

Why are you interested in serving on a board or committee?

An expression attributed to Mother Theresa says “If you want to change the world, go home and love your family.” I have done that. I have also put time and effort into my professional career. Now I believe it is time for me to give back more fully to my larger community. I am a life-long St. Paul resident and want to serve the city that has given me and my family so much.

What skills/training or experience do you possess for the committee(s) for which you seek appointment?

In my professional career as an attorney, I have experience in both the public and private sector. I worked for many years as a law clerk for several judges where I served in both an advisory role and as a sounding board for fact-finding decisions. In my work as a private attorney, I serve in an advisory role to my clients and as an advocate for their positions.

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Question applies to Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity

The Saint Paul HREEO Commission seeks candidates with strong community involvement experience. Briefly describe your background that relates to the purpose and work of the Human Rights Commission. Include details of work and involvement in human rights and all work that might contribute to the mission of the Human Rights Commission.

My interest in Human Rights first took form during my college education when I pursued a minor in International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. I carried the call to pursue equality for all with me during my studies at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. As a law student I served as Secretary for the St. Thomas Chapter of the Minnesota Justice Foundation; interned with the National Child Protection Training Center; and volunteered as a law clerk with the Immigration Court. In my law school studies, I focused on representing under-served populations and earned the Dean’s Award for Academic Excellence (signifying the highest grade) in both Family Law and International Human Rights. I spent the second semester of my final year of law school working in the Law School Family Law Clinic representing domestic abuse victims. After law school I worked as a judicial law clerk in Olmsted and Hennepin Counties collaborating closely with judges in civil, family, and criminal cases before the court. After approximately eight and half years working in the court system, I began pursuing a career in family law litigation and have been working in private practice for approximately four and a half years. As a private practitioner, I often represent and advocate for victims of domestic violence. I believe my work with the domestic violence community will inform my contribution to the mission of the Human Rights Commission. My work with domestic violence victims requires me to recognize, on a fundamental level, that they have been denied by their abuser the respect and dignity as a human being. My continued work with domestic violence victims, in accessing the justice system, allows me the opportunity to help restore their recognition and full merits as human beings.

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What do you see as crucial issues facing our community, and briefly explain why?

As an attorney, I witness first-hand the uneven access to justice granted to various populations in our community. The access to various government entities is metered based on income or financial resources, race or ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, among other nuanced or overt classifications. Those of us who are lucky enough to be involved in government systems should be cognizant and knowledgeable enough to endeavor to provide equity to all populations. The barriers to fair government processes to some (or, in reality, many) erode the aim of fairness of government and its systems, to all.

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Please describe your present and past community involvement which are applicable such as voluntary, social, city, church, school, business, and professional. Include dates of involvement, and any offices or leadership positions held.

As described in my answer above, I volunteered in various capacities during my law school years between 2002 and 2005. In 2007-2008 I was on the Alumni Board of Directors for the University of St. Thomas School of Law. Since 2014, I have been a member of the Minnesota Bar Association; the Hennepin County Bar Association; the Minnesota Women Lawyers; and the Cooperative Practice Network. In 2016 I volunteered as a Highland Groveland Recreation Association (HGRA) little league baseball coach and as a St. Paul Recreation track coach. From 2016 to 2017 I was an Editor for the Minnesota State Bar Association Family Law Forum and assisted in publishing academic articles for the bar association. Since 2016 I have been a member of the Holy Spirit School Advisory Council which allows me to serve both my church and my children's school.

Question applies to Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity

As part of your duties as a HREEO Commissioner you may be called to serve on a panel regarding fair housing issues. Please describe your experience, if any, working on fair housing issues? Note: lack of experience will not preclude applicants from serving.

I do not have any direct experience working on fair housing issues. However, during law school I took courses focused on (and called) Poverty Law, wherein we studied major issues affecting the poorest and most marginalized populations. It was apparent to the professors – and taught to us students – that as future attorneys we could accomplish significant work in the area of poverty law in addressing fair housing issues. I learned that the laws available for the enforcement of equity standards can be accessed by advocates on behalf of those for whom the law is meant to protect, especially in the areas of fair housing.

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List any skills, knowledge, or perspectives that would serve the Human Rights Commission's ability to meet its mission and further the work of its committees.

My first appearance as an attorney in a courtroom was to seek a legal name change and gender change for my client. Although the hearing was not contested (there was no party on the other side), I still felt tremendous pressure to advocate for my client because this was his LIFE. I also felt tremendous pressure because this was my BROTHER. I try to remember that experience in my daily work as an attorney - because every issue affects someone's life and every person is someone's family member. In addition to the skills and knowledge I describe in my answers to the above-questions, I hope that my perspective of the importance to each individual encountering each government entity is apparent and present in my work and would be present in my service on a committee.

Demographics

Ethnicity

Caucasian/Non-Hispanic

Gender

Female

05/01/1979

Date of Birth