

Pat Jennings

Probate Judge Candidate

July 27, 2012

1) Why are you running for probate judge?

I have had a private law practice since 2000 representing people ranging from toddlers to senior citizens. My practice has included all aspects of the Probate Court as well as elder law, wills and trusts, juvenile and adult criminal proceedings, and bankruptcy proceedings in federal court. I have also been involved in the Marquette Sobriety Court.

Before my legal career, I taught mathematics at the University of Alaska where I also worked with Inupiaq (Native Alaskan) social services agencies caring for children who were victims of abuse and neglect. I am a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard, and a member of St. Michael Catholic Parish, where I serve on the parish finance council.

My wife, Martha, and I came back to Michigan because the Upper Peninsula is a great place to live and raise our children. We are blessed to be a part of this community and I want to have the opportunity to give back what I have to offer. I want to be able to have a positive influence on the people who come before the Probate Court and I want to maintain the same level of judicial professionalism that we enjoy in Marquette County.

2) What's the most important duty of a probate judge and why?

A probate judge makes decisions that have a significant impact on families, including people suffering from mental illnesses, children whose parents are not taking care of them properly, and elderly people suffering from dementia. A Probate Judge should make the right decisions and treat each person fairly and respectfully. A person appearing in a hearing should not feel intimidated, but should feel that the judge is listening to her and making decisions that are fair and just.

The probate judge must have a variety of resources available. For example, elderly persons who have no family members to take care of them may need conscientious and compassionate guardians appointed. Some of these things require funding, so a judge should be able find the necessary resources efficiently.

I have represented people in all aspects of the Probate Court for 12 years, and I have the qualities that are necessary for a judge. I have always treated people fairly and respectfully, and I have the compassionate and moral disposition that is necessary to make decisions affecting people who come into this court. I am the judge that you would feel the most comfortable with making a major decision about your life.