

Code of Probate Judicial Conduct Campaign Ethics

Presented by

Hon. Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas

Office of the Probate Court Administrator

Probate Court Administrator

Panel Discussion by

Hon. Peter C. Barrett

Madison-Guilford Probate Judge

Hon. Paul J. Ganim

Bridgeport Probate Judge

Hon. Mathew H. Greene

New London Probate Judge

Hon. William A. Hamzy

Region #19 Probate Judge

Hon. Dianne E. Yamin

Danbury Probate Judge

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Honorable Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas

Probate Court Administrator

Judge Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas serves as the Probate Court Administrator for the State of Connecticut by appointment of Chief Justice Richard Robinson in September 2019. She was the judge of probate for the Milford Probate Court beginning in January 1999 to 2011 and thereafter for the consolidated Milford-Orange Probate Court until December 2021.

She is a 1985 graduate of Smith College with a bachelor's degree in Economics and earned her J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1990. She was engaged in the private practice of law for many years with a solo practice in Milford, CT and before that as an associate with Fasano, Ippolito, Lee & Florentine (formerly Fasano & Ippolito) in New Haven.

She is a past president of the Connecticut Probate Assembly and past member and chair of many assembly committees. Appointed by prior administrators, she was the Administrative Judge of the New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court from 2018-2019, and the Temporary Administrative Judge to establish the Central Connecticut (formerly the Meriden/Wallingford) (2005) and the New London (2007) Regional Children's Probate Courts.

In addition to her service in the Probate Assembly, she is an originating member of the Advisory Committee on the Connecticut Probate Court Rules of Procedure.

Honorable Peter C. Barrett

Madison- Guilford Probate Court

Peter Barrett was elected as Judge of the Madison-Guilford Probate Court on November 4, 2014 and was sworn in on January 7, 2015. He was re-elected in 2018. He graduated in 1978 from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and from Villanova University School of Law with a Juris Doctorate in 1981.

He currently serves on the Connecticut Probate Assembly's Executive Committee and recently chaired Subcommittee II of the Probate Rules Advisory Committee. Judge Barrett has presented at the Judges Institute in the past on the topic of "Conservator Hearings and Decrees" and in several other seminars on several other probate topics. Judge Barrett currently also serves as Town Attorney for the Town of Guilford and in the past served as Corporation Counsel for the City of West Haven. He is Board Chairman of the non-profit charitable organization The Guilford Foundation.

Honorable Paul J. Ganim

Bridgeport Probate Court

Paul J. Ganim has been the Probate Judge for his native city of Bridgeport since 1999. He is a 1987 graduate of Fairfield University and a 1992 graduate of the University of Bridgeport, School of Law. A member of the Connecticut Bar since 1992, he is

admitted to practice law before all courts in the State of Connecticut, including the Supreme and Appellate Courts, as well as the United States District Court and the United States Supreme Court.

A second generation lawyer, Judge Ganim is also the founder of Ganim Legal, P.C. located in Bridgeport. Aside from probate, his practice focuses on personal injury, family law, criminal law, real estate and workers' compensation.

Since 2017, Judge Ganim has served as a member of the CT Probate Assembly's Executive Committee as the Fairfield County Representative. He also dedicates himself to a variety of community based events and organizations in the Bridgeport area.

Honorable Mathew H. Greene

New London Probate Court

Judge Mathew H. Greene serves as the Judge of Probate District of New London since 1992 and also services as the Administrative Judge to the New London Regional Children's Probate Court. Judge Greene attended New London schools, and graduated from Bryant College, with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing Major in May of 1982. He received his law degree from University of Bridgeport School of Law, Juris Doctorate, December 1989.

Judge Greene is admitted to practice law in Connecticut. He is an attorney in general practice with Mueller, Greene, Attorneys at Law. He was the General Counsel from 1998-2005 for the New London Development Corporation. He is an IAABO Eastern Board 8 Basketball Official and created the organization ALS Soccer Cup Inc that donates to families affected by ALS.

Honorable William A. Hamzy

Region #19 Probate Court

Judge Hamzy serves as the Judge of Probate for the Region #19 Probate District serving the towns of Bristol and Plymouth. He was elected in a special election in 2020 and was sworn in on June 3, 2021. He graduated from the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law in 1992 and received a BA from the University of Connecticut in 1988. He's been practicing law in Bristol since 1992 focusing in the areas of bankruptcy, real estate, landlord/tenant, debt settlement and estate planning. Judge Hamzy served as a state Representative in the Connecticut General Assembly from 1995 through 2011 and was Deputy Minority Leader from 2007 through 2011. He was chosen to serve on the Select Committee of Inquiry which was charged with investigating former Governor John Rowland. In 2011, the General Assembly appointed him as Commissioner of the Legislative Commissioner's Office and served in that capacity until 2021. Judge Hamzy is very active in his community which has included coaching and managing various local youth baseball and basketball teams and volunteering his time on non-profit organizations such as Bristol Health, United Way and the Terryville Volunteer Fire Department.

Honorable Dianne E. Yamin
Danbury Probate Court

Judge Yamin has served as Probate Judge for the District of Danbury since 1990 and was reelected for her eighth four-year term in November of 2018. She is also an attorney in the law firm of Yamin & Yamin, LLP, a real estate and general practice firm. Judge Yamin attained a BA from Lehigh University, in Bethlehem, PA and a JD from Mercer Law School in Macon, GA.

Judge Yamin is past President of the CT Probate Assembly. She is Membership Director and Immediate Past President of the Danbury Lion's Club. She is a Past Chairman of the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce and was its first woman chairman in its ninety-four-year history. Judge Yamin is also a corporator of the Savings Bank of Danbury, and serves on the Dean's Advisory Council for the Ansell School of Business. She serves on the Finance Council for the Eparchy of St. Maron; she also serves as Co-Chairman of the Peter Buck Foundation's Age Well Council. (www.agewellct.org) ; Judge Yamin is also the Secretary/Treasurer, CT State Representative and Membership Co-Chairman of the National College of Probate Judges (www.NCPJ.org), where she is serving on the Executive Board and belongs to the Danbury, CT, and American Bar Associations.

In 1995, she was named one of "21 Young Lawyers Leading us into the 21st Century", by the American Bar Association in its national Barristers Magazine in a cover story on that accolade. She has won other awards including the American Cross Grace Award, The Boy Scouts Good Scout Award, Community Service Award and President's Medal from Western CT State University, the Leadership Award from the New American Dream Foundation, as well as numerous Lions Club Awards, including Knight of the Blind, Ambassador of Sight, Lion of the Year 2019 and the highest honor, the Melvin Jones Award. In 2008 Judge Yamin was named Chairperson of Danbury's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. She regularly conducts Probate Seminars in the community including the Senior Center, local bar associations and community service clubs.

Judge Yamin lives in Danbury with her husband, Attorney Bob Yamin, and has two adult daughters, Rebecca, and Samantha. She enjoys community service, ballet, letter writing, travel, and performing weddings.

CODE OF PROBATE JUDICIAL CONDUCT CAMPAIGN ETHICS

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Preamble Penumbras

An independent, fair and impartial judiciary is indispensable to our system of justice... Inherent in all the Rules contained in this Code are the precepts that probate judges, individually and collectively, must respect and honor the judicial office as a public trust and strive to maintain and enhance confidence in the legal system.

Judges should maintain the dignity of judicial office at all times and avoid both impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in their professional and personal lives... They should aspire at all times to conduct that ensures the greatest possible public confidence in their independence, impartiality, integrity and competence.

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Canon 4

A judge or judicial candidate shall not engage in political or campaign activity that is inconsistent with the independence, integrity or impartiality of the judiciary.

- 4.1: Political and campaign activities in general
- 4.2: Campaign activities while seeking election
- 4.3: Activities of Probate Judges seeking appointive judicial office
- 4.4: Campaign Committees
- 4.5: Activities of judges who become candidates for nonjudicial office

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Judges and Judicial Candidates

- Code defines Judge and Judicial Candidate
- Campaign and election rules apply to all sitting Probate Judges and Judicial Candidates
- Judicial Candidate is a person seeking election to Judicial office
 - Public announcement; or
 - Declares or files with election or appointment authority; or
 - Authorizes solicitation or acceptance of contributions or support

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Political Activities: Rule 4.1

- Probate Judges *MAY...* (*unless otherwise restricted or prohibited by rule*)
 - Participate/hold membership in political party, town committee, or other political organization;
 - Identify as a member of a political party;
 - Contribute to a political organization/party/committee for a candidate
 - Attend or purchase tickets for dinners or other events
 - Attend political convention, rally, fundraiser or other political gathering

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Political Activities: Rule 4.1: Cont.

- Probate Judges *MAY...* (*unless otherwise restricted or prohibited by rule*)
 - Participate in party-caucus election that is not prohibited by Rule 4.1 (b)
 - Participate in nonpartisan civic, community, social, labor or professional organization activities
 - Sign a political petition as an individual
 - Assist with other campaigns so long as such assistance does not violate any other rule. *See Comment 8.*
 - Assistance cannot be a leadership role or management role
 - No spouse or family exceptions

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Political Activities: Rule 4.1 SHALL NOT, MAY NOT

- Be a leader/officer in a political organization (no town committee chairs)
- Make speeches on behalf of a political organization
- Publicly endorse/oppose a candidate (for probate judge or otherwise) in a speech, advertisement, broadcast, campaign literature or similar material for others
- Display a political picture/sticker/badge/button/sign on self or real property supporting any other candidate in an election
 - Real property exception for co-owners

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Political Activities: Rule 4.1: Cont. SHALL NOT, MAY NOT

- Directly solicit, receive, collect, handle, disburse or account for assessments, contributions or other funds
- Manage the political campaign for someone else
- Organize, reorganize, a political organization or affiliated organization
- Initiate or circulate a nomination petition, other than for self

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Political Activities: Rule 4.1: Cont. SHALL NOT, MAY NOT

- Lie, mislead, knowingly or recklessly disregard the truth or make any public statement that would be reasonably inconsistent with the office and Code of Conduct
- Work as a driver transporting voters to polls during election
- Act as election moderator, recorder, watcher, challenger or poll officer
- Become a candidate for other public office (*resign to run rule, see also Rule 4.5*)

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Campaign Activities: Rule 4.2

- Probate Judges and judicial candidates SHALL
 - Act at all times in a manner consistent with the independence, integrity and impartiality of the judiciary;
 - Comply with all applicable election, election campaign and election campaign fundraising laws and regulations;
 - Take reasonable measures to review all campaign statements and materials before dissemination
 - Must comply with SEEC, election and campaign finance Laws

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Campaign Activities: Rule 4.2

Probate Judges or judicial candidates *MAY* run for judicial office

- Manage your own campaign
- Establish your own campaign committee
- Make statements, pledges, promises consistent with code of conduct and integrity of office
- Seek party endorsement
- Solicit public statements in support of your own candidacy
- Appear in photographs, even with other candidates of same party/slate
- Promote own candidacy through advertisements, websites, literature, wear sticker, badge, button, or other campaign flair
- Make general comment regarding party affiliation, principles, and other candidates that are consistent with rules and with dignity of the office

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Campaign Activities: Rule 4.2

Probate Judges or judicial candidates *SHALL NOT*:

- Commingle Probate Court with campaign activities, such as use of court staff, facilities, or court resources, including displaying campaign material in court facilities or during judicial functions
- Personally solicit campaign contributions or accept campaign contributions other than through a campaign committee
- Use or permit the use of campaign contributions for the private benefit of yourself or others

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Social Media

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Campaign Committees: Rule 4.4

- Probate Judge or Judicial Candidate may establish a campaign committee to manage and conduct probate campaign
- Campaign committee may arrange and coordinate media advertisements, brochures, mailings, judicial candidate forums and other means not otherwise prohibited
- Solicit public statements of support for candidacy
- Solicit and accept reasonable campaign contributions (unless otherwise prohibited) and manage the expenditure of funds for the campaign
 - **DISCLAIMER:** Judges and candidates **MUST** familiarize themselves and comply with all state campaign financing laws and the State Elections Enforcement Commission (“SEEC”)

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