

## Guidelines for AWL Endorsements

The Association for Women Lawyers of Greater Kansas City's ("AWL") considers applications for endorsement from its members and other candidates seeking judicial appointments or other leadership or bar association positions. The following Guidelines are designed to provide information regarding AWL's process in evaluating candidates, the selection criteria used by AWL, as well as the information AWL requires from candidates who are seeking to be endorsed.

Any questions regarding the information contained in these guidelines or AWL's endorsement process should be directed to the Chair or Vice Chair of the Judicial Committee. The current Judicial Committee members are:

**Chair:** Stacey Wullschleger, Fisher Law, LLC, [stacey@fisherlawkc.com](mailto:stacey@fisherlawkc.com)

**Vice Chair:** Megan Pierre, Legal Aid of Western Missouri, [mfrederickson@lawmo.org](mailto:mfrederickson@lawmo.org)

### A. Goals of Endorsing Candidates

AWL's principal goal in endorsing candidates for judgeships and other leadership positions is to ensure the appointment of qualified candidates to the various courts, bar associations, or other leadership posts in the Greater Kansas City Area and throughout the State of Missouri. Consistent with that goal, AWL also seeks to increase the number of individuals occupying judgeships and leadership positions in the Greater Kansas City Area who share the vision of AWL. AWL has a goal of endorsing candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to equality of all litigants before the courts, who have been responsive to women's needs and concerns, and who demonstrate a commitment to AWL's mission.

### B. Endorsement Application Process

1. Candidates must initiate the endorsement process by submitting a written application (available on the AWL website), along with their resume and/or CV and all documents/applications submitted to the Judicial Nominating Committee. These documents should be sent to the Judicial Chair (or, if directed, the Vice Chair) and may be submitted by mail, fax or e-mail.
2. Applications *may be* submitted to the judicial chair/vice chair as soon as the candidate makes the decision to run for office.
3. AWL endorsements will not be made, however, until applicants have made it through the nominating process and/or pre-panel selection stage.
4. The Judicial Committee will present the names and information with respect to the qualifications of each candidate to the Board for its review and consideration and to prepare for a vote of endorsement.

5. The Board, when voting to endorse a candidate, may consider but is not limited by, the following criteria affecting a candidate:
  - a. Activities and involvement with AWL
  - b. A member in good standing of the applicable state or federal bar;
  - c. Professional experience;
  - d. Professional and personal reputation;
  - e. Integrity and character;
  - f. Common sense;
  - g. Communication skills;
  - h. Bias, if any;
  - i. Judicial temperament;
  - j. Candidate's work and efforts to advance and promote women's issues in the legal profession and in the community;
  - k. Other civic and community activities;
  - l. Commitment to equal justice under the law.
6. If approved by a majority of the voting board, AWL will make its endorsement to the official(s) vested with the authority to make the appointment following a review and consideration of each application for endorsement submitted to the Chair/Vice Chair of the Judicial Committee.

### **C. When Applications for Endorsements To Be Made**

1. This endorsement request must be completed by submitting an AWL application to the Judicial Chair (or Vice Chair) no later than 5:00 p.m. on the seventh (7) day after the panel is announced.
2. If the date for submitting the endorsement application, as described in section C(1) above, encompasses a regularly scheduled board meeting, candidates should submit their applications for endorsement prior to the regularly scheduled board meeting in order to allow the board to consider and vote on the endorsement request. Currently board meetings are held on the **3rd Thursday of each month**.
3. If time is of the essence with respect to the endorsement request, the board may – but is not required to – convene a special meeting to consider and vote on an applicant's endorsement request.

### **D. Positions Allowed to Be Endorsed**

1. AWL will consider endorsement applications for the following positions:
  - a. **State Judicial Positions:** Non-Elected Judicial Positions for Jurisdictions following non-partisan court plan. AWL may endorse only one candidate selected to the panel by the Judicial Nominating Commission for

consideration by the elected official(s) vested with the authority to make the judicial appointment for each open judicial position.

- b. **Federal and Local Judicial Positions:** AWL may endorse candidates selected for federal judicial appointments or members of the panel selected by a judicial nominating commission for municipal judgeships.
  - c. **Commissions, Bar Association Positions, and other Leadership Positions:** If appropriate and otherwise consistent with AWL's by-laws and mission, AWL may endorse applicants for judicial nominating commissions, bar association positions, or other leadership positions.
2. No endorsements are allowed for jurisdictions requiring judicial election. Further, pursuant to its Bylaws, AWL may not endorse and/or financially support candidates for elected public office, nor advance any partisan political cause or position.

#### **E. Letters of Support**

Although AWL does not provide endorsements for applicants to judicial nominating commissions, *i.e.*, at the pre-panel selection stage, AWL is fully supportive of its membership at the pre-panel selection level. To that end, AWL will provide the following support to any AWL member upon written request by the member to the Judicial Chair or Vice Chair:

1. AWL will provide information about a member's application to the full AWL membership and encourage members to write letters in support of other AWL members' applications to judicial nominating commission members.
2. AWL will provide one letter to the judicial nominating commission reiterating the goals and mission of our organization and identifying for commission members any applicants for the judicial position who are members of AWL.

#### **F. Confidentiality**

The fact that an individual has sought AWL's endorsement or support is not considered confidential. However, the information contained within applications for endorsement shall be treated as confidential and may only be disclosed to other members of the AWL Board. All inquiries concerning the AWL Board's proceedings shall be referred to the Chair of the Judicial Committee.

#### **G. Conflict of Interest**

No member of the AWL Board who has a potential or actual conflict shall participate and/or vote in the endorsement process.

#### **H. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

AWL does not discriminate based upon race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, and childbirth or related medical conditions.