

MSBA Questionnaire for Judicial Candidates in Contested Races:

1. What is your full name? **Lucinda Ellen Jesson**
2. Does your campaign have a website or facebook page? **Yes. Judgelucindajesson.com**

A Facebook page is in the works.

3. List the colleges and law schools you have attended, including your dates of attendance and degrees awarded.

Undergraduate: University of Arkansas 1976-1979 B.A.

Law School University of Pennsylvania 1980-83 J.D.

University of Minnesota as a visiting student in 1983

4. List where you have been employed since graduation from law school, including dates employed, your position and nature of your employment responsibilities.

Associate Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly Mpls. 1983-1990

Partner Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly Mpls. 1990-1993

Business litigation practice including healthcare, employment, medical device product liability, trade secret, condemnation and banking cases. Tried numerous cases for both plaintiffs and defendants.

Asst. A.G. Minnesota Attorney General's Office St. Paul 1993-95

Deputy A.G. Minnesota Attorney General's Office St. Paul 1995-98

Litigated high profile cases in employment, health care and human services areas. Supervised the Health, Licensing, Human Rights, Public Utilities and Investigations Divisions.

Chief Deputy Hennepin County Attorney's Office Mpls. 1999-2000

Managed daily operations of public law office and advised Hennepin County Board and County Attorney with regard to all civil litigation. Also personally litigated cases in the child protection, civil litigation and public health areas.

Shareholder Jesson & Pust PA St. Paul 2001-2006

Healthcare and employment practice with emphasis on dispute resolution. (Operated as a sole proprietorship for first years.) Retained as a neutral fact finder in significant corporate misconduct and discrimination disputes by many corporations and government institutions in Minnesota.

Assoc. Prof.	Hamline University School of Law	St. Paul	2006-2010
	Founding director of nationally ranked health law institute and faculty member.		
Of Counsel	Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly LLP	Mpls.	2009-2010
	Client advice on health care matters		
Commissioner	Minnesota Department of Human Services	St. Paul	2011-2015
	Oversaw safety-net services at the state's largest agency providing services to well over one million low income Minnesotans every year. Also served as Co-Chair of the Child Protection Task Force, the Health Reform Financing Task Force, the Children's Justice Initiative, and the Interagency Council on Homelessness.		
Judge	Minnesota Court of Appeals	St. Paul	2016-present
	Served as a judge in approximately 500 decisions and authored over 150 opinions, including criminal cases of every nature; family law, constitutional challenges, administrative law, child protection, civil commitment, and all nature of civil cases.		

I note that in addition to my teaching at Hamline, I also taught as an adjunct professor at both William Mitchell College of Law (1995-98, 2001-2006) and the University of St Thomas Business School (2001-2006).

5. Have you ever been convicted of a crime or publicly disciplined by the lawyer or judicial standards board?

No.

6. What is/was the general nature of your practice? Indicate any areas of practice in which you concentrated.

A judge considers issues from many perspectives. I represented many of those perspectives in practice. I represented plaintiffs and defendants; governments and regulated entities; and individuals and corporations large and small. My experience spans both the private and public practice of law. A significant part of my career was spent addressing constitutional issues from reproductive rights to civil rights. Complex litigation, employment and business litigation are areas I know well. And while much of my personal trial experience is found in my first 15 years of practice, the second half of my career grounded me in parts of our judicial system less known to many lawyers: the child protection system, our mental and chemical health challenges and the child support infrastructure which is critical to the infrastructure of many families. Finally, as a judge on the Court of Appeals, I see the full panoply of cases, both civil and criminal.

7. What percentage of your practice is/was litigation?

Across the course of my practice, not including the five years I spent as Commissioner of Human Services, I estimate that 70% of my practice was litigation. I also counseled clients in employment and health care matters, and conducted numerous mediations, arbitrations and independent investigations.

8. Why do you want to be an appellate judge?

Without a solid judicial system, there is not a functioning society. And that judicial system cannot function without a foundation of public trust, which we must continually replenish in an increasingly polarized society. To do so we must have judges – especially at the highest levels – that command respect throughout our state. We must have judges who remain truly independent from the politics of the day without retreating from the society we serve. Judges who think about justice when examining every case.

As a society, we have made much progress during my life. But variations of the glaring injustices that led me to the law remain today. We see them on our streets and in our neighborhoods. The justice system alone cannot fix them all. But without a strong justice system we will advance no further.

I want to continue to be part of that strong justice system.

9. What qualities do you believe are most important in an appellate judge? Explain how you have demonstrated that you possess those qualities.

An appellate judge must have breadth of experience, an even-handed approach to decision-making, and an appreciation for the circumstances of the people we serve.

Almost every week on the Court of Appeals, a judge decides six cases, authoring two of those opinions. We see about everything: criminal, civil, family, and constitutional challenges. There is no better place to come to understand the full spectrum of legal dilemmas facing our state. The breadth of experience on the court complements my previous legal work, which spans both the private and public practice of law, from complex litigation to child protection and family law.

But decision-making goes beyond knowing the “right decision.” It requires an open mind and treating people fairly. I have community stature earned by an even-handed approach to decision-making, as a judge, a commissioner, and a sought-after third party neutral. But even the best decision lacks meaning if it is not explained in a way the parties, regular Minnesotans, can understand. My opinions are written with this goal—clear, understandable explanations—in mind.

Finally, a judge must not live in an ivory tower. How would one recognize justice without understanding the circumstances of the people we serve? Given my long-standing pro bono work, my government and extensive community service, I bring to the court a humbling appreciation for and experience with the broad spectrum of people seen in our judicial system.

10. Why do you believe you are the best candidate for the appellate judge seat?

Breadth of experience:

My appellate opinions, legal practice and teaching span the legal horizon. Criminal and civil work. Plaintiffs and Defendants. Complex litigation to child protection. My experience includes not only the legal practice, but also hard-won knowledge of each branch of government. And understanding the workings of these branches is critical on a court which must interpret statutes and review executive actions in light of constitutional and statutory limits.

Connected:

My longstanding public service and community work provides the gift of coming to know people from all walks of life, throughout our state. Since joining the Court of Appeals my efforts to engage with the community – particularly underserved communities – continue. I serve on the boards of Lutheran Social Services, which serves Minnesotans in all 87 counties; Southern Prairie Center for Community Health Improvement, which focuses on rural health challenges; Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul, an anti-poverty organization; and Close Gaps by 5, which advocates for high quality early childhood education across Minnesota. And I tutor every school week through Reading Partners.

My connections with the MSBA have always been strong. I serve as a member and past Chair of the Rules of Professional Conduct Committee, as well as past Chair of the Health Law Section.

Respected:

My history as a decisionmaker attests to my reputation for fairness and integrity. The bipartisan respect for my candidacy is reflected by the Honorary Co-Chairs of my campaign: The Honorable Kathleen Blatz, the Honorable Alan Page and the Honorable Edward Toussaint.