

**Tenth District Bar Association Questionnaire
for Judicial Candidates in Local Contested
Races**

1. *What is your full name?* Helen Brosnahan
2. *Does your campaign have a website or Facebook page? If so, please list it.*

www.judgehelenbrosnahan.org
Citizens for Judge Brosnahan (Facebook)
3. *List the colleges and law schools you have attended, including your dates of attendance and degrees awarded.*

Smith College: 1988-1992; Degree: Bachelor of Arts (1992)
University of Minnesota Law School 1993-1996; Degree: Juris Doctor (1996)

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

District Court Judge, Stillwater, Washington County (February 2022-present): preside over criminal, civil, family, juvenile delinquency, child protection, probate, proceedings including jury and court trials, evidentiary hearing, sentencing, and post-trial motions. Draft orders and memoranda of decision. Preside at Veteran's Court.

I am a member of the Washington County Law Library Board and Litigant Services Committee. I also look for opportunities to improve access to justice for litigants. I helped re-establish the Limited Scope Volunteer Attorney program which connects volunteer attorneys with low-income litigants who otherwise don't qualify or have access to private family law representation.

DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY, Hastings, MN (2000 – February 2022)

Assistant Dakota County Attorney-Civil Division: (September 2013 - February 2022): Advised the Dakota County Board of Commissioners and county leaders on a wide range of issues including contract, employment law, environmental law, open records, open meetings, data privacy, and risk management. Provided advice and legal counsel on drafting, reviewing and revision of county policies and ordinances. Negotiated and drafted contracts. Negotiated and drafted joint powers agreements with other government entities. Represented the county in state and federal trial and appellate courts. Researched and prepared appellate briefs and argued before the Minnesota Court of Appeals and Minnesota Supreme Court. Served as legal counsel to the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Vermillion River Joint Powers Organization, and the Dakota Communications Center (911 Dispatch Center). Conducted training for law enforcement on asset forfeitures and obtaining administrative subpoenas.

Assistant County Attorney-Criminal Division: (2000 - September 2013): Prosecuted felony level offenses. Reviewed law enforcement investigations, prepared and filed criminal complaints, presented cases before the grand jury. Represented the state in court hearings, trial, sentencing proceedings, appeals and post-conviction proceedings. Conducted plea negotiations, advised law

enforcement officers and provided assistance and support to crime victims. Researched and prepared appellate briefs and argued before the Minnesota Court of Appeals and Minnesota Supreme Court. Reviewed and authorized all requests for administrative subpoenas. Conducted training for law enforcement on constitutional requirements for arrest, search and seizure.

LEVANDER, GILLEN & MILLER, P.A., South St. Paul, MN (1999 – 2000)

Associate Attorney: Represented municipal clients in a variety of legal matters including development contracts, employment law issues, quiet title actions, drafting ordinances and joint powers agreements. Advised municipal and corporate clients on employment, FMLA, ADA and data privacy issues. Prosecuted misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor adult offenders for five municipalities in Dakota County.

OLMSTED COUNTY ATTORNEY, Rochester, MN (1997 – 1999)

Assistant County Attorney: Represented the state in adult criminal matters. Reviewed investigative reports of law enforcement officers, prepared and filed criminal complaints, represented state in court hearings and trial, sentencing proceedings, appellate and post-conviction proceedings. Conducted plea negotiations, provided advice to law enforcement officers and provided assistance and support to crime victims. Authored Olmsted County's Domestic Abuse Prosecution Plan and Criminal Vehicular Operation Investigation Policy.

HON. ROBERT F. CAROLAN, FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, Hastings, MN (1996 – 1997)

Law Clerk: Assisted Judge Carolan with drafting opinions, trial management, drafting jury instructions, and other legal research and writing.

5. *Have you ever been convicted of a crime or publicly disciplined by a lawyer or judicial standards board? If so, feel free to provide an explanation.* No.

6. *What is/was the general nature of your practice? Indicate any areas of practice in which you concentrate or concentrated. (Response limited to 150 words.)*

As a judge, I preside over every case type and every type of hearing including court and jury trials. As an Assistant Dakota County Attorney I worked for 15 years in the criminal division where I managed and prosecuted cases from minor traffic violations to the most serious and complex sex offenses, computer facilitated exploitation of minors, child pornography, financial exploitation of vulnerable adults, complex embezzlements, and homicide. For ten years I represented Dakota County in state and federal trial and appellate courts, negotiated multi-million dollar contracts, drafted inter-governmental agreements, and handled a wide variety of contentious issues in areas such as employment, environmental, and contract law.

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

District Court Judge: 100% Litigation

Assistant Dakota County Attorney Criminal Division: 95% Litigation

Assistant Dakota County Attorney Civil Division: 50% Litigation

LeVander Gillen & Miller: 80% litigation

8. *Why do you want to be a district court judge? (Response limited to 150 words.)*

I am honored to currently serve as a District Court Judge in the Tenth Judicial District. I seek to retain my seat to continue that service by reaching fair, just, and non-partisan decisions in every case that comes before me. I enjoy the challenge of being presented with unique and complicated issues and cases. I work very hard every day to uphold the tradition of excellence of Minnesota's court system to ensure people continue to trust and have confidence in our judicial system.

9. *What qualities do you believe are most important in a district court judge? Explain how you have demonstrated that you possess those qualities. (Response limited to 250 words.)*

Patience: With few exceptions, district court judges see people who are experiencing tremendous stress. I listen carefully and respectfully to everyone who appears in my courtroom. I ensure individuals, particularly those who are self-represented, understand what just happened, what the next step is, and what is required of them.

Fair and Impartial: Judges must be fair and impartial. I focus on the legal issue and the facts. I apply the law without regard to my personal views on either the law or the facts and support my decisions with well-researched, legally sound opinions. I provide a fair opportunity for all involved. I understand my role is to apply the law, not make the law.

Preparation: Preparation is imperative to be successful as a district court judge. I spend countless hours preparing for each case. I read the written submissions to know what issues will be presented at each hearing. I thoroughly review the record and research relevant issues to make accurate findings of fact and conclusions of law to ensure fair and accurate rulings.

10. *Why do you believe you are the best candidate for this district court judge seat? (Response limited to 250 words)*

I am the best candidate because I am experienced, fair, and respected. I understand the role of a district court judge is to apply the laws - not make them. I faithfully apply the laws as enacted by the legislature and interpreted by the Supreme Court. I understand I am no longer an advocate. I listen carefully to the parties, and apply existing law to the facts in each case. When parties leave my courtroom, they know they have been heard and were treated fairly.

I am a dedicated public servant with a depth and breadth of experience in both civil and criminal law that prepared me well to be a judge. I understand the decisions I make every day have real consequences for the individuals and businesses behind each case caption. I understand the district court is often the first and last stop for many individuals encountering the justice system. Their experiences in court have a lasting impact on their faith and belief in the law. District court judges also serve on the front lines of justice and have a profound impact on not only the lives of individuals who appear before them, but also on the community's collective confidence in our legal system. My current experience as a district court judge, and twenty-five years of experience as a prosecutor, civil practitioner, and litigator, have given me the confidence, knowledge, and experience necessary to serve the people of the 10th Judicial District well.