

Mary DeGenaro



Office: Supreme Court of Ohio

Age: 57

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Occupation: Justice Supreme Court of Ohio

Education: 1986 JD Cleveland State University; 1983 BA Youngstown State University

Work Experience: January, 2018-date Justice Supreme Court of Ohio; 2001-January, 2018 Judge 7th District Court of Appeals; 1986-2001 Appellate/General Practice Attorney Youngstown Ohio; 2011-2013 Adjunct Faculty Youngstown State University Political Science Department

Family: Married 34 years; older son is married and younger son is engaged.

Affiliations: Religious: Roman Catholic. Professional includes: 2010-date Ohio Women's Bar Association, current Vice-President; 2001-date Member Ohio Judicial Conference Judicial Ethics & Professionalism Committee and Co-Chair 2013-date, OJC Executive 2013-date, Founding Member Appellate Practice & Procedure 2013-date, Specialized Dockets 2017-date; 2005-date Founding Member Appellate Practice Certification Board through the Ohio State Bar Association which administers the bar exam for lawyers specializing in Appellate Practice; 2003-04 Named by then Chief Justice Thomas Moyer to serve on the Voter Education/Public Funding Working Group as a part of a larger Committee reviewing issues involving judicial races. Also helped prepare YSU teams to compete in national college appellate competitions and judged Ohio High School Mock Trial Competitions for 17 years. Community & Civic includes: 2015-date Ohio Civility Consortium, created in 2015 to promote and educate about the importance of civil discourse; 2017-date Ohio Farm Bureau member; 2011-date Mahoning Valley Historical Society Board, has held various offices, 2003-date Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County Board, 2007-2012 Mahoning County Alcohol & Drug Addiction Service Board; External Advisory Committees for Cleveland State University Center for Women in Public Service 2002-2004 and Youngstown State University College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences 2007-2009; Also a member of the Italian Education Foundation and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. 2018 Inductee, Association of Ohio Commodores.

Endorsements: Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council ACT Ohio; Ohio Chamber of Commerce, National Federation of Independent Business; Western Reserve Building and Construction Trades; Columbus Fire Fighters Union Local 67; Ohio State Medical Association; Ohio Manufacturers Association Ohio Society of CPAs. The Matriots; Ohio Farm Bureau; Ohio's International Union of Operating Engineers Local 18; Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association Toledo Police Patrolman's Association; Toledo Police Command Officers' Association; Ohio Right to Life; Ohio Teamsters; Youngstown Teamsters Local 377; Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters; Cleveland Fire Fighters Local 93; C.A.M.E.O.-Cleveland American-Middle Eastern Organization; Justinian Forum-Preferred Candidate.

Bar Association Ratings: Ohio State Bar Association-Highly Recommended. Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association-Excellent. Norman S. Minor Bar Association-Excellent. Cuyahoga County Criminal Defense Bar-Excellent.

(1) List your judicial experience (courts and years):

January, 2018-date Justice Supreme Court of Ohio 2001-January, 2018 Judge Ohio 7th District Court of Appeals, serving Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Harrison, Jefferson, Mahoning, Monroe & Noble Counties. (elected 2000, re-elected 2006 & 2012) Sat by assignment on 10 cases with the Ohio Supreme Court; also sat by assignment with 6 other Appellate Districts across Ohio. Served as Administrative/Presiding Judge for 2 two-year terms, 2007-2008 and 2013-14.

2) What about your non-judicial legal experience qualifies you to be a judge?

My 33 year legal career has been dedicated to appellate practice, which is a unique writing style and very different from trial court and academic writing. I had extensive experience as an attorney; over 25 appeals before the 7th and 11th Districts and two before the Ohio Supreme Court which are rare achievements for a civil attorney. Over 17 years as a judge, I wrote 1,000+ opinions in over 3,000 cases. In several significant cases appealed to the Supreme Court my reasoning was adopted and became the law in Ohio. I grew up in Cleveland Heights and my family moved to Youngstown when I was 15, where I live today. Many family members, including my husband and son, belonged to unions and I was able to go to college because of the state university system, by living with family and working as a waitress and sales clerk. In law school I interned at a hospital legal department and for a federal trial judge My life experience and having served eight counties made up of urban, suburban, rural, agricultural and manufacturing communities has enabled me to build relationships with the people I serve, and expertise in a variety of legal issues. More important, it keeps me committed to fairly and impartially decide every case, and treat every party, attorney, court employee and member of the public with respect. I belong to numerous boards and organizations to improve the practice of law, judging and my community. It is a joyful responsibility to serve on the Youngstown Library Board, Ohio Civility Consortium, and Appellate Specialty Board for example I am a leader in the Ohio judiciary on ethics and professionalism, and am also a voice for civility in the profession, civic engagement and daily life. Through my involvement with the Ohio Women's Bar Association, we have been addressing issues of recruitment, retention and advancement of women, and I recently participated in a joint Supreme Court/Ohio State Bar Association half-day presentation on sexual harassment in the legal profession. Also as an OWBA officer and justice, I have been able to begin the conversation with leaders in the legal profession about reinstating mandatory education for judges and lawyers on substance abuse and other ways for the profession to address the drug/alcohol/opioid crisis which is affecting everyone in some way throughout Ohio.

(3) Why are you running for this particular court seat?

In addition to deciding cases, I believe a justice on the Ohio Supreme Court has additional responsibilities: 1) improve access to and the administration of justice on the Supreme Court and statewide; 2) educate the public about the work of judges and lawyers; and 3) public service to improve the lives of Ohioans. I have a passion for literacy, civic education and civility, and as a justice I have a platform to bring attention to these issues and the opportunity to promote programs that will make a difference. To successfully improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our courts and the practice of law, relationships with judges, lawyers and the public across the Ohio is important. I have built those relationships over 17 years as an active member of the Ohio Judicial Conference, the Ohio Civility Consortium, the Ohio State and Women's Bar Associations. For example, I helped put together a panel of health professionals and women in recovery for an OWBA seminar on substance abuse. I encourage the creation of, as well as promote and educate the public about specialty courts which address drug abuse, human trafficking and other criminal and juvenile/family issues. This is a creative tool for judges to address the opioid/drug/mental health crisis and to stop the revolving court/jail door. Finally, the Supreme Court decides what cases it will hear; hundreds of requests are filed but less than 10% are accepted. Since I've joined the Court, we have tested and implemented a new process to review the requests, and we still thoughtfully but more efficiently make that decision. I also believe as a justice it's important for me to be accessible to the public and dispel the myths popular culture and TV have created about the legal system, so they understand the work that lawyers and judges really do every day in Ohio's courts to help people: start a business, guide them through a divorce, help them with an adoption, and protect their civil rights. There are still countries around the world which don't have the independent legal system we do. I am honored to be serving as a Justice, and am proud to be a part of a team of over 200 professional, dedicated people at the Court who work every day to make the Judicial System in Ohio the best it can be.