

## Oregon State Bar Judicial Voters Guide 2020

### Candidate Questions:

1) Full name:

**Rima Ghandour**

2) Campaign website (if applicable):

**Rimaforjudge.com**

3) List college and law school attended, including dates of attendance, and degrees awarded.

**Colgate University, B.A., 1994**

**University of San Diego Law School, J.D., 1998**

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

**Ghandour Law, LLC, Partner, 2013 - Present**

**Wiles Law Group, Partner, 2009 - 2013**

**Liberty Mutual Insurance, Attorney, 2008 - 2009**

**Safeco, Attorney, 2003 - 2008**

**Orange County, Deputy County Counsel, 2000 - 2001**

**Selski, Sturgeon and Wehbe, Attorney, 1998 – 2000**

5) List state and federal bars, courts and administrative bodies to which you are currently admitted.

**Oregon State Bar**

**California State Bar**

**Idaho State Bar**

**Washington State Bar**

**Federal Districts: Western Washington, Oregon and Central and Southern Districts of California**

6) If desired, list any publications and/or articles you have authored.

**OSB Legal Publications, Bar Books, Damages: Chapter 24 author – Book awarded ACLEA’s Best Award of Outstanding Achievement in Publication**

**MBA Masthead – 2018, Various Issues**

7) If desired, list any community, teaching or civic activities.

**Co-Founder, Past President and current Board Member, Arab American Cultural Center of Oregon**

**Served as leadership college fellow for the Oregon State Bar and as a Pupilage Group Leader for the Owen Panner Inn of Court**

**Pro-bono assistance to travelers from Muslim-majority countries detained in the Federal Muslim ban**

**Pro-bono assistance at Mexican consulate to Dreamers completing DACA applications**

**ACLU Volunteer for Name and Gender Change applications**

**Served on the Arab & Muslim Police Action Committee  
Quarterly courthouse access roundtable member**

***Presentations:***

**Employment and Career – OLIO, 2014**

**Diversity in the Pacific Northwest: Impacts on Claims, Settlements and Trial – CLM, 2014**

**Small Firm Workshop: Money Matters – MBA, 2015**

**Diversity and Cultural Competence in Claims – CLM, 2015**

**Reptile Theory – CLM, 2016**

**Getting Women Into the First Chair – CLM, 2016**

**Navigating Consent Judgments – CLM, 2016**

**Breaking Into the CLE/Public Speaking Game – OWLS, 2016**

**Construction Contracts, Risks & Insurance – Seminar Group, 2017**

**Class Actions – A Blessing or a Curse? – CLM, 2017**

**Construction Defects: Overview and View from the Trenches – Advice and Consult, 2017**

**Hot Topics in Construction Law – Women in Construction, 2017**

**MENA Civic Engagement – MEPI Student Leadership, PSU, 201, 2018 and 2019**

**Panel on ICE, moderator – MET, 2017**

**Building the Pipeline and Bridging the Gap, D&I in Construction Claims – CLM, 2018**

**Legal Careers – Wilson High School, 2018**

**Ethics & Equity in the Law – Jefferson High School, 2018**

**Keynote Speaker - Bastyr Univ. and Institute for Conflict, 2019**

**Hidden Disabilities – Multnomah County Court, 2019**

**Being a Muslim in Oregon II: Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims - Healing Hatred One Case At a Time – Oregon Department of Justice, 2019**

**An Immigrant's Story, Multnomah County Court, 2020**

8) What is the general character of your practice? If desired, please indicate any legal areas in which you concentrate.

**I founded an all women-owned law firm that has a very busy general litigation practice. I represent persons and businesses who have been harmed or are at risk. Representative plaintiff cases include significant personal injuries, or damages claims, by a company due to a larger company's failure to honor a contract. Representative defense cases include defending sub-contractors in multi-party construction defense cases. I also provide pro bono services to recent immigrants.**

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

**Personal injury Plaintiff cases in Multnomah County**

**Personal injury Defense cases in Multnomah County, Washington County, Clackamas County, Deschutes County, Linn County, Lane County, Washington State**

**Construction defect subcontractor Defense in Multnomah County, Washington County, Clackamas County, Deschutes County, Jackson County, Lincoln County, Polk County, Clatsop County, Lane County, Washington State**

**Plaintiff insurance coverage cases in Multnomah County, California and Washington**

**Business general litigation in Multnomah County and California**

10) Describe any appellate court experience not included above.

**A few of the cases I was involved in went to the appellate court. I have assisted the appellate lawyers in preparing and arguing cases on appeal where I have been involved in the trial level.**

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

**Served as community mediator in various disputes within the community.**

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

**None**

13) List any bar association memberships, and if desired, any offices held or committee/project assignments.

**Past President and current Board Member, Multnomah Bar Association**

**Past President and current Board Member, Queen's Bench (Multnomah Chapter of Oregon Women Lawyers)**

**Past Chair, Multnomah Bar Association's Equality and Diversity Committee**

**Past Co-Chair, Oregon Women Lawyers Networking Committee**

**Former board member Oregon State Bar's Diversity Section Executive Committee**

14) 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**

15) 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.**

16) Why do you want to be a judge?

**I want to ensure our courts are welcoming and inclusive for all Multnomah County residents. We need judges with the experience of listening to all**

**segments of our community and who will fight for fairness and stand up for all. The people of Multnomah County need and deserve a leader on the bench, one who instills confidence that our courts will be safe places where everyone may seek justice under the law.**

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

**Access to justice for all people: this is my north star. My presence will be a challenge to policies that create fear in vulnerable communities. One of the most important qualities a judge can have is the ability to see and hear the people in front of them as they actually are. Everyone can and should use our court system without fear of repercussions based on bias. I believe in equal representation of all parties in disputes to improve procedural fairness. When an attorney becomes a member of the judiciary, it is important that they adjust from the role of advocate to that of an adjudicator. That means assuring all parties in a dispute that they will have equal treatment and professionalism in proceedings. The ability to look and understand disputes from all angles is paramount to achieving justice.**

**The greatest challenge for any judge involves maintaining a fresh perspective. The legal community is fairly small, which means that people know each other, know the issues, and have developed a routine for working together. Over time, these relationships could unknowingly develop into habits of behavior, which can be both productive as well as unproductive. My consistent engagement in the community has continually refreshed my perspective on the challenges in our county and given me a dynamic appreciation of the administration of justice.**

18) 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.

**Recently, I represented a small company in litigation against a major insurer for failing to defend and indemnify the company when it was sued. With the help of other stakeholders, we set up novel theories to try the case. This case required researching and analyzing case law from all 50 states due the dearth of relevant case law in Oregon. It required a strong background and understanding of both Contracts and Tort law. The case was tried successfully and in a manner that resulted in the opposing counsel thanking me, and the judge thanking the parties, for the way the adversarial process was handled. Preparation and professionalism by both parties and the judges involved**

allowed the parties to concentrate on the issues in front of the court versus unnecessary “noise”. The case was appealed, the appeals court affirmed the trial court’s opinion and the appellate opinion was affirmed by the Supreme Court. This case strengthened the protections businesses and individuals have in making sure their insurance company does the “right thing” when they face a claim. It also offers protections to others who file claims against a company to make sure that compensation is available for damages they suffered.

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

**One significant issue that has come into sharp focus is the imposition of bail requirements on non-violent offenders. Bail has always been an economic and equity issue, and current events have made it a health and national security issue. During the current pandemic, numerous jurisdictions are releasing or considering releasing non-violent offenders. As pretrial incarceration is a risk to local public health and bail has disparate impact, the decision about pretrial bail should be based on public safety, not the ability to pay.**

**Another concern is that people without documented status and other immigrants have deep fear about accessing our courts or appearing in judicial proceedings. I myself am a naturalized U.S. citizen who has worked in the legal profession for over 20 years and I still worry about the deployment of federal agents outside our court system. To me it is vital we do everything we can to ensure everyone, regardless of citizenship or documentation, has full, safe access to justice.**

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

**Abraham Lincoln was a general practice country lawyer. He rode the circuit and handled all kinds of work, from murder defense to land disputes to breach of contract. He formed his convictions by going out into the world, traveling and meeting people, and seeing the world as it actually was. He articulated the basis for a world without human bondage, developed the complex legal framework for preserving the Union, and simultaneously honored the sacrifices that gave us our country and asked all of us to work together to achieve a just and lasting peace.**

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

**The oath of naturalization was the formative event of my young adulthood, in particular, my promise: “to support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; (and) that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.” Every effort I make as a lawyer and as a community leader is taken as part of my promise to give my best efforts for the support, defense, and advancement of the principles of our shared community.**