

Judicial Election Questionnaire

1) Your full name:

Jenefer Stenzel Grant

2) Office Address and Phone Number:

**Columbia County Courthouse
230 Strand Street, Room 311
St. Helens, Oregon 97051**

3) Web site (if applicable):

www.retainjudgegrant.com

4) List high school, college and law school attended, including dates of attendance, degrees awarded and your reasons for leaving each school if no degree from that institution was awarded.

**U.S. Grant High School, Portland, Oregon
1975-1979, diploma**

**University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
1979-1980 (chemistry major)
Relocated to Portland in summer, 1980, for employment**

**Portland State University, Portland, Oregon
1981-1988, Bachelor of Arts (business major, French & economics minors)**

**George Washington University National Law Center, Washington, D.C.
1989-1991, Juris Doctor w/honors (emphasis in int'l and environmental law)**

5) List employment since graduation from law school, including dates employed, your position and the nature of the practice or activity.

1992-1995: part-time legal work under contract for several Portland firms; also founded and operated La Catalana, a critically acclaimed Mediterranean Spanish restaurant in Portland, Oregon (which we eventually sold to one of our employees)

1996 (February through November): worked as associate attorney for the Law Office of Roberto Castro, in St. Helens, Oregon

1996-1998: part-time adjunct professor, teaching Business Environment, a required business ethics class at Portland State University's School of Business

1997-2007: solo law practice in St. Helens, Oregon (see below for details)

6a) List state and federal bars, courts and administrative bodies to which you are presently admitted and the date of admission.

Oregon State Bar, admitted September, 1992

6b) List any previous admissions, including dates, and the reason why you are no longer admitted.

N/A

7) List publications and/or articles you have authored.

(I served on the George Washington University Journal of International Law and Economics while I was in law school, but did not individually author any published articles.)

8) List community, teaching (Continuing Legal Education or otherwise) or civic activities.

(Prior to my appointment to the Bench:)

**Columbia County Commission on Children and Families
(1997-2007; Vice Chair, 2003-2007)**

**Columbia County Sheriff Supervisory Authority
(2001-2007)**

**Local Public Safety Coordinating Committee, Columbia County
(1999-present)**

Columbia County Bar – active member and de facto “social director,” organizing Columbia County Bar Luau and hosting annual Bar holiday party (1996–present)

Columbia County Legal Aid, Inc. – President of Board of Directors of not-for-profit organization providing legal advice and representation in civil matters (primarily domestic relations), to low-income residents of Columbia County (1996-2007)

Pro bono representation – provided direct advice and representation to low-income residents of Columbia County, in domestic relations matters, on unpaid, volunteer basis (1996-2007)

Columbia Humane Society – provided advice to CHS Board of Directors (1996-1998)

St. Helens Teen Court judge – presided over teen accountability court, handling low-level offenses such as minor in possession of alcohol or tobacco (2005-2006)

St. Helens Rotary – community service club, working with Columbia Pacific Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, and other local charitable organizations (2007-present)

Columbia County Domestic Violence Council (2007-present)

(Since being appointed to the Bench:)

Local Family Law Advisory Council (Chair) – current projects are development of a supervised parenting time resource in our community, for parents who cannot safely visit their children without supervision; increasing access to justice for self-represented litigants, particularly in family law cases; recruiting local custody study providers; and revising our Local Rule governing parenting time for non-custodial parents.

Courthouse Safety Committee (Chair)

9) Prior to your becoming a judge, what was the general character of your legal practice? Indicate the nature of your typical clients and mention any legal areas in which you concentrated.

I was a founding member of the Columbia County Consortium, an association of private attorneys contracting with the State of Oregon to provide representation to indigent litigants, including parents and children in dependency cases and youth in delinquency cases in Juvenile Court, and adults in criminal cases in District and Circuit Courts, and in mental commitment hearings in Circuit Court. I was also individually appointed to represent indigent adults in St. Helens and Rainier Municipal Courts. Additionally, during this period of time I did retained work representing numerous adults and some children, in domestic relations proceedings including contested child custody cases, and in criminal and Juvenile court. My clients were all individuals with individual problems, most of whom were Columbia County residents, and very few of whom were financially well-to-do.

10) List your judicial experience, including as a pro tem, and/or service on an administrative tribunal, or justice, municipal, tax, circuit, or appellate court.

I was appointed by Governor Kulongoski in May, 2007, and sworn into office as a Circuit Judge on June 25, 2007. Since then I have handled criminal matters from traffic violations through homicide, Juvenile Court dependency and delinquency cases, domestic relations hearings and trials, probate matters including a will validity trial, and other civil matters including a condemnation jury trial, FED proceedings, contested restraining and stalking order hearings, and defamation and other torts, as well as numerous other matters.

11) Describe the general character of your judicial work over the past five years. Indicate the nature of the cases over which you preside, any specialty courts or court programs, and any legal areas in which you concentrate.

(See above.) I also preside over Adult Drug Court in Judge Reed's absence, and over Juvenile Drug Court when Judge Grove is unavailable to do so. Together with Judge Grove, I am currently working on establishment of a Dependency Drug Court, which we hope to have operating early next year.

12) Describe any judicial experience in appellate courts not included above.

N/A (While in private practice, I did argue a case before the Oregon Court of Appeals on one occasion.)

13) State the approximate number of trials or contested hearings over which you have presided as the judicial officer during each of the past five years. Indicate roughly how many were jury trials and how many were trials to the court.

I strongly encourage litigants to resolve their disputes through settlement, often acting as a mediator between parties or between their attorneys, and in part because of this I do not end up hearing many jury trials. Since my investiture last June, I have presided over two civil jury trials and three criminal jury trials, as well as a handful of domestic relations trials and one trial to determine validity of a will. However, there have also been many dozens of contested hearings over that period of time, including probation violation hearings and other contested criminal proceedings such as hearings on defense motions to suppress evidence; domestic relations matters such as hearings to determine child and/or spousal support, as well as pre-trial or post-judgment modification hearings regarding child custody and/or property issues; various other

civil proceedings such as hearings on motions for summary judgment, objections to restraining or stalking orders, etc.

14) Describe any experience serving as an arbitrator or mediator.

I had quite a bit of informal mediation experience prior to become a Circuit Judge, during my twelve years in private practice doing primarily criminal defense work. More often than not, I was in the role of mediator between my accused client and the District Attorney's office (or sometimes the city prosecutor), trying to explain each adversary's position to the other and work out a settlement. Because I was able to communicate well with both sides, I could nearly always reach an agreement that was acceptable to the State, but which took into consideration my client's needs, and was better for that client than the likely outcome of a trial to the court or to a jury. I believe that this experience now serves me well in my efforts as a Circuit Judge acting as a mediator to resolve disputes between the parties, and that the savings to them in time and money, and in emotional distress (particularly for crime victims, for whom testifying at trial can be traumatic) when litigation results in settlement rather than trial, is well worth working toward.

15) List all bar association memberships, offices held and committee assignments.

**Oregon State Bar
Advisory member of Committee for Legal Programs and Services**

16) Describe any bar association or judicial department committees, task forces, or special projects in which you have been involved.

N/A

17) Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of any federal, state, county or municipal law, regulation or ordinance? If so, please give details. Do not include parking offenses or traffic violations for which a fine of less than \$500 was imposed.

No.

18) Have you ever been the subject of a formal disciplinary proceeding as an attorney or judge? If so, please give the particulars and the result. *Include formal proceedings only.*

No.

19) What attracted you to a judicial career?

I like to solve problems, particularly those which involve disputes between individuals where better communication and analysis of the issues dividing them can assist them in arriving at a settlement and/or achieving a better relationship (e.g., parents struggling to raise children together during and after divorce).

I believe passionately in the right to a fair hearing, and that everyone should have access to justice even though this can very difficult where litigants are unfamiliar with legal procedures and cannot afford counsel.

I think our adversarial legal system is not very well suited to resolving many issues which are brought to court, and that judges have a lead role to play in bringing compassion to the legal system; this means helping lawyers and their clients see that everyone gets a better outcome in court when litigants are respectful and try to understand the other party's point of view, even though they will certainly disagree and sometimes need a judge or jury to resolve issues which cannot be settled.

I like legal research and writing, and the balance of working both with people and doing intellectual work inherent in this job.

20) Briefly describe your philosophy of the judicial role, the qualities that are most important for the role, and the greatest challenges to the role.

In a nutshell, the judicial role is one of leadership: framing the issues in a case to illustrate the "big picture" into which all of the stakeholders fit, teaching litigants how to look at the picture from a wider perspective, suggesting how to meet the most urgent needs of each party without undermining the rights of the other, and ruling carefully – listening well, and understanding the applicable law before making a decision which may have profound effects on the litigants.

21) Briefly describe a case, or a legal issue on which you worked, of which you are particularly proud, or which is reflective of your legal ability, work ethic, judicial philosophy, or temperament.

I issued a FAPA restraining order in a case where the father requested it due to some frightening behavior on the part of the mother as a result of her mental health issues. There were several children, and the parenting time supervisor originally provided for in the restraining order did not follow through with his offer to facilitate mother's parenting time. It was a very difficult situation for this family, and the mother was heartbroken at not being able to see her children. We had a number of Juvenile Court-style "review hearings" to address the evolving situation, and finally the father requested that the restraining order be modified to allow the mother to have unsupervised contact with the children, and much less-restricted contact with him, while they lived separately but obtained counseling to try and save their marriage. This type of case, where a family is in crisis but neither party has an attorney to assist him or her, is becoming increasingly common, and I believe it is the judge's role to actively guide them through the legal process, taking whatever time is necessary to arrive an effective and compassionate solution for everyone concerned. The skills needed to succeed in this role are an ability to listen attentively, an understanding of what support resources are available in the community, a good understanding, based on experience, of what interventions are likely to assist people in crisis, and a patient and kind -- but decisive -- demeanor.

22) Briefly describe an issue, related to Oregon's justice system, that is of particular interest or concern to you, or that you have interest in working toward improving.

I am very concerned with our corrections system, and in using our scarce tax dollars to deliver the lowest recidivism possible. This means using evidence-based practices to reform behavior, both on probation in the community, and in our correctional facilities as well as during the post-prison phase of re-entry into the community. It does not make sense to lock people up without giving them tools to use when they get out, to become productive members of society. Some people may never become wage-earning, pro-social individuals, and will require long-term incarceration, but many others may benefit from earlier intervention into their criminal behavior, and never need to be sent to prison -- at great taxpayer expense -- if they can succeed in overcoming addiction through a combined approach of treatment and short periods of time in jail. As a judge, I am willing to be part of that community-based approach, requiring offenders to appear in my court as often as necessary to monitor their conduct, including substance abuse

treatment, parenting issues, and education or vocational achievement, and to reinforce their accountability for their failures and successes with sanctions or congratulations, as individually merited.

23) Briefly describe a legal figure, personal, fictional or historical, whom you admire and why.

I practiced for twelve years before the Honorable Ted E. Grove, prior to being appointed to the bench. He was then -- and continues to be -- an inspiring role model to me because of his very successful approach to judging. He works hard to facilitate settlements, is practical in his efforts to solve problems, has excellent relationships with service providers in our community, and is patient and courteous with litigants but also expects his rulings to be followed and holds parties accountable for their conduct.

24) State any other information that you regard as pertinent to your candidacy.

My husband and I relocated to St. Helens from Portland in 1995, after living in various other places including England, Spain, and Washington, D.C., and we are here to stay. We adopted a daughter from China in 2005, and have made Columbia County our permanent home. I love this community, and will always feel that I have an obligation to work toward making life better for people here, both on and off the judicial bench.