

**Jake Cunningham and Dan Christ Want to Be Judge
Judicial Candidates
for
The Oakland County Circuit Court, Michigan's Sixth 6th in 2018**

Jake Cunningham and Dan Christ will face off for an open seat on The Oakland County Circuit Court, Michigan's Sixth Circuit Court in the November, 2018, election. The winner will serve for six years in the Family Law Court. Five incumbent judges from the Sixth Circuit Court are running in the same election, but face no opposition. Therefore, there is no point in writing about them except to say that [Judge Leo Bowman](#) who is running for re-election is a sub-standard judge. Michigan should have [judicial retention elections](#) in order to weed out poor performing judges such as [Judge Leo Bowman](#). By not voting for mediocre Judge Leo Bowman you can make a statement about his poor judicial performance, but unfortunately he has already won another term.

I have written well regarded articles concerning judicial candidates for The Oakland County Circuit Court for several election cycles. Judicial elections are non-partisan and the candidates usually do not express opinions on political issues.

I recommend a vote for Dan Christ. My lengthy presentation of facts and opinions follows:

Dan Christ graduated MSU undergrad in 1987 with a B.A. degree. He received his law degree in 1991 from the University of Detroit School of Law. He did an internship concerning international law in England. Mr. Christ has been in private legal practice since 1991 representing a diversified group of clients with varying legal issues including being the city attorney for a number of municipalities in Oakland County. On his [web site](#) he does not list any experience in family law. Dan Christ ran a nice campaign for an open seat on the Oakland County Circuit Court in 2012 and finished second. Click [here](#) for candidate's answers to Oakland County Bar Ass. Questionnaire.

Jake Cunningham graduated (B.A.) from Oakland University in 2007 and received his law degree in 2011 from the Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Following law school he briefly worked as a law clerk for a private law practice, was a volunteer staff attorney at the Oakland County Circuit Court, and taught at the Cooley Law School. From 2012 to 2014 he was a law clerk to a judge at the Oakland County Circuit Court dealing with business and other types of legal cases. Since Dec., 2014, Mr. Cunningham has been a staff attorney to a Family Law Judge at the Oakland County Circuit Court. (information from his [web site](#) and [Linkedin](#)) Click [here](#) for candidate's answers to Oakland County Bar Ass. Questionnaire. Both of Jake Cunningham's parents are influential attorneys in Oakland County. His mother Judith was the administrator for the Oakland County Circuit Court prior to being appointed Oakland County Corporation Counsel in 1999.

I attended the Judicial forum on Oct. 2, 2018, at the Oakland County Commissioner's Auditorium and watched the video that can be seen by clicking [here](#). The audio quality on the video is much better than being there live. No public address system was used in the large room. Some in the room told me they had trouble hearing the candidates and the questions. I felt that both of the candidates spoke well, but Mr. Christ gave a stronger performance because of the content and depth of his answers.

Brian Dickerson of the Detroit Free Press directed more difficult questions at Mr. Christ and *pushed his button* three times by implying that Christ did not have enough family law experience for Family Law Court where the elected judge will sit. In another question Dickerson questioned Christ concerning being endorsed by Right To Life, and if Christ should handle cases involving abortion. In a further question Dickerson questioned whether Christ would be fair in criminal cases since a lot of law enforcement agencies endorsed Christ. I felt that Christ remained composed and answered all of these

questions in a satisfactory manner. Christ indicated he had done some divorce work, would follow the law in abortion cases and not his religious beliefs, and that he would be a fair and non-partial judge in criminal and other cases. I believe that Mr. Christ gave honest answers.

Jake Cunningham did the better job when both spoke about family law and how a Family Law Court judge should act. Jake Cunningham understands divorce and the emotional impact of divorce much better because he indicated that his parents are divorced. The candidates were asked at minute 37 of the video what type of judicial behavior annoys them, and how they would avoid making the same mistake. Mr. Cunningham got the question somewhat wrong and answered what annoys members of the Bar. However, his answer was very significant. Attorneys are annoyed by judicial frustration and lack of judicial patience when the attorney has to be in multiple places (ie. *different courtrooms in a large building*) at the same time (ie. *motion day*). I am glad that he identified a very significant problem that adversely affects those that appear before a judge of the Oakland County Circuit Court. I was very disappointed with the rest of his answer. His solution if he is a judge is to be more patient. He should have stated the cause of the problem is that *motion day* is run on a first come first serve basis in all of the Oakland County Court Rooms, and the solution is to run *motion day* by appointment. More on this latter. Twice when Mr. Cunningham answered second he asked for the question to be repeated after Mr. Christ finished his answer. Somewhat disturbing concerning comprehension or attention span. Will the same thing happen in court?

Both candidates gave good opening and closing statements as to why they are the best candidates. Both of their statements were consistent with the theme of their campaign as seen on the Internet and mailers. Mr. Christ states he has more legal experience as a practicing attorney, which is true. Mr. Cunningham states that he has more experience working for the Court in all of its divisions, which is true. Legal experience is a very important factor for the voter to weigh in deciding between the two.

Some of my opinions that went into my decision or will go into my decision are as follows:

1. Mr. Christ is in the prime of a successful legal career and has been interested in being a judge since at least 2012. He has the legal experience that voters appreciate. I admire Mr. Christ in keeping on course and pursuing his dream despite not being initially successful. Mr. Christ is the stronger candidate concerning legal experience and performance in the judicial forum.
2. Mr. Cunningham will make an excellent family law judge, which is the judicial position that these two candidates are running for at this time. Please, see my letter to the two candidates at the end of this article concerning career plans if elected. I congratulate Mr. Cunningham for running.
3. My wife has said to me more than once that I am too angry when I do these legal articles in which I am advocating change in how justice is administered. If you read the rest of this article and other references that I have cited you will understand why I am motivated to put in the time and effort to do this type of work. The Oakland County Court needs to treat its subjects with more respect and dignity. Running *motion day* by appointment would be an important start. If either candidate further answers the question that was asked during the candidate forum concerning what change they would make as a Judge to include running *motion day* by appointment I would vote for them. I feel that this would outweigh any other differences between them concerning who would make the better judge.
4. In a recent Detroit Free Press article, [*Both candidates say long waits at Secretary of State branch offices is the No. 1 complaint they hear from voters.*](#) Long waits in court costs both time and money when there are legal fees. Running *motion day*, which is one morning a week, by appointments should not be too difficult to administer. I successfully ran my solo practice of dermatology 4½ days a week for 39 years by appointment only. With today's technology many appointments for that one morning a week can be made online.
5. At my first *motion day* experience 18 years ago I was told to appear at 8:30 A.M. I did. Shortly thereafter I saw many attorneys and people standing in the hall outside of the courtroom. I

asked some of them, *Why are so many people in the hall? Motion day is run on a first come first serve basis.*, they replied. Around noon a court official told me the court would recess before my motion was heard. I was stressed out and pleaded with the official for the judge to hear my motion before lunch because mediation was scheduled to begin that day at 1:00 P.M. The judge was agreeable. Nevertheless, we arrived very late for mediation. The mediator admonished all of us for being so late and stated because we were so late mediation could not be concluded that day. The [mediator](#) was not prepared and wasted the rest of the afternoon. The hourly legal fees kept growing on top of the hours from the morning.

Further Comments and Opinion

Judicial retention elections would improve judicial performance.

Courts would most likely run *motion day* by appointment if a judge was not retained because the judge ran *motion day* on a first come first serve basis, and there were a lot of complaints about long waits that aroused the voters.

[Judge Lisa Gorcyca](#) is an excellent example of the trials and tribulations of a family law judge. She put in her time, but showed little growth on the job. On June 24, 2015, her well publicized disgraceful actions in court were childish, immature, and dishonest besides making legal errors. She made misrepresentations about that day to the Judicial Tenure Commission. At the disciplinary hearing on May 31, 2016, the Master, Hon. Daniel P. Ryan, found Judge Gorcyca guilty as charged. I feel that Judge Lisa Gorcyca should be removed from the bench. Unfortunately, the Michigan Supreme Court gave Judge Lisa Gorcyca a light slap on the wrist when she appeared before them. Oakland County citizens most likely will never be able to have a meaningful voice concerning Judge Gorcyca because she will have no opposition if she runs for re-election in 2020. This is why we need [judicial retention elections](#)

Why should an excellent Divorce Court Judge matter to you? In Oakland County the sad fact is that 50% of marriages end in divorce, and the parties appear before the judge in Divorce Court. Divorce is big business for the legal system. The legal profession has used the acrimony and contentiousness of divorce to line its pockets during the process of divorce. The family suffers emotionally and financially. The Judge is part of the process. The family that was the victim of Judge Gorcyca's bad behavior is an excellent example. Ask the candidates how they will reduce conflict and legal fees during the process of divorce. Ask the candidates if they will respect those who have to appear before them by running *motion day* by appointment instead of first come first serve starting at 8:30 A.M. Other highly esteemed professionals operate by appointment.

The winner of this open seat will serve as a judge in the Family Law Division of the Oakland County Court. The new judge's baptism of fire is Divorce Court, which I feel is tough duty. It is the place for on the job judge training. The family law judge's job is mainly hearing angry emotional complaints all day long, and then rendering decisions on the complaints. This is not easy work. Unfortunately, I have first hand experience sitting in family law court rooms during long unnecessary waits. I witnessed what the judge goes through, and also what the judge and legal system put the unfortunate subjects (including me) of the divorce court through.

Summary: I voted for Dan Christ.

[Ted Golden, M.D.](#)

Letter sent to both candidates for further information:

Theodore A. Golden, M.D.
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October 2, 2018

Dear Mr. Christ and Mr. Cunningham:

I want to congratulate both of you for running and participating in the forum tonight. I have written a number of articles about the Oakland County Circuit Court because I had a terrible experience there (divorce) and feel that improvements need to be made in how justice is administered, so you know where I am coming from. I have written articles about the judicial candidates the last couple of elections, and make a recommendation. The current article will appear at:

<http://www.tagolden.com/Oakland%20County%20Court%20Candidates.pdf>

Most people will reach the site by Googling: *Dan Christ Oakland County* or *Jake Cunningham Oakland County* or *Jake Cunningham Dan Christ*. Give it a try.

When I was a lowly dermatology resident at HFH I was in charge of a clinic that treated patients with chronic leg ulcers who were dumped on HFH and had to be seen once a week for wound care. The clinic started every day at 1:00 P.M., and the patients were seen on a first come first serve basis. Some came before 11:30 A.M. in order to be seen first. Only one patient could be seen first and that patient usually had to wait about 90 minutes to be seen first. Most of the old sick patients had long waits. The staff did not care because that was the way things were always done, business was good because of the dumping factor, and the patients had no where else to go. I did not like the patient's situation. I told the staff that this was my clinic and they had to operate by appointments only. They complained because they said it would cause them more work. The patients loved being seen by appointments, and being treated with respect and dignity. I did the right thing.

Unfortunately, the ones who screened the questions tonight did not like my question as usual. How would you answer the question that I submitted. *Will you operate motion day by appointment? Yes or No. Please, explain your answer.*

Two years ago the judicial candidates were asked or stated if they would stay on the Family Court for their entire judicial career or move to another court position if it became available. I feel that this is again an important issue in this race. How do you answer this issue?

Is there anything else that I should know.

I feel that both of you are qualified for the position that you are running for and spoke well tonight. I and the voters of Oakland County are going to have a difficult decision to make in this election. I hope to have my answer on my web site in the near future after I hear from you and carefully reviewing the video of the forum.

Best wishes,

Theodore A. Golden, M.D.
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