

# Oregon State Bar Judicial Voters Guide 2018

## **Candidate Questions:**

1) Full name:

**John A. Olson**

2) Office Address and Phone Number:

**Hood River County Courthouse**

**309 State Street**

**Hood River, OR 97031**

**(541) 386-2676**

3) Web site (if applicable):

**[www.judgejohnolson.com](http://www.judgejohnolson.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.

**Gateway High School; Aurora, CO; 1983**

**University of Colorado; Boulder, CO; 1987; B.S. in Journalism**

**Lewis & Clark Law School; Portland, OR; 1990; J.D.**

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

**(1) Twin Falls Public Defender; Twin Falls, ID; 1991-1999; Criminal Defense**

**(2) Morris, Olson, Smith, Starns & Raschio; Hood River and The Dalles, OR; 1999-2011; Criminal Defense**

**(3) Circuit Court Judge; 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District; 2012-present**

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

**Oregon State Bar, 1997**

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

**Colorado State Bar; 1990; allowed membership to lapse due to no intention of returning to Colorado**

**Idaho State Bar; 1991; allowed membership to lapse due to no intention of returning to Idaho**

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

**Revision/Update of Discovery Chapter in The Trial Notebook, published by OCDLA**

8) List community, teaching or civic activities.

**Former faculty member, National Institute for Trial Advocacy**

9) What is the general character of your practice? Indicate the nature of your typical clients and mention any legal areas in which you concentrate.

**Prior to taking the bench, my legal practice was criminal and juvenile law. I have been a Circuit Court Judge for the Seventh Judicial District (Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties) since February of 2012.**

10) What percentage of your practice is litigation?

**100 percent prior to taking the bench.**

11) Do you regularly appear in court?

**Yes**

12) What percentage of your litigation practice in the last five years was in:

Federal Trial Courts: **N/A**

Federal Appellate Courts: **N/A**

State Trial Courts: **100 percent**

State Appellate Courts: **N/A**

Administrative Bodies: **N/A**

13) Describe your litigation practice in the last five (5) years and address both the courts and types of cases.

**Before assuming the bench, I was a partner in a law firm that focused on criminal defense and juvenile law. I tried misdemeanor and felony cases--from DUII to Murder--and handled juvenile delinquency and dependency cases as well. Since, taking the bench I have presided over criminal, civil, and juvenile cases.**

14) Describe any appellate court experience not included above.

**As the Public Defender in Twin Falls, Idaho, I argued several cases before the Idaho Court of Appeals.**

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

**As Circuit Court Judge, I have acted as a mediator in judicial settlement conferences and have helped to resolve criminal and civil cases in that capacity.**

16) State the approximate number of cases you have tried to conclusion in courts of record during each of the past five years (or longer period, if you desire), indicating whether you were sole, associate or lead counsel.

**I would estimate that I have tried more than 150 cases in my career, almost all as sole counsel. I have tried two murder cases, one as associate counsel and one as lead counsel.**

17) State the approximate number of cases you have handled in state and federal appellate courts in the last five years, indicating whether you were lead or co-counsel. Include citations of reported cases.

**I have not handled any appellate cases in the past five years.**

18) List any experience you have as a pro tem or municipal judge, and the names of the courts you have served.

**I have been a Circuit Court Judge since February, 2012.**

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

**Former member of Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association**

20) 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 or parking offenses or traffic violations for which a fine of less than \$500 was imposed.*

**No.**

21) Have you ever been the subject of a formal disciplinary proceeding as an attorney? If so, please give the particulars and the result. *\*\*Include only proceedings that were authorized for prosecution by the SPRB.*

**No.**

22) Why do you want to be a judge?

**Prior to becoming a judge, my professional career was devoted to protecting the rights of my clients, many of whom were economically and/or educationally disadvantaged. I took pride in that role, and came to love the potential of our legal system, a potential that is sometimes unrealized. I wanted to become a judge because I hope I can do more to help our justice system reach its full potential in that role than I could as a trial attorney.**

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

**The judge is the pillar of the rule of law, which has three basic principles. First, the government is bound by the law. Second, all people are treated equally. Third, there are certain enduring human rights that must be protected. A judge should be detached, independent, and fair. A judge is called upon to make dozens of decisions every day, and the challenge is to be decisive and yet reflective in making those decisions in a detached, independent and fair manner.**

24) 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 once represented a young mother accused of scalding her 2-year-old daughter. Through investigation and research I was able to show that the child likely had suffered an allergic reaction and had not in fact been scalded. My client was found not guilty of the charge. I am proud that through my efforts and the efforts of the entire defense team, this mother was allowed to remain at liberty and be reunited with her daughter.**

25) Briefly describe an issue, related to Oregon's justice system, that concerns you, or that you have interest in working toward improving.

**Juvenile law.**

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

**Atticus Finch, for his integrity, empathy, and moral courage.**

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

**I was appointed to this position by Governor Kitzhaber to fill the seat of the Honorable Donald Hull, who retired earlier this year. I practiced in front of Judge Hull for many years, and have a great deal of respect and admiration for him. He left big shoes to fill. I am honored to have this opportunity to serve the people of the Seventh Judicial District.**