I was a plaintiff in a personal injury case that settled. The second legal proceeding was a trip and fall case two to three years ago in which I was deposed as a witness. That case settled as well.

26. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, bar association, disciplinary committee or other professional group? If so, give the details.

No.

27. Currently or within the past five (5) years have you suffered from any medical or other condition which could affect or impair your judgment, reliability or ability to perform the essential functions of the judicial position you are seeking? If so, describe.

No.

28. Do any circumstances exist that would affect your ability to perform the function of the position you seek or fulfill the term of office? If so, please explain.

No.

29. Furnish one (1) writing sample that reflects your analysis of a legal problem or issue.

See attached.

30. List all bar associations and professional societies of which you are a member and give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups. Please also identify any leadership role you have held in such groups.

**Allegheny County Bar Association
Cambria County Bar Association**

31. List your experiences in teaching and lecturing, including law school, continuing legal education and to non-legal audiences.

**Lectured on Preference Litigation;
Lectured on contract principles and formation
Lectured on Antitrust issues for internal employees as in-house counsel**

32. List all organizations other than bar associations, professional associations or societies of which you are or have been a member, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social and fraternal organizations.

**St. Thomas More Society
Logistics Chairman for Big Brothers & Big Sisters Bowl for Kids Day
Notre Dame Alumni Association
Association of Corporate Counsel
Bankruptcy Inns of Court**

33. List any honors, prizes, awards or other forms of recognition which you have received (including any indication of academic distinction in college or law school) other than those mentioned in answers to the foregoing questions.

**Honor Role College and Law School
American Jurisprudence Award for Legal Writing**

34. State any other information which may reflect positively or adversely on you or which you believe should be disclosed.

Thank you for your consideration. I humbly believe that I am uniquely prepared for the bench based upon my broad litigation practice, with respect to both the areas of the law (see above) and breadth of clientele. I have worked and represented municipal clients, school districts, cities, townships and boroughs as solicitor, corporate entities, and individuals in many areas of the law in various civil proceedings (see above responses).

35. Why do you wish to become a Justice or Judge? What strengths do you possess that would particularly well qualify you for such a position?

I believe that I have the temperament, skill, and legal acumen for the bench. I am a thorough attorney, and take great pride in my preparation of cases, review of the law, and application to the facts to the law that a case presents. I believe that I can take those attributes to the bench to fairly, positively, and expeditiously bring cases to conclusion for all litigants.

36. What do you consider a significant achievement in your life outside your profession?

Besides our children, overcoming the death of my father at a young age (I was 11) and the death of my brother five years later. I have worked tirelessly to make them proud of me every day – taking advantage of the opportunities they were not fortunate enough to have. My father was an attorney and former president of the Allegheny County Bar Association who had aspirations, one day, for the bench. I understood from his example that I required time to hone my skills to be properly prepared for the bench. Although, I personally consider overcoming these life obstacles a great personal achievement, I acknowledge that there is still work to be done to better myself.


37. Please identify specific efforts you have made, or been involved with, to support equality and inclusion in the legal profession.

During my career, I was fortunate to be the head attorney for the oil and gas group of a law firm. In this regard, I had the opportunity to hire several individuals for the group. Keeping in mind my commitment, as well as the firm's commitment, to diversity and gender equality and inclusion in the legal profession, we hired a diverse group of five professionals consisting of four of women, one of which was African-American, and one male.

As a member of the bench as would be aware to let members of the bar know that diverse attorneys are welcome to practice in the Court and that firm management should do everything that they can to afford opportunity to a diverse and inclusive bar. I would be mindful to encourage diverse attorneys to practice before the Court in an equally welcoming way – to foster meaningful and professionally satisfying work experiences for a diverse and gender equal bar.

The undersigned certifies that the statements made in this questionnaire are true, complete and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief and are made in good faith.

Dennis R. Very
Type or print name


Signature

8/30/2024
Date

4869-3368-4484, v. 1