

Dear Friend:

With the retirement of Judge Wendell Griffen and Judge Alice Gray at the end of this year, there are two open seats among the five seats in the majority-African American subdistrict to be filled by voters on May 24th. With the retirement plans of Pulaski County Prosecuting Attorney Larry Jegley, the prosecutor's office will be voted on, as well.

For anyone who may be interested in a recommendation for either of these positions, I recommend and urge voting former Judge ERNEST SANDERS to succeed Judge Griffen; CARA CONNORS to succeed Judge Gray; and ALICIA WALTON to succeed Mr. Jegley.

Why?

**ERNEST SANDERS** filled out a term when a vacancy occurred in this same Fifth Division some years ago. He was a colleague to me, as I was still a circuit judge at the time. Judge Sanders is knowledgeable. He possesses judicious demeanor and temperament. He demonstrated that during the time he served. Additionally, we lawyers take an oath in our profession, when sworn into the bar, to be respectful in our conduct in court. Ernest Sanders has always upheld the highest standards of professional conduct. He has earned the respect of his colleagues and court staff members, while diligently representing the interests of his clients. When asked how he was to work under while he was the judge, one woman who still works in Fifth Division said, "I loved him."

**CARA CONNORS** has made quite a name for herself as a lawyer. She has been a prosecutor, an appeals judge for the Parole Board, a member of the Little Rock Civil Service Commission by appointment of Mayor Scott, before opening her own law practice--- courageously "hanging out her shingle" and going for it. As a private attorney, her practice is rich in diversity, involving criminal, civil, probate, domestic and juvenile law. One court employee, who has had the opportunity to observe Ms. Connors on numerous occasions, says of her, " She's always prepared." She is dependably compassionate and diligent.

**ALICIA WALTON** seeks to bring a fresh perspective to the prosecuting attorney's office. I believe it is time for a change. When asked if she was tough enough to be a prosecuting attorney, her reply was and is, " I'm a Marine." Indeed, she is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. She is also one of her parents' 19 children. One would think she can hold her own. Ms. Walton is well versed in the criminal law and now works as a public defender. While she knows that the job of a prosecutor is to serve the county by holding people responsible for obeying the laws of the state, she understands that her role also would be to seek the truth and to apply the law fairly and justly. She, as well as anyone, understands the impact of crime in a community at large, and, more importantly, on the people who are most affected by it. She has spoken of having lost one of her 18 siblings to gun violence here in Pulaski County. Yet, she speaks, too, of opposing the death penalty. Finally, Ms. Walton's announced opponent in this race is married to one of the district court judges in the county. They are both fine and decent people, but, I believe there would be an unnecessary conflict of interest if his staff members were handling cases before his wife. Defendants in that court should not start off with the obvious thought that entering the court would be nothing more than walking into a "setup." Could anyone blame them for feeling that way?

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There is a third seat in the majority African-American subdistrict that is up for a vote this year. I recommend **JUDGE LEON JOHNSON** for reelection for judge in First Division. Judge Johnson has done an outstanding job and his colleagues have voted him to serve as administrative judge for the Sixth Judicial District of Arkansas.

Sincerely,

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