



**Judicial Candidate Information Form  
for the Judicial Poll on the  
November 3, 2020 Election**

**Instructions:** Please only respond using 10 pt. Arial font in the spaces provided. Any items left blank will be noted that the candidate chose not to respond.

1. Name	Bernadette D'Souza
2. Date of Birth	Month: <u>06</u> Year: <u>1954</u>
3. Place of Birth	City: <u>Goa, India</u> State: <u>    </u>
4. Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Widowed
5. Undergraduate Education  Include name of school, degree(s) and graduation year(s)	University of Bombay, India - Bachelor of Arts (Honors) 1976
6. Legal Education  Include name of law school, degree(s) and graduation year(s)	Tulane University Law School - J.D. 1992
7. Date of Admission to Louisiana Bar	Month: <u>October</u> Year: <u>1993</u>
8. Professional Experience Including Nature of Practice and Extent of Civil and/or Criminal Trial Experience	I worked as a public interest lawyer at NOLAC (now Southeast Louisiana Legal Services) for approximately 18 years. The nature of my practice was primarily in family law. I litigated several hundred family law and domestic violence cases. As an Adjunct Professor at Tulane Law School I taught a course on Family Law and Domestic Violence. I have presented numerous CLEs on family law and domestic violence issues for NOBA and LSBA. As a Judge, I participated in the planning of the Judicial College and LSBA CLE family law track for judges and attorneys. I serve on the Faculty of the Judicial Institute of National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. During this pandemic I was a panelist on the ABA webinars for family law and domestic violence presentations.



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<p>9. Bar Associations, Court Admissions, Professional Organizations and Legal Fraternities</p>	<p>Member - Louisiana State, New Orleans and American Bar Associations. National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Association National Association of Women Judges – President 2019-2020 Supreme Court Appointments to the Committee on Bar Admissions and Self-Represented Litigants Task Force; Association for Women Attorneys; Fellow of the Louisiana Bar Foundation - former chair of the Judicial Liaison and Development Committees; A.P. Tureaud Inn of Court; Martinet Legal Society – CLE Committee; St. Thomas More Catholic Lawyers Association – President-Elect</p>
<p>10. In the past ten years, have you ever filed for or declared bankruptcy?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain.</p>
<p>11. In the past ten years, have you ever been arrested, charged, or convicted of a criminal violation other than a minor traffic violation? Include matters that have been dismissed, expunged, subject to diversion or deferred prosecution or otherwise set aside.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain.</p>
<p>12. Have you ever been publicly sanctioned by the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board or the disciplinary body of any court, administrative body, or other entity before which you function as an attorney or judge?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain.</p>



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Instructions: For sections 13 through 19, please provide us with your perspective on why you are well-suited to uphold the following well-accepted principles essential to any strong and vibrant judicial system. Comment only in the space provided. If you do not comment, it will be noted that the candidate chose not to respond.

<p>13. Judges should uphold the rule of law.</p>	<p>As a judge, I am duty-bound to uphold the rule of law, and as a human being, I am also duty-bound to aim for equal justice under the law. I therefore make every effort to apply the law consistently to each case based on the facts, circumstances and evidence presented. A strong commitment to the rule of law and equal access to justice have always been important issues in my life.</p>
<p>14. Judges should be independent and impartial.</p>	<p>I firmly believe that judges must be independent and impartial. It is inappropriate for any judge to allow personal considerations or sentiments to influence decisions. As President of the National Association of Women Judges, I am dedicated to preserving judicial independence through the Fair Judges Project. This initiative strives to increase citizen knowledge regarding our judicial system, promote an independent judiciary, and ensure fair and impartial courts.</p>
<p>15. Judges should possess the appropriate judicial temperament and character.</p>	<p>To maintain order and decorum in highly contested emotional litigation, it is crucial for me as a judge to exhibit a calm and authoritative demeanor. Prior to coming to the bench, as a lawyer practicing exclusive family law for 18 years, I learned to recognize how important it is for judges to maintain excellent courtroom decorum. Throughout my years of sitting on the bench, I have consistently sought to maintain the requisite temperament that is essential for a family court judge.</p>
<p>16. The judicial system should be racially diverse and reflective of the society it serves.</p>	<p>As an immigrant female who has lived in New Orleans for over 42 years and worked at a legal aid office for 18 of those years representing the indigent population of our city, I embody the reality of diversity on the bench. Diversity is a particularly important attribute for a family court judge, as family law matters impact people of all races and socioeconomic levels within our community.</p>



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<p>17. Judges and the judiciary should have the confidence of the public.</p>	<p>Thanks to my former role as a public interest lawyer and my current service as a member of the judiciary, the citizens of Orleans Parish can trust that my commitment to serving the public is not motivated by financial opportunism or political ambition. My long history of community service demonstrates my dedication to the families and individuals of our community. In my role as President of the National Association of Women Judges, I had the opportunity to participate at the Conference of Chief Justices Meeting and was invited to present at the Committee on Public Engagement, Trust and Confidence.</p>
<p>18. Judges should possess the appropriate capabilities and credentials.</p>	<p>Prior to taking the bench, I worked exclusively in the areas of family law and domestic violence for over 18 years, many of which I served as the Managing Attorney for the Family Law Unit at New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation (now SLLS). This dedicated experience helped me develop the expertise necessary to serve as a family court judge. In addition, over the course of my time on the bench as the first dedicated family court judge in Orleans Parish, I have adjudicated several thousand family law matters for the citizens of this community. Domestic Sections of the Civil District Court have the largest number of filings. My expertise and thorough management of these cases are an integral part to their fair and effective resolution.</p>
<p>19. Please comment on how you plan to manage your docket from an efficiency standpoint.</p>	<p>Each section of Family Court has a huge docket of hundreds of cases each year. The majority of them are time sensitive, and many involve complex contentious issues. My docket management style strives to balance efficiency with the need to give due consideration to each case. I must allow both pro se and represented litigants ample time to present their cases, and I must be thorough and careful to consider all angles and all possible solutions for the sake of the litigants and any children. I have also learned from other experienced family law judges at the State Judicial College and through my involvement at the national level to implement best practices in docket management.</p>