

TESTIMONY TO THE KANSAS HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, March 13, 2025

LINDA WEIS OLSON, 2121 MEADOWLARK ROAD, MANHATTAN, KANSAS 66502

LINDA@LINDAWEIS.COM

785.313.0567

I come before you as a long-time prior member of the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission, appointed in 2014 and reappointed 2018, the longest serving member on the Commission at that time. I am the broker-owner of Realty Executives Weis Real Estate Company, Manhattan, KS, having been the active listing/ selling/ managing owner of that company since January 1992, supervising agents and contracts for more than 35 years. It was my honor to serve on the Supreme Court Nominating Commission for 8 years, and it is a privilege to testify to you today.

May I respectfully preface my testimony by stating my prior experience in serving the State of Kansas. I was appointed to the Kansas Governor's Military Council on September 18, 2008, by Governor Kathleen Sebelius, reappointed by Governor Marc Parkinson, and reappointed to that Council by Governor Sam Brownback, serving for 6 years until May 2014.

In February 2011, I was appointed to the Kansas Arts Foundation, Inc, by Governor Sam Brownback and elected President by that body. On June 7, 2011, Governor Brownback appointed me as State Agency Chairman for the Kansas Arts Commission. My responsibility was to not only serve as State Chairwoman but also to relocate all the State assets for that state arts agency from government to private quarters. On July 7, 2012, I was also later appointed to the Kansas Creative Arts Commission.

On May 7, 2014, I was appointed by Governor Sam Brownback to the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission, which required my resignation from the Governor's Military Council, a cause close to my heart. My passion for seeing that justice is done, and my ability to help in that capacity, superseded my personal interest in serving on the Governor's Military Council, where I had worked diligently to retain federal funding of all Kansas military bases, most especially Fort Riley, 9 miles from my business. On June 8, 2018, I was reappointed to the Supreme Court Nominating Commission by Governor Jeff Colyer.

During my 8-year term on the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission I vigorously endeavored to educate the public through local newspaper of the extensive application required, the rigorous investigative requirements, the public interview process, and voting conducted in a public hearing on written ballots, made available to the public after the hearing. (See attachments)

During my 8 years on the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, I never once, at any time, witnessed a violation of the integrity required of the members of this Commission. We were consistently passionate about our serious responsibility to the citizens of this State. I was with them in meetings, at breakfast, lunch, dinner, in countless informal situations, but never EVER in my presence has any member violated the duties and confidentiality required of us. We exerted our best efforts to choose the most highly qualified persons, regardless of political affiliation, to accept nomination for judicial office. As a group, and as individuals, we strove to send the three most highly qualified individuals to the Governor, without consideration of political affiliation, race,

religion, sex, or disability that would affect performance of the essential job duties of a potential nominee. We were committed to the realization that the character and competence of the Kansas judiciary depended upon the effective performance of the duties and responsibilities of us as the Supreme Court Nominating Commission.

Page 2, TESTIMONY: LINDA WEIS OLSON to HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, LEGISLATURE, March 13, 2025

The Commission consists of 4 lawyer members, one from each congressional district, elected by other lawyers. Four members of the Commission, one from each congressional district, are appointed by the Governor. The ninth member and chair, also a lawyer, is chosen by qualified lawyers in a statewide election. All members, appointed and elected, are treated with the greatest respect and dignity. I never at any time felt that my opinion was not counted with the same weight as that of other members, most especially elected lawyer members. It is not true that the opinions and vote of elected lawyers have more weight than that of appointed members. I often expressed a dissenting opinion and was always treated with the greatest respect. Being from “the old school”, I was sometimes known to express concern about an applicant who might have been more acceptable to other members of the Commission. I always felt free in “standing my ground” regarding my negative opinion of an applicant, even when I sensed that applicant was favored by others. Everyone’s vote counted equally, and everyone’s voice counted equally. There was no room for intimidation in this Commission!!

From reading my prior experience you may notice that I have been appointed by Governors of both parties. I can honestly report that political affiliation is never discussed among the Commission, and I have never known the political affiliation of any of the justices chosen except for Justice Caleb Stegall, whom it was my honor to thoroughly investigate, interview publicly, and present for consideration. My first question to him in public interview was to address his “youth” as the youngest to be considered for appointment to the Supreme Court. My second question was, of course, to address his relationship to the Governor, for whom he had served as legal counsel. You may be aware that Justice Stegall responded with brilliance to both questions and was approved without hesitation by the Supreme Court Nominating Commission on the first vote.

The commission’s job is to vet candidates extremely thoroughly. We are required to review ALL applications and attachments, as well as reference letters. Though we are required to contact a minimum of 3 people listed on the application assigned to us, I contacted a minimum of six, in order to see all sides of this applicant. I particularly felt an obligation to contact those attorneys whom the applicant opposed or judges who ruled against them. The list would also include area attorneys, chief judges, clerks of the district court, community members of the applicant’s involvement. The investigative process goes far beyond the Commission’s personal inquiries. The Clerk of the Supreme Court provides personal, confidential information on the following investigations, then all this information is then shared with members of the Commission.

- 1) Judicial Conduct Commission (an applicant’s ethical indiscretion can disqualify him/her)
- 2) Continuing Education Commission
- 3) Kansas Attorney Disciplinary Administrator’s Office
- 4) Criminal background check ordered from the KS Bureau of Investigation
- 5) Credit check by a national credit reporting agency—(this can reveal surprises)
- 6) Appellate practice report from Clerk’s office
- 7) Report of any judge who has sat with the Supreme Court or Court of Appeals

8) Social Media check by validitiescreening.com— independent background screening organization

Page 3, TESTIMONY: LINDA WEIS OLSON to HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, LEGISLATURE, March 13, 2025

The lengthy, comprehensive application is attached for your review. *Please be apprised that I have reviewed hundreds of these as well as their cases in my role on the Supreme Court Nominating Commission. When appointed in 2014, a bank box containing all the applications, support information, and **their legal cases** were shipped to my home. I almost fainted when the first huge box arrived---other boxes arrived as the process continued. **I was horrified in reading the cases---murders, incest, theft—horrors of the worst kind. I was struck with the EXTREME responsibility bestowed on me in representing the citizens of the State of Kansas in selecting for nomination justices for the administration of justice who are exceptionally qualified beyond a shadow of doubt.** Since 2018, the Commission has received the information via confidential, secure email, but the workload is the same!*

When friends vote at the polls for judges, they often seek my opinion as to whom I recommend because they have little information on which to base their selection. Of course, I do not comply with their request, but as I consider this important situation, I wonder how the general public would be privy to the kinds of personal, confidential, professional qualifications that has taken thousands of hours to evaluate. ***This is not a popularity contest; this is life and death business!***

Thank you for your kind attention. I am available by phone for questions.

LINDA WEIS OLSON
KANSAS SUPREME COURT NOMINATING COMMISSION 2014-2022

THE MERCURY

MANHATTAN, KANSAS

Letters to the Editor:

Friday, November 8, 2019

Weis: Nominating commission followed open meeting laws, did not commit violations

To the editor: I want to assure all Mercury readers that there is no validity to the charge that the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission violated open meetings law during the recent selection process. On Oct. 16, The Manhattan Mercury printed a front-page article about my participation on the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission. In that article it was clearly stated that there is one non-lawyer representative from each district on the Commission, and that I represent District 1 as a non-lawyer. There are four lawyers on the commission, one elected from each Kansas congressional district, and the chairman is a lawyer elected by a statewide vote of qualified lawyers. I have served on the Commission since 2014, along with one other non-lawyer Commissioner, both having been re-appointed in 2018. One of the main purposes of the Mercury's Oct 16 article was to publicly announce that the process of selecting Kansas Supreme Court nominees is a process open to the public. The public was, and is, invited to send comments, attend meetings of the Commission, attend public inter-views of all applicants, and attend the voting session, which many did. I can assure you that the Commission followed the Open-Records/Open-Meetings process to a "T". All commissioners spent six weeks consumed with the investigation of the 19 applicants, and I want to assure you that we were well-pre-pared and highly qualified to evaluate the merits of the applicants. Though I was not the chairman, I can assure you that my experience from having served in 2014 provided me the experience and qualification to call to the attention of the Commission any situation that warranted consideration. I have received notice this morning that Sedgwick County District Attorney Marc Bennett has determined that there is no violation of the Kansas Open Meetings Act, and there is no longer an is-sue; however, I want all Manhattan Mercury readers to be reassured that my prior state leadership experience with open meetings/open records requirements pre-pared me well to challenge any deviation from the law that might have occurred or been suggested. Had there been any hint of by-passing our obligation to public process, I would have challenged Commission leadership to halt the proceedings. All members of my real estate firm are intimately familiar with my passion for full disclosure, honesty, and integrity. When my assistant Alex Thompson asked this morning what the Commission did to "get in trouble", I knew it was time to make a public statement. We did not do anything to get in trouble, but thank you, Alex, and the Manhattan Mercury reading public, for your interest in this extremely important selection process. Linda Browning Weis 215 Pine Drive

SUPREME COURT NOMINATING COMMISSION

**Application for the position of
Justice of the Kansas Supreme Court**

The original and one copy of this form and its attachments should be submitted by **NOON, September 2, 2020**, to:

Douglas T. Shima
Clerk of the Kansas Supreme Court
Kansas Judicial Center
301 SW 10th Avenue, 1st Floor
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1507

Letters in support of the applicant are encouraged. They should be addressed to the Commission Chair Mikel L. Stout and mailed to the attention of Douglas T. Shima at the above address. Such letters may accompany the application form or may be submitted separately.

Under Supreme Court Rule 1101 all records of a judicial nominating commission are confidential and not subject to disclosure to anyone not a member of the commission or assisting the commission. Under K.S.A. 20-123, the Commission is deemed a public body and subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act of K.S.A. 75-4317 *et seq.*

Please answer the following questions on 8½ x 11 paper. State the question, then give the answer. The last page (Page 10) of this application concerns information about the judicial applicants that will be disclosed by the Commission. See Supreme Court Rule 1101. Please do not bind or hole-punch your application.

Full name: _____

Residence address: _____ Phone No.: _____
Street/P.O. Box City State Zip

Office address: _____ Phone No.: _____
Street/P.O. Box City State Zip

Place of birth: _____ E-mail address: _____

Kansas Bar Admission #: _____ Law School GPA: _____ Law School Class Rank: _____

1. Are you between the ages of 30 and 75?
2. Are you a citizen of the United States? Are you a resident of Kansas?
3. List each college/university and law school you have attended, degrees and dates earned, scholastic honors, and major academic activities.
4. List all state bars, courts, and administrative bodies having special admission requirements to which you are presently admitted to practice, specifying the dates of admission, whether you are currently a member in good standing, and whether there have ever been any restrictions on your practice.
5. Describe chronologically your employment since becoming a member of any state bar. As to legal employment, include names and addresses of all law offices, firms, companies, or government agencies with which you have ever practiced, the nature of your affiliation with each, the general nature of your practice, and any other relevant particulars. Provide the name, current address, and phone number of a person, preferably your supervisor, who can verify your employment for each position listed. List the months and years of legal employment to verify that you meet the statutory requirement under K.S.A. 20-105, which requires a potential nominee to have been engaged in the "active and continuous practice of law" for at least ten years prior to the date of appointment.
6. List all published articles on legal subjects as well as continuing legal education courses which you have presented. Please provide citations to all publications.
7. If in private legal practice, describe your typical client(s). If not in private legal practice, describe your employer or work arrangement, your position within the structure (are you supervised, how is work assigned, who receives your work product), and other information you feel would assist the Commission in understanding the nature of your current professional responsibilities.
8. What percentage of your court appearances in the last ten years was in:
 - ____% Federal district court
 - ____% Federal appellate court
 - ____% State general jurisdiction court
 - ____% State appellate court
 - ____% State limited/special court (Specify the court)
 - ____% Administrative bodies
 - ____% Municipal court

9.
 - (a) If your practice includes litigation, list and describe the five most significant cases which you personally litigated, including case caption, case number, and citation to reported decisions, if any. Identify your client and describe the nature of your participation in the case and the reason you believe it to be significant. Give the name of the court and judge, the date tried, and the names of other attorneys involved.
 - (b) If your practice does not include litigation, describe the five most significant legal matters in which you were involved. Describe the nature of your participation in the matter and the reason you believe these experiences are relevant for consideration by the Commission. Provide the name of the client and the names of other attorneys involved.
10. Describe any arbitration, mediation, or other alternative dispute resolution experience that you would like to bring to the attention of the Commission.
11. Have you ever held judicial office or been a candidate for judicial office? If so, provide copies or give citations to significant opinions while in judicial office or dates of candidacy.
12. Have you ever held any other public office or been a candidate for other public office? If so, state the office involved, dates of service or dates of candidacy. If you currently hold such public office, would you be willing to resign from this position?
13. Have you ever submitted your name for a vacancy on one of the Kansas Appellate Courts? If so, when?
14. State your approximate individual net worth and the nature of your substantial financial interests.
15. Are you a director or officer of any business or corporation? Do you hold an ownership interest of more than \$5,000 in value (stock, partnership or proprietorship equity, or otherwise) in any business or corporation? Is there any such connection you would not be willing to sever if the relationship resulted in your frequent disqualification?
16. Are you a member of any partnership or joint venture?

17. If required by the Canons of Judicial Conduct, would you be willing to resign or divest yourself of any business interests, offices, or positions you now hold if you are appointed Justice of the Kansas Supreme Court?
18. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a violation of any law, except traffic offenses? [Driving under the influence violations and reckless driving offenses should be included.] If “yes,” please include the title of the proceedings, the caption of the case, the court or tribunal in which the case was filed and the location of same, the date of the alleged violation or incident giving rise to the charge, a statement of the relevant facts, the identity of the principal parties involved, and the outcome of the proceedings, specifying any sentence, decision, and/or judgment entered.
19. (a) Have you, within the last ten years, failed to **file** any applicable local, state, or federal income tax return, schedule, or report required by law? If “yes,” provide the name and address of the taxing authority, the tax year(s) for which you failed to file the return, schedule, or report, and the date you finally filed the return, schedule, or report.
- (b) Have you, within the last ten years, failed to **pay** any taxes owed pursuant to state or federal law? If “yes,” provide the name and address of the taxing authority, the tax year(s) for which you failed to pay, and the date you finally paid the taxes. If you continue to owe past due taxes, list the current balance of the taxes by tax year and by taxing authority.
- (c) Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by local, state, or federal authorities? If “yes,” please include the title of the proceedings, the caption of the case, the court or tribunal in which the case was filed and the location of same, the date of the incident giving rise to the proceeding, a statement of the relevant facts, the identity of the principal parties involved, and the outcome of the proceedings, specifying decision and/or judgment entered.
20. Have you ever sued or been sued by a client? If “yes,” please give the particulars.

21. Have you ever been a real party defendant in interest in any legal proceedings? If “yes,” please give the particulars. Include all legal proceedings in which you were a party in interest, including divorce proceedings; a material witness; a named co-conspirator or co-respondent; and any grand jury investigation in which you were a subject, or in which you appeared as a witness. Do not list proceedings in which you were sued only in a representative capacity (*e.g.*, guardian ad litem).
22. Have you ever been the subject of an order or other discipline imposed by a professional disciplinary body, or found in contempt? Explain. To your knowledge, have any complaints (including fee disputes), charges, or grievances been brought against you (not disclosed in response to the previous two questions)? In each case state in detail the circumstances and the outcome. Please include all complaints, even if they were dismissed or not accepted for filing.
23. If you are a judge, has a complaint been filed against you with the Commission on Judicial Conduct, formerly known as the Commission on Judicial Qualifications, that resulted in a finding of a violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct? If “yes,” please state in detail the circumstances and the outcome.
24. Have you ever been accused of harassment, sexual or otherwise, in the workplace or elsewhere? Explain. In each case, state in detail the circumstances and the outcome.
25. Do you currently use illegal drugs? Illegal use of drugs means the use of one or more drugs, the possession or distribution of which is illegal under the laws of Kansas or of the United States. If so, please explain.
26. List all bar associations, professional associations, or professional societies of which you are or have been a member. Give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups and committees on which you served.
27. In fully identifiable fashion, list all civic, service, charitable, or other community organizations of which you have been a member, including the titles and dates of any offices which you have held and the activities in which you have been or are engaged in each such organization. Include a description of pro bono legal services you have performed.

28. The American Bar Association's Commentary to its Code of Judicial Conduct states that it is inappropriate for a judge to hold membership in any organization that invidiously discriminates on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin. Indicate whether any of the organizations listed in response to questions 26 and 27 currently or formerly discriminated on the basis of race, sex, religion or national origin either through formal membership requirements or the practical implementation of membership policies. If so, describe any action you have taken to change these policies and procedures.
29. If you have been in the military service, state the length of service, the branch and dates you served, your rank on discharge, and the type of discharge.
30. List the names, addresses, and phone numbers of five persons who are well acquainted with your legal ability.
31. If you are a practicing attorney, list the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three judges you have appeared before in the last five years and three lawyers who have been adverse to you in litigation or negotiations within the last five years.
32. If you are a judge, list the names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least five lawyers who have appeared before you within the last five years. Include relevant case names and numbers.
33. Please list any social media or internet accounts you use or have used and provide corresponding handles, usernames, or any other names or labels by which you would be identified.
34. Do you have a professional, business, consanguineous or personal relationship with any member of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission to whom you are submitting this nomination form? If so, provide dates and a description of this relationship.
35. State your perception of the primary duties, responsibilities, characteristics, and qualifications of being a Justice on the Kansas Supreme Court and describe the skills and personal qualities you possess that would enhance the court if you are appointed. **(300 words or less.)**

36. The Commission will receive information regarding your credit history. Provide any explanation you feel necessary.
37. If requested to do so, are you willing to participate in a personal interview process conducted publicly by members of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission?
38. If you should be one of three nominated for the Kansas Supreme Court, would you agree to serve if appointed by the Governor?
39. Attach to this application form a writing sample which reflects your own work product, preferably containing legal analysis and citation to authority.
40. Attach a copy of the completed Driver's License form and also an executed copy of the Authorization of Release, both which accompany this form.
41. State any other information which you believe should be disclosed in connection with the Commission's consideration of your potential nomination to the Kansas Supreme Court.

(Signature) _____

(Date) _____

SUBMIT BY **SEPTEMBER 2, 2020 AT NOON** TO:

Douglas T. Shima
Clerk of the Kansas Supreme Court
Kansas Judicial Center
301 SW 10th Avenue, 1st Floor
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1507

Completed applications with an original signature may be submitted by email to scnc@kscourts.org.

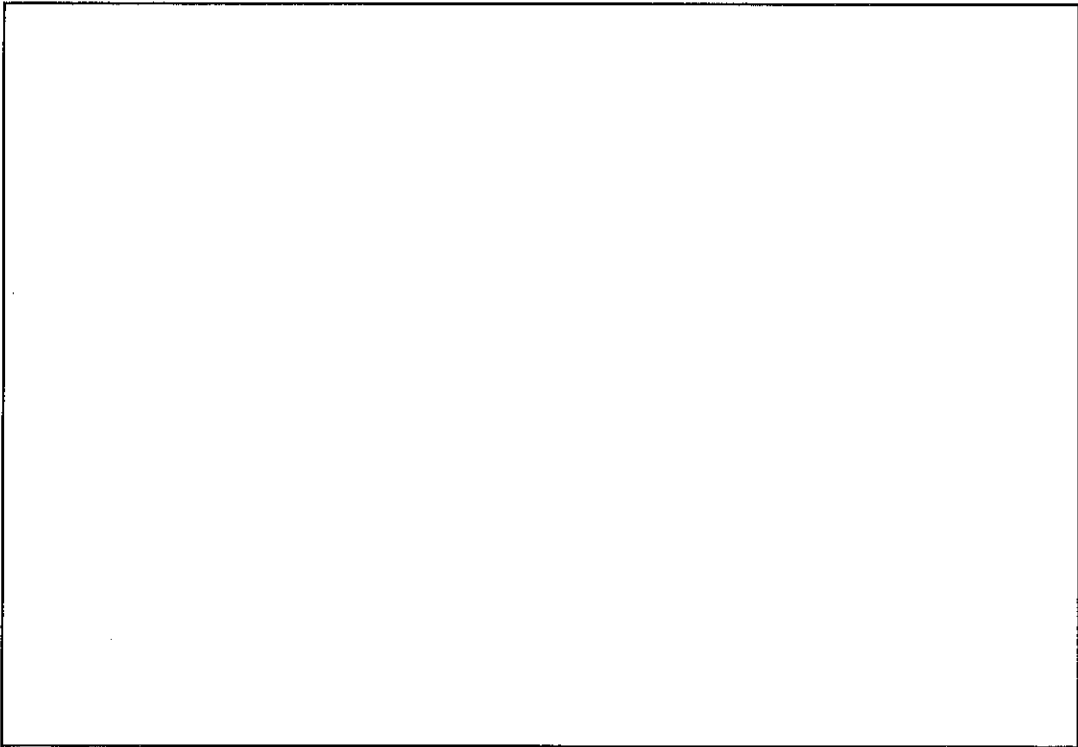
DRIVER'S LICENSE

In order to facilitate background investigations, the Commission requests that you complete the form below and attach a copy of your current driver's license in the space provided.

Driver's License Number: _____

Issuing State: _____

Expiration Date: _____



**AUTHORIZATION OF RELEASE
(Confidential – Return Original Only)**

Date

I hereby authorize and request any former and present employer, creditor, bank, savings and loan, credit union, finance company, mortgage company, credit card company, credit reporting agency, collection agency, school, college, university, agencies in the criminal justice system or any other person, company, or corporation to release any and all information and documentation relating to my employment, personnel records, evaluations, credit, financial condition, financial information, school activities, grades, degrees, character, integrity, social media activity, criminal history including expunged records and any other information whatsoever to any member of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission or any person acting on behalf of the Commission.

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Residence Address, including Street, City, Zip Code)

(Kansas Bar Admission Number)

(Social Security Number)

(Driver's License Number)

STATE OF KANSAS,

ss:

COUNTY OF _____,

Acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Notary Public

My Appointment Expires: _____

**SUPREME COURT NOMINATING COMMISSION
APPLICANT INFORMATION FOR PUBLICATION**

DATE: _____

FULL NAME: _____

CITY OR CITIES OF RESIDENCE FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS:

LIST EACH COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY AND LAW SCHOOL YOU HAVE ATTENDED, INCLUDING DEGREES AND DATES EARNED.

DESCRIBE CHRONOLOGICALLY YOUR EMPLOYMENT SINCE BECOMING A MEMBER OF ANY STATE BAR.

When a vacancy occurs in the supreme court, the Clerk of the Supreme Court shall promptly notify the chairman of the commission of such vacancy and the commission shall make nominations of three persons to fill such vacancy and certify the names of the nominees to the governor. K.S.A. 20-132.

- Nominees complete a thorough application consisting of 41 questions with multiple sub-questions. All applicants for the Kansas Supreme Court are accomplished attorneys or judges.

COMMISSION REQUESTS REPORTS FOR EACH APPLICANT CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING:

1. Judicial Conduct Commission
2. Continuing Education Commission
3. Kansas Attorney Disciplinary Administrator's Office
4. Criminal background check ordered from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation
5. Credit check by a national credit reporting agency.
6. Appellate practice report from Clerk's Office
7. Report of any judge who has sat with the Supreme Court or Court of Appeals
8. Social Media check by validityscreening.com – an independent background screening organization.

COMMISSION MEMBER'S INVESTIGATION INCLUDES:

1. Thoroughly review ALL applications and attachments
2. Review ALL reference letters received
3. Contact a minimum of 3 people listed in the application assigned to you
4. Contact a minimum of 3 additional people not listed in application assigned to you (ex. area attorneys, chief judges, clerks of the district court, members of applicant's community involvement)
5. Prepare Questions for each Applicant's Interview

INTERVIEWS

1. Commission has interviewed all candidates who have applied.
2. Commission conducts the interviews in a public hearing.
3. Commission is permitted to enter executive session to discuss the sensitive financial information contained within the personal financial records or official background checks of the candidates. K.S.A. 20-123
4. Candidates are questioned by the Commission in the public hearing.
5. All voting on the candidates is conducted in the public hearing.
6. Voting is conducted on written ballots that are made available to anyone in the public after the hearing.
7. The Commission decides on the voting procedure prior to each vacancy process.

PERSONAL QUALITIES TO BE CONSIDERED IN SELECTING JUDICIAL NOMINEES

1. Does the person have adequate legal ability?
2. Has the person obtained adequate legal experience?
3. Is the person courteous and considerate?
4. Would the person be deliberate and fair-minded in reaching decisions and conclusions?
5. Would the person be prompt in dispatching judicial business?
6. Is there any question about the person's honesty or integrity?
7. Are the person's personal habits compatible with judicial dignity and responsibility?
8. Would the person be involved in any activities or relationship which would tend to interfere with that person's usefulness as a judge?
9. Is the person generally intelligent and knowledgeable?
10. Is the person free from prejudice and bias?
11. Does the person possess the statutory qualifications for the office?
12. Has the person exhibited any tendency which would indicate that he or she might abuse the power and prestige of the judicial office?
13. Would the person respect the confidences inherent in such office?
14. Would the person conscientiously carry out judicial obligations to the state, its inhabitants, and the practitioners of law in court?
15. Is the person patient, attentive, temperate, and impartial?
16. Is the person generally organized in approach to problems?
17. Is the person capable of making up his or her mind?
18. Is the person unduly affected by criticism or adverse comments?
19. Would the person be influenced by partisan demands, public clamor, or considerations of personal popularity or notoriety?

20. Would the person become an advocate rather than an impartial judge?
21. Would the person unduly interfere in the presentation of cases by attorneys and witnesses?
22. Would the person be able to write clean and concise opinions?
23. Does the person possess the ability to express himself or herself clearly, both orally and in writing?

APPLICATION FROM MOST RECENT VACANCY IS ATTACHED

THE MERCURY

MANHATTAN, KANSAS



Weis helping to choose next Kansas Supreme Court justice

Megan Moser mmoser@themercury.com

Oct 16, 2019 Updated Oct 17, 2019

Linda Weis is a busy lady on any given day, but for the last six weeks or so, she's spent countless hours researching candidates applying to become the next justice of the Kansas Supreme Court.

Weis, of Manhattan, is the owner of Realty Executives. She's also one of nine people on the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, which recently went from years of dormancy to high gear with the retirements of Justice Lee Johnson and soon, Chief Justice Lawton Nuss.

"I just had to make time," she said in an interview at her office Tuesday. "It's the kind of thing you don't say no to."

On Thursday and Friday, the commission will interview the 19 candidates applying for Johnson's seat on the court. Those interviews will be in Topeka.

The commission consists of four lawyer members, one from each congressional district, who are elected by other lawyers. Four are nonlawyer members appointed by the governor. The ninth member and chair, also a lawyer, is chosen by qualified lawyers in a statewide election.

The commission's job is to vet candidates thoroughly and recommend three to the governor. It's a job they take seriously. Commissioners are assigned applicants to investigate, and they scour not only their applications but the candidates' court cases, continuing education, disciplinary records, social media and financial information. Candidates must be at least 30 years old, must be authorized to practice law and have practiced for at least 10 years.

The commissioners then prepare investigative reports on the candidates and present those to the rest of the commission. In this case, Weis and her partner, Garden City attorney Gerald Schultz, were assigned five candidates on whom to write investigative reports.

They're required to speak to at least two people, usually attorneys or judges, with whom the candidate has worked. Weis says she talks to at least six for each candidate.

"I'm very committed to the administration of justice and to making certain that things are fair and that they're done well," Weis said. "It's important that we pick people who are exceptionally qualified — not just qualified. They have to be exceptionally qualified."

All that means long hours of work on top of her usual duties. In addition to her real estate business, Weis said she and her husband, Jerry, have a foster son who's playing football this year at Manhattan High.

But she said she finds time to do what she needs to do and is lucky to have a team at her office that keeps things running smoothly.

Weis has sat on the commission since 2014. She was appointed to a four-year term and then appointed to a second four-year term in 2018.

The commission takes care not to consider political affiliations of the candidates, because the court is supposed to be nonpartisan.

"This is not a political thing," Weis said. "When these people come up there, I have no idea what political party they are, and I don't care. What I'm looking for is the brightest and the best, the person with the greatest integrity, the greatest legal minds, and a temperament that will work well with other Supreme Court judges — that's important. We can't have prima donnas who want their way on the Supreme Court all the time. It just won't work."

On Thursday and Friday, each candidate will have a 20- to 30-minute interview with the commission, and those interviews are open to the public.

Johnson officially left the court on Sept. 8. The commission must choose the three nominees by simple majority.

Their deadline is Nov. 7, and Gov. Laura Kelly must make her appointment 60 days after she receives the nominees.

Nuss will retire Dec. 17. The application deadline for his seat is Nov. 14, so the commission hasn't yet received applications for his position.

But Weis said it's likely many of the candidates who applied for Johnson's seat will apply for Nuss' as well.

And though Nuss is the chief justice, that distinction will go to the justice with seniority in terms of continuous service, which currently appears to be Justice Marla Luckert.