



# JUDICIAL SURVEY 2018

Each judicial candidate pledges to keep an open mind and carry out their adjudicative duties faithfully and impartially if elected.  
Each candidate also recognizes their overarching obligation to apply and uphold the law, without regard to his or her personal views.

<p>No statement should be interpreted as a pledge, promise, or commitment in connection with any case, controversy, or issue likely to come before the court.</p>	 <p><b>Jane Adams Venters</b> <i>No Website Provided</i></p>	<p><b>KY Family Court District 28, Division 4</b></p>
<p><b>Education</b></p>	<p>I was educated in the Somerset Independent School system, the University of Kentucky (B.S. Accounting) and the University of Kentucky College of Law.</p>	
<p><b>Current Occupation</b></p>	<p>Practicing Attorney at Law, mother and grandmother.</p>	<p>Melinda Gillum Dalton</p>
<p><b>Family</b></p>	<p>My husband Daniel J. Venters. We have five children and twelve grandchildren.</p>	<p><b>CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</b></p>
<p><b>Legal Background / Experience</b></p>	<p>Growing up I worked in my parent's law firm. After graduating from law school I began practicing law in the family firm handling real estate, family law, banking and insurance defense matters. I will have been in practice 33 years in October and focus primarily on family law while continuing to do some banking law.</p>	
<p><b>What do you consider the greatest accomplishment of your legal career? Why?</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>Earning a reputation as an honest, ethical, hardworking lawyer; litigating justice for the family of a young woman and her unborn child who were wrongfully killed; protecting the family law rights of hundreds of people.</p>	<p>Keith Allen McLamb</p>
<p><b>To what extent have you practiced in the area of criminal law? Family law? Complex civil litigation?</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>I practice no criminal law and never have. I have practiced family, banking, and real estate law for almost 33 years.</p>	<p><b>CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</b></p>
<p><b>What forms of voluntary professional and community service have you been involved with in the past?</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>Kentucky Board of Education, Kentucky Bar Foundation, Kentucky Child Support Review Commission, Kentucky Lawyers for Legal Services to the Poor, Chairman of Appaired, Pulaski County Alzheimer's Respite Center; Elder-First Presbyterian Church of Somerset; Somerset-Pulaski County United Way, Pulaski County Domestic Advisory Council</p>	

By sharing how each candidate describes themselves, their qualifications, and judicial philosophy, the KCIS Judicial Survey is bringing light to the area voters are often least informed about. Thus, improving 1) voter knowledge; 2) voter participation; and 3) the quality of the democratic process.

KCIS is a non-partisan project of the Family Trust Foundation of Kentucky.



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<p><b>What are the major influences in your life? Why?</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>My parents, who taught me honor and ethics and the value of hard work and education. They taught me to work tirelessly to do the right thing and treat others how I would like to be treated. My faith as a life long member of my church has also been a major influence on my life.</p>	
<p><b>Are there any specific types of cases in which you know now you would find it necessary to recuse yourself?</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Melinda Gillum Dalton <b>CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</b></p>
<p><b>In the last 10 years, which of the following organizations have you been a member, contributed money, volunteered time, been employed by, been endorsed by for a campaign, received money from for a campaign, or had any other affiliation?</b></p>	<p>Local Chamber of Commerce My Church</p>	 <p>Keith Allen McLamb</p>
<p><b>Some judges practice a philosophy of restraint, believing that judges must interpret the law strictly rather than seek to make new laws. Others develop a philosophy of activism, using the bench to enact social and political change. Please explain your approach.</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>The Judge's role is to apply the law as handed down by the legislature and the Constitution, not to make law. Social policy is made by the legislature, not the courts.</p>	<p><b>CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</b></p>
<p><b>Some judges believe that courts should read the Constitution expansively and should not limit themselves to what is explicitly stated. Others believe the courts should not reinterpret the Constitution. Please explain your approach.</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>The meaning of the Constitution does not change. Evolving social standards cannot amend the Constitution. The only interpretation required is to discern how modern facts/situations fit into the existing constitutional framework, if they do so at all.</p>	



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<p>Some judges believe that courts should interpret the Constitution as the framers intended. Others believe that the Constitution must grow and adapt to new circumstances. Please explain your approach. (50 words or less)</p>	<p>Judges are bound by their oaths to interpret the Constitution as it was drafted. Modern circumstances that cannot fit within the existing constitutional framework are not governed by the constitution.</p>	 <p>Melinda Gillum Dalton</p>
<p>What is your general judicial philosophy? (75 words or less)</p>	<p>I believe that judges must strictly apply the law to effectuate the intent of the legislature and the Constitution based on the language of the law. Where that language is unclear or ambiguous, judges must harmonize those words with the legislatures' or framer's intent.</p>	<p><b>CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</b></p>
<p>Which of the current/recent Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court MOST reflects your judicial philosophy and why? Which LEAST reflects it and why? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>The focus of my professional practice is helping clients with personal crisis and problems of immediate concern, applying Kentucky law as it exists. I have not reflected upon the academic posture of specific justices but follow the law handed down as it applies to my clients.</p>	 <p>Keith Allen McLamb</p>
<p>What do you see as the most important issue facing Kentucky's judiciary? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>Making litigation efficient and affordable for Kentucky's citizens. Judicial leaders are strapped with tight resources. Innovations to provide efficient and effective solutions to the procedural quagmires that exist need to be examined.</p>	<p><b>CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</b></p>
<p>What do you perceive as the greatest obstacles to justice, if any? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>The greatest obstacle to justice is the court system's present inability to provide effective relief to litigants whose need is prompt resolution of legal claims. The current system is too expensive for most litigants and too slow for the needs of society.</p>	
<p>What steps will you take as a judge to ensure that the rule of law is uniformly applied without passion or prejudice? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>I will conduct myself both in and out of court in a manner that demonstrates my objectivity and honesty and will require the same of my staff.</p>	

**Kentucky  
Candidate  
Information  
Survey**



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<p><b>While serving on the bench, do you believe you have a role in bringing important legal or judicial issues before the public or the legislature? Why or why not? What should your role be?</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>Yes, Judges, especially at the trial court level serve on the front lines where the process intersects with real needs of real people. Judges see the problems first hand and must speak out to the public and the legislature so problems can be addressed.</p>	<div style="text-align: right;">  <p><b>Melinda Gillum Dalton</b></p> </div>
<p><b>What makes you the best qualified candidate for this position?</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>I have the years of professional and personal experience to preside over family court and help families, particularly children, with whatever issue they face. I believe in the teaching of the Bible to "do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God." I have the judicial temperament to serve well.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>CANDIDATES CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</b></p> </div>
<p><b>Is there anything else you would like the voter to know?</b> (50 words or less)</p>	<p>I value the time that litigants are involved in the system and the expense/inconvenience of prolonged legal battles. I will do my best to move people along given the parameters imposed upon me.</p>	

**Overview of Kentucky's Court System**

Supreme Court

**Basic Info:** The Supreme Court is the state court of last resort and the final interpreter of Kentucky law. Seven justices sit on the Supreme Court and all seven justices rule on appeals before the court.

**Cases Handled:** Appeals involving the death penalty, life imprisonment or imprisonment for 20 years or more go directly from Circuit Court to the Supreme Court. All other appeals must first be heard by the Court of Appeals, except those so exceptional that the Supreme Court will grant a request to bypass the Court of Appeals.

**Term:** District judges serve four-year terms.



Court of Appeals

**Basic Info:** Fourteen judges, two elected from each of the seven appellate districts, serve on the Court of Appeals and are divided into panels of three to review and decide cases, with the majority deciding the outcome.

**Cases Handled:** With a few exceptions, most cases appealed from Circuit Court go to the Court of Appeals. The case is not retried at the appeals level. Instead, the original trial record is reviewed, with attorneys presenting the legal issues to the court for a decision.

**Term:** Court of Appeals judges serve eight-year terms.



Circuit Courts

**Note:** Family Court is a division of Circuit Court that hears only cases involving families and children.

**Cases Handled:** Can hear all types of cases unless the General Assembly has given exclusive jurisdiction of particular kinds of cases to another court to handle, such as District Court. Circuit Court hears civil matters involving more than \$5,000, capital offenses and felonies, divorces, adoptions, termination of parental rights, land dispute title problems and contested probates of will. It also has the power to issue injunctions and writs of prohibition and mandamus to compel or prohibit acts, and to hear appeals from District Court and administrative agencies.

**Term:** Circuit judges serve eight-year terms.



District Courts

**Cases Handled:** Hears juvenile matters, city and county ordinances, traffic offenses, probates of will, felony preliminary hearings, civil cases involving \$5,000 or less, guardianship, conservatorship, voluntary or involuntary commitment, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence.

**Term:** District judges serve four-year terms.