

CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT
SPOKANE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

J. Scott Miller
July 7, 2017

I am honored to be running for election for Spokane Superior Court Judge, Position 6. I have dedicated my legal career to our justice system, and I am committed to advancing justice in Spokane County as a Superior Court judge.

Justice means administering decisions fairly, protecting the public as well as the constitutional rights of every person. Justice begins by carefully listening to every person in the courtroom, regardless of economic situation, background, age, or gender. Justice requires carefully considering the best application of the law, and determining the most appropriate sentence or outcome.

Some attorneys spend a career practicing in one area of the law. Developing skill in a particular field is important, and clearly benefits clients. An effective Superior Court judge is required to rule on a wide variety of issues. Since passing the bar in 1984 I have represented defendants and plaintiffs in many complex cases, including contract disputes, land use and zoning matters, insurance coverage, employment discrimination, misdemeanor criminal cases, divorce, probate and trust, property rights, landlord-tenant, business formation and bankruptcy, family law, personal injury and wrongful death litigation, as well as administrative hearings.

I have argued appeals at the Supreme Courts of both Washington and Idaho, as well as the Washington State Courts of Appeal, and the 9th Circuit.

I understand the challenges facing the civil and criminal justice systems in Spokane County.

I support focusing on the offender instead of the offense in deciding when and under what circumstances pretrial release is appropriate. I also support carefully evaluating the risk of releasing an individual that is likely to reoffend prior to trial. The new pretrial risk assessment tool built in partnership with WSU using a MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge grant, is proving to be tremendously successful in reducing both jail population and recidivism.

But the issue of jail crowding and recidivism clearly extends past the pretrial phase of criminal jurisprudence. The Superior Court has a critical role in providing input to the legislature that can assist in expanding alternatives to incarceration, enhancing the methods of determining sentencing guidelines, and balancing individual rights against public needs.

It is extremely important that Superior Court judges have strong background in several legal areas. Sometimes judges are asked to hear cases involving legal issues with which they have no experience or familiarity. It is unfair to the parties, to the attorneys, and to our system of justice to have judges rule on unfamiliar issues. We need more judges with strong background and experience in a wide variety of areas. Experience with trials in more than one field is essential.

I have received the following ratings:

- Washington State Veterans Bar Association – Exceptionally Well Qualified
- Latina/o Bar Association of Washington – Well Qualified.
- GLBT Bar Association of Washington – Well Qualified
- Washington Women Lawyers - Qualified

Superior Court judge is a non-partisan position. I am proud that my campaign chairs are former State Supreme Court Justice Phil Talmadge, and former 5th District Congressman George Nethercutt. To date, I have been endorsed by numerous attorneys and individuals, as well as

- Spokane County Democrats
- 6th Legislative District (Democrat)

My career has expanded to include teaching at Gonzaga Law School and at Whitworth University. Teaching law students, MBA students, and undergraduates is challenging, and very rewarding. Sharing my experience is an important way to meaningfully encourage future leaders, attorneys, and judges.

My wife, Susan, and I are proud to have lived in Spokane since 1977 where our four children attended public schools. I look forward to continuing to serve this community as a Superior Court judge.