

The Supreme Court of Montana
Office of the Court Administrator

Beth McLaughlin
Court Administrator



301 South Park
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3002
Telephone (406) 841-2950
FAX (406) 841-2955

TO: Judicial Nomination Commission
FROM: Lois Menzies, Commission staff
SUBJECT: Telephone Call in Support of Yvonne Laird
DATE: September 16, 2016

On September 14, 2016, I spoke by telephone with Mary Pyette from Chinook, Montana. Ms. Pyette expressed her support for Yvonne Laird as district judge for the 17th Judicial District.

Ms. Pyette stated that she has known Ms. Laird since 1996 and knows Ms. Laird's family well. Ms. Pyette has worked in the court system as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for over 20 years and has worked with Ms. Laird on child abuse and neglect cases and custody cases.

Ms. Pyette said that Ms. Laird is family-oriented and presents herself well in the courtroom. Additionally, Ms. Laird relates well to families and is efficient with court records. Ms. Pyette said that it would be good to have a woman serve as district court judge and that Ms. Laird would do well in the position.



PO Box 669, 203 South Main Street
Harlem, Montana 59526
(406) 353-2213
Toll Free: (800) 464-2213
Fax: (406) 353-2693

September 21, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

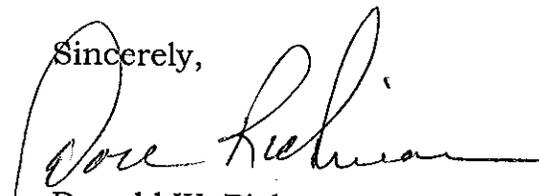
I'm writing this to recommend Yvonne Laird to fill the seat vacated by Judge McKeon.

I've known Yvonne for years, and consider her to be a very honest, hardworking attorney. Even though we are on opposite sides of the political aisle, it has never made a difference in our professional relationship. Yvonne has always been willing to look at all sides of an issue, and make judgements based on facts, not emotions.

While serving as the Blaine County Attorney, she worked well with the Sheriff's Office and Deputies. She made sure that they did their jobs properly and then filed charges, only when everything was in order.

I've always found Yvonne willing to go above and beyond to see that everything is done timely and properly. I can think of no one who would be a better candidate to fill Judge McKeon's position.

Sincerely,



Donald W. Richman
President

Rhea Miller

• 460 Stockyard Road; Chinook, MT 59523 • Phone: (406) 357-3557 • Email: gowf@mtintouch.net

September 20, 2016

Judicial Nomination Committee
c/oLois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena MT 59620-3005

Dear Nomination Committee Members:

Hello and thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts about Judicial Candidate Yvonne Laird.

I am a Christian farm/ranch wife, with four children. Although I grew up in Harlem, Montana, I graduated from Chinook High School in 1986 and went on to MSU-Northern to earn a Bachelor of Business Degree, which I use daily in the agriculture industry. My husband and I farm/ranch east of Harlem on 5000 deeded acres, not far from my roots, where I learned to operate equipment and to ride horse on the Fort Belknap Reservation.

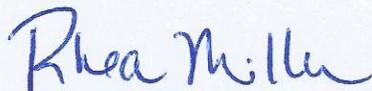
I am writing to recommend Yvonne Laird as the next District Court Judge for the 17th Judicial District. I believe Yvonne will be a judge of exemplary character that has firsthand knowledge of the demographics of the Hi-Line. Her integrity is exactly what the definition says: The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles even when no one is looking and when there isn't reward or recognition.

I have known and worked with Yvonne personally, as we are both from Chinook and our children are in the same 4-H club of 30 members, which requires considerable negotiation with diverse personalities in parents. Professionally, she has guided us through a disputed road closure issue. This case could have been extremely volatile, involving many entities, yet Yvonne and the opposing attorney worked everything out so that we all could go away peacefully and live with the fair and equitable outcome.

I believe Yvonne will protect the distinctive quality of life here in Montana on the Hi-Line in these small rural counties. An endorsement of Yvonne Laird would mean that all parties involved would have access to an honest, impartial, educated person with the highest regard for the law.

If you have any further questions, I can be reached at 406-357-3557 or at gowf@mtintouch.net.

Sincerely,



Rhea Miller

Danna R. Jackson
719 Holter St.
Helena, MT 59601
(w)406.444.0503 * (c)406.431.8485

September 23, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Louis Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Re: Yvonne Gaye Laird's application for the Seventeenth Judicial District
Judgeship Vacancy (Blaine, Phillips, and Valley Counties)

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

It is my great pleasure to recommend Yvonne to be judge for the Seventeenth Judicial District. I have known Yvonne since 1993. We first met in law school. We liked each other immediately because of our shared ranching heritage.

Yvonne has been a valuable colleague throughout my legal career. For example, in one of my first solo jury trials, Yvonne, who was Deputy County Attorney for Blaine County at the time, helped me navigate my way through this venue that was new to me. This introduction calmed my nerves and helped me operate professionally. More recently, it was my wonderful privilege to work with Yvonne, directly, in my role as an Assistant United States Attorney.

Yvonne is a wonderful person and lawyer and will be an outstanding judge. I provide you three reasons why:

Yvonne is trusted in her community. Shortly after law school, Yvonne returned to the hi-line with her husband. She ran, as a Democrat, for Blaine County Attorney. She won. She managed the position with grace. In her current position, she manages her relationship with her employer, the Fort Belknap Tribe, with appropriate respect. The respect is mutual.

September 23, 2016

Page 2

Yvonne's husband is a valued teacher and coach in Harlem. Their daughter is a lovely young lady who plays football. Yvonne and her family are active and engaged community members. In short, Yvonne is a known quantity and a proven public servant.

Yvonne is a smart lawyer. In our most recent professional contact, Yvonne and I teamed up to prosecute violent crime on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. At the beginning of the Obama Administration, the United States Department of Justice picked four tribes across the country to pilot a Tribal Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) program for purposes of combatting domestic violence in Indian Country. Practically, as a SAUSA, Yvonne is in charge of prosecuting domestic violence cases in tribal court but she can also follow the felonious matters into federal court. If we determined that the matters were to be charged in federal court, Yvonne and I would often be co-counsel on these cases – taking turns as to who would be lead. We collaborated on filings, charging decisions, and briefs. We tried cases together. Additionally, we both served as members of the local MDT and Sexual Assault Response Teams. We conducted joint law enforcement trainings.

Under Yvonne's guidance, the Fort Belknap project has been lauded nationally – and for good reason. The program strengthened the tribal/federal relationship. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to work with and learn from Yvonne. Additionally, Yvonne enhanced my relationship with the tribe, which is invaluable to me.

Yvonne has relevant experiences. Yvonne is a clear and concise writer. She is direct. She is practical. She is professional. She is collegial. She knows the community. She is a nimble lawyer – a person who has both extensive criminal and civil experience. Yvonne is a steady hand. She is measured. She is an expert on the Rules of Evidence. Without question, Yvonne will be a competent and fair judge.

Finally, Yvonne is a rare person who has the ability and experience to bridge the relationship between state and tribal courts. This need is vital to Montana.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danna R. Jackson', written in a cursive style.

Danna R. Jackson

September 24, 2016

Sharon Reed
40890 US Hwy 2
Chinook, MT 59523

Judicial Nomination Commission

c/o Lois Menzies

Office of Court Administrator

P.O. Box 203005

Helena, MT 59620-3005

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

This letter is being written in support of Yvonne Laird to be nominated to complete the term of Judge John McKeon.

Yvonne, has lived in North Central Montana most of her life. When she served as Blaine County Attorney I felt that she was fair, well organized and did a wonderful job serving the community. She worked hard to prosecute but also to protect our county. While she was in that office I felt safe and protected. I would not say that of the people that have served the county since that time.

Since that time she has served the victims of crimes and aided them not only legally but aided them to get the services they need to go and be productive in their life. Yvonne has encouraged and helped many people get their lives put on a positive path.

As a private attorney Yvonne is one of the most competent, honest, and meticulous attorney's in North Central Montana. Having grown up in the area and working in this area the past 15 years she better than anyone else understands the needs and wants of the 17th Judicial District. She calls the area home and will work as a judge to protect the area.

Personally, Yvonne and her family are some of the best Montana has to offer. Montana is the last best place and people like Yvonne make it that way. I give her the highest endorsement for the job. I think she would make an excellent judge in the 17th Judicial District.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Reed

Harlem High School Instructor and Farm Owner/Operator

September 20, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Support for Yvonne Laird, 17th Judicial District Judge Applicant

Dear Commission:

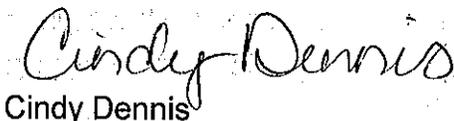
I have known Yvonne Laird for 20 years and was fortunate enough to have worked with her as support staff in the County Attorney's Office where she served as Deputy County Attorney and eventually County Attorney.

I feel compelled to express why I personally believe she is the best person to preside as District Court Judge. While working with her behind the scenes as well as in the courtroom, on occasion, I was able to witness, firsthand, her passion for justice, as well as her ability to keep an objective point of view. Her quick thinking and ability to apply her knowledge made her a worthy opponent in the prosecutor's office. On more personal terms, Yvonne is an inspiration and she and her family's respectful and caring nature, not only make me always consider her friend, but show cases her ability to bring a positive impact to the community.

Based on her, character, flawless integrity, and her dedication to public service, I firmly believe she is a perfect fit for the 17th Judicial District Court Judge. This is the person who knows the tug of war between case backlogs, tight resources and the judicial system in general. Further, her non-prejudicial attitude, understanding and experience with all citizens in our area bring with her an equality for all.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Cindy Dennis

P.O. Box 625

Chinook, Montana 59523

Wilma J. Mellville
PO Box 162
Chinook, MT 59523

September 29, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am writing in support of Yvonne Laird to fill the seat vacated by Judge John McKeon for the 17th Judicial District Court.

I have known Yvonne for 19 years both personally and professionally since she came to the Chinook area as Deputy Blaine County Attorney. Yvonne has always demonstrated professionalism, honesty, a thorough knowledge of the law, and an impeccable work ethic. She has worked hard to serve this community and other communities in our area under her jurisdiction. Yvonne has consistently been firm, yet fair in executing her duties. In addition, she is a valuable asset when someone is in need. I value Yvonne's opinion, as I can depend on her to listen to mine, weigh options, and engage in a healthy discourse instead of a one-sided lecture or conjecture, for that matter.

Yvonne does not make rash decisions and looks at all sides of an issue before coming to her judgment or conclusion. She has extensive experience working with individuals, families, and agencies in Blaine County, including her work on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. What really stands out about Yvonne is that though she is very personable, she makes unbiased, objective decisions, not based on feelings, but rather facts.

Yvonne would make an excellent district judge; moreover, she is the best candidate for Judge McKeon's seat. It is with great confidence that I write this letter, as Yvonne is dependable and can be counted on to preside as and fulfill the duties of the 17th Judicial District Judge without prejudice.

Submitted respectfully,



Wilma J. Mellville
Harlem School District #12
School Psychologist

HARSHMAN LAW OFFICE P.C.

A Professional Corporation

Mark Harshman
Attorney and Counselor
harshman.law.office@gmail.com

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P.O. Box 1594
Chinook, Montana 59523
PHONE: (406) 357-4444
Facsimile: (406) 357-4445

Havre office:
410 Fourth Avenue
Lower Level
By Appointment

Reply to the Chinook address

September 27, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3005

RE: 17th Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Judicial Nomination Committee:

I am writing to oppose the appointment of Yvonne G. Laird to the position of district court judge. I have known this applicant since she first moved to the area in late 1996. During her twenty years as an attorney she has worked primarily in public office with a brief stint with Montana Legal Services. For the past number of years she has worked at Fort Belknap prosecuting tribal offenses in tribal court. Missing from her resume is any real experience in the private practice of law and in handling the many different types of civil matters that routinely come before the district court.

In my opinion, this applicant does not possess the professional experience or the judicious, temperate, and scholarly nature that we have come to expect in our district court judge.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

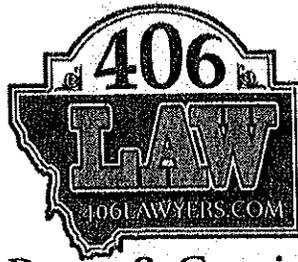
HARSHMAN LAW OFFICE, P.C.

By:



Mark Harshman

Billings:
D. Michael Eakin
Laurie Andreen Grygiel



Bozeman:
Jeannette Ellen Berry

Eakin, Berry & Grygiel, PLLC
Attorneys at Law

September 28, 2016

Judicial Nomination Committee
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of the Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I strongly support the nomination of Yvonne Gaye Laird for District Judge for the Seventeenth Judicial District Court of Montana.

I first met Yvonne when we both worked as staff attorneys for the Domestic Violence Unit of the Montana Legal Services Association, providing civil legal assistance to victims of domestic violence. I was impressed with her experience and skill in the courtroom, as well as her legal writing and research skills. She was willing to take on and fight for all victims, even when those victims came with warts of their own. At the same time, her practical nature made her a natural problem solver.

Yvonne has a strong commitment to the Hi-Line, where she was born and raised. She chose to return there to raise her family. As a rancher's daughter, she understands the issues facing rural Montanans. She understands the workings of local government from her time as county attorney, where she dealt with both civil and criminal issues, as well the practicalities of balancing a department budget. Because she has spent years working with the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes in the tribal court on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, she has seen firsthand the struggles and barriers faced by Native Americans, the most marginalized population in our state.

In addition to her years as a prosecutor (tribal, state and federal) Yvonne's experience as a solo practitioner has given her a wide range of experience from family law to probate to agricultural issues. Her understanding of the jurisdictional issues in a judicial district with two Indian Reservations would be an asset to the bench. Few attorneys have the range of experience and comfort level she has, practicing in state court, tribal court and federal court.

I urge the Commission to forward her name for consideration by Governor Bullock.

Sincerely,

Laurie A. Grygiel

September 23, 2016

Judicial Nomination Committee
Office of Court Administrator
301 South Park
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3002

Committee Members;

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support for Yvonne Laird as District Judge for the 17th Judicial District.

I have known Yvonne for many years as our personal and professional lives have intersected. Through the years of service Yvonne and I have given to the Boards of our respective Human Resource Council Districts I can attest to her commitment to her community.

In addition, her legal career in the Domestic Violence Unit at Montana Legal Services has given Yvonne a unique and insightful knowledge of the dynamics of domestic and child abuse. She has proven herself to be a professional, steady guide to families trying to negotiate an often frightening and complex judicial system. I believe that experience gives Yvonne a wisdom that would serve her well as a district court judge.

I know Yvonne to be an active and engaged parent. I know Yvonne to be careful and thoughtful in her legal work and community activities. She consistently treats everyone with respect and courtesy. Yvonne's impartiality, wisdom and respect for all cultures are all in the best traditions of our judicial system. And, as a woman, Yvonne would bring a perspective to the district court that would be a very positive influence on the trust citizens place in their judicial system.

Respectfully,


Marilyn Ross
P.O. Box 298
Twin Bridges, MT 59754

Judicial Nomination Commission
C/O Lois Menzies
Office of the Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT. 59620

Dear Nomination Committee Members:

I would like to recommend Yvonne Gaye Laird for appointment to the position of District Court Judge for the 17th Judicial District, Blaine, Phillips and Valley counties.

I have known Yvonne on a professional and personal level since she began here as the Deputy Blaine County Attorney in 1996. At that time I was a Detention Officer/Dispatcher for the Blaine County Sheriff's Office, until I was hired as the Justice Court Clerk in 1997, so I had the pleasure of working with her for her entire 6 year tenure with Blaine County. Yvonne and I have remained friends ever since.

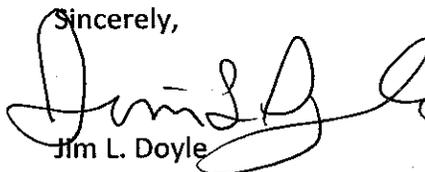
In the nearly 20 years that I have known Yvonne, she has always displayed the utmost professionalism, work ethic and has been very diligent in completing whatever task she may have at hand.

In my 26 years working in law enforcement and with the Court, I have had the opportunity to work with many different attorneys, both prosecutors and defense, and I believe Yvonne to be the best of the best.

I have no doubts that she would perform the duties of District Court Judge with integrity, honesty and to the very best of her ability, and would first and foremost have the best interests and wellbeing of the citizens and communities of the State of Montana in mind. She will undoubtedly be fair, unbiased, objective and will base her rulings on the evidence and testimony presented to her.

I could go on and on about Yvonne's qualifications for this position, but anyone who reads her application and other public comments can see that she is more than qualified.

Sincerely,



Jim L. Doyle

Billings:
D. Michael Eakin
Laurie Andreen Grygiel



Bozeman:
Jeannette Ellen Berry

Eakin, Berry & Grygiel, PLLC
Attorneys at Law

September 29, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of the Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Re: 17th Judicial District Judge
Applicant: Yvonne Gaye Laird

Dear Commissioners:

This correspondence is to wholeheartedly support the application of Yvonne Laird for appointment to the 17th Judicial District Court judgeship.

I first met Yvonne in December of 2006 when we interviewed her for the staff attorney position for the Havre office of the Montana Legal Services Association. I was the Managing Attorney of the Domestic Violence Unit of MLSA at the time. I was impressed with Yvonne's experience and credentials at the time and became more so over the years that she worked for us.

My own 40-year career has been varied and has included litigation and appellate work in all the State courts and at all levels of the federal court system. Broad-based litigation experience is important for a member of the judiciary, and Yvonne has this. She has done trial and appellate work in state and federal court, and additionally, she has practiced in a number of tribal courts. I supervised Yvonne along with our other DV staff members for a number of years, so I got a first-hand look at the depth and quality of her work. She is a superior trial lawyer—which is an ability that cannot be too highly stated for a District Court Judge.

I saw the quality of her legal analysis and her writing ability over those years also. It is excellent. She has a logical, holistic and balanced legal mind which is important for the bench.

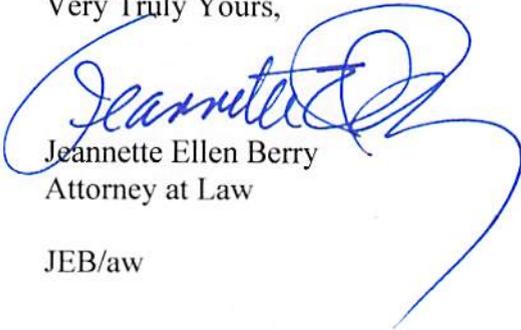
Other aspects which are sometimes overlooked, but important, are integrity and temperament. Yvonne has impeccable integrity. This is so valuable in a profession where we wield so much power. By way of temperament, she has great personal strength. This also is very important in a profession where we must make hard decisions regarding other people's lives and then stand by those decisions. These two things are especially critical for a member of the judiciary.

Judicial Nomination Commission
Re: 17th Judicial District Judge Applicant,
Yvonne Gaye Laird
September 29, 2016
Page Two

Yvonne was born in Montana and grew up on the Hi-line. Her family has farmed and ranched near Gilford for generations. She and her husband chose to stay, make a life for their own family, and work on the Hi-line. She has had a distinguished legal career, as reflected on her resume. Her husband is a Special Education teacher at Harlem High School. Their daughter is in the 5th grade in Chinook and is proud to be a fourth generation 4-H'er.

You simply could not pick a better candidate to send to the Governor's Office for consideration for this judicial position. I most sincerely hope that you do. And, I sincerely hope that the Governor appoints her.

Very Truly Yours,



Jeannette Ellen Berry
Attorney at Law

JEB/aw

Curtis Fox, Supervisory Criminal Investigator
Ft. Belknap Law Enforcement Services
656 Agency Main Street
Harlem, MT 59526
cfox@ftbelknap.org
(406) 353-4717 (office)
(406) 399-4643 (cell)

September 29, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Dear Commission,

I am writing to recommend Yvonne Laird for the position of the 17th Judicial District Judge. She is currently employed here on the reservation as the SAUSA Attorney. I have had the pleasure of working directly with her for several years and I would like to say her remarkable work ethic does not cease to amaze me.

Her dedication to her job and helping others shows fine moral values. Yvonne is both courteous and steadfast with her clients. She is an active member of the Child Protection Team and the Multidisciplinary Team. Both teams handle crimes against children and families. She works closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US Attorney's Office and several tribal programs.

Yvonne's ability as an attorney and her skill with both state and federal laws have made her an excellent asset to the Ft. Belknap Court System. She also understands and respects the many cultural differences that working on the reservation entails.

Yvonne has presented cases to the Grand Jury and has testified in Federal and State Court. Her work is professional, methodical and always meticulous. She would make a first class addition to any court system.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me either by phone or email. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,


Curtis Fox

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Friday, September 30, 2016 1:27 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Laird

From: Dave Boisvert <jandav@mtintouch.net>
Date: September 27, 2016 at 7:56:09 PM MDT
To: <bmclaughlin@mt.gov>
Subject: Letter of support for Yvonne Laird

Judicial Nomination Commission

c/o Lois Menzies

Office of Court Administrator

To whom it may concern:

Please consider this a letter of support for Yvonne Laird, applicant to fill the vacated 17th Judicial District judgeship.

I have known Yvonne for many years. When she was County Attorney for Blaine County I got to know her in a professional capacity. She has all the qualities we would want in a district court judge. I always found her to be honest, objective, fair, and, above all, professional. She is smart, engaging, and extremely well grounded. More than anything else, I know that she bring integrity and intelligence to the bench.

I can, without equivocation, recommend Yvonne Laird for this most important position.

W. David Boisvert

IT Director, Blaine County

Cook, Kevin

From: MT Supreme Court,
Sent: Friday, September 30, 2016 1:30 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Laird

From: Wendy Maratita [<mailto:wmaratita@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, September 30, 2016 8:22 AM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: Letter of Support for Yvonne Laird

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of Yvonne Laird. I have known Yvonne for the past several years. First in her capacity as the Blaine County Deputy Attorney to the present time where she works with the Violence Against Women Act on Fort Belknap. During this time Yvonne has shown to be unbiased in her approach to the law only wanting to find out the truth and make it known. She has faced public criticism with grace and knowledge of the facts. She is determined in her approach to the law yet does not discount the human factor. She feels it is everyone's right to have access to legal help and has shown this in her action by doing pro bono work and low cost work to low income families in her private practice. She is able to argue in Federal, State and Tribal courts. She is courageous, knowledgeable, witty and grows a mean zucchini. She is ready to tackle this next level of her career and I highly recommend her for the position of Seventeenth Judicial District Judgeship.

Sincerely,

Wendy R. Plumage-Maratita

Public School Teacher, MEA/MFT Union/Board Member, Blaine County Democrat States Woman, Registered Member of the Fort Belknap Assiniboine Nation

Tami S. Mitchell
P.O. Box 685
Chinook, Montana 59523
(406) 357-3343

September 29, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Louis Menzie
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Yvonne Gaye Laird's application for the Seventeenth Judicial District Judgeship
Vacancy (Blaine, Phillips, and Valley Counties)

Dear Nomination Committee Members:

I am writing this letter of support for Yvonne Laird in her quest to become the 17th Judicial District Judge.

I started working for Yvonne as her Administrative Assistant in 2004 when she was the Blaine County Attorney. During those years I got to know Yvonne not only as a co-worker but a friend. I was able to experience firsthand how dedicated and loyal she was to her job and staff. Yvonne was very professional, dependable, ambitious and hardworking, persistent and accurate, and also a very knowledgeable person who had a strong passion for the law.

Since leaving the Blaine County Attorney's Office, Yvonne has worked diligently for the Montana Legal Services as an attorney/victim's advocate, Prosecuting Attorney for the Ft. Belknap Indian Community, and Laird Law Office PLLC, her own private law practice. Yvonne strives to be honest, fair and impartial and has a reputation for being a tough prosecutor who also tries to help the offenders to get the help that is needed for them.

When my daughter, who has special needs, turned 18 and I needed to retain Guardianship, Yvonne helped guide us through the whole process. She made sure the paperwork was done properly on behalf of my daughter and to protect my family.

I personally know the majority of the applicants who have applied for this position, so I know you have a hard task ahead of you, but I hope you will consider Yvonne Gaye Laird. I do believe she possesses the qualities and experience to be an excellent Judge.

Sincerely Yours,



Tami Mitchell

September 26, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

To the Nomination Committee Members:

I would like to take the opportunity to endorse Yvonne Laird for the 17th Judicial Court vacancy. I have known Yvonne since 2002 when I worked as a State Social Worker and she was with the Blaine County Attorney's Office. Since then, I have had the opportunity to work with Yvonne across several different disciplines and I firmly believe that she is the best candidate for the position of District Court Judge of the 17th Judicial District.

Yvonne is a true Montanan; she was born and raised on the Hi-line and has faithfully served it during her career as an attorney. She encompasses values and characteristics that are important to Montanans – hard work, honesty and reliability to name a few. I returned to the Hi-line in 1998; like Yvonne I am from this area. One dynamic I have noticed since returning is that, often times, talented people do not stay in this area. They either do not have roots here or they move on to “bigger and better” things. Over my professional career I have gotten used to this rotating door of people that come to rural Montana to get some experience and then move on. This is not true of Yvonne, she left to pursue her education and came back to serve the people of the Hi-line. That investment and commitment to her community is one of the things that make her the best candidate for the position of District Court Judge of this area.

Yvonne has a rich combination of experience in the field of law that would be difficult to match by any other candidate. She has worked as a Deputy County Attorney and also served as County Attorney in Blaine County. During her time as Blaine County Attorney, Yvonne had the difficult job of prosecuting Larry Jackson who killed Deputy Joshua Rutherford, her friend and colleague, in the line of duty. Yvonne successfully prosecuted this case with the highest degree of professionalism and, as a member of the local law enforcement community at that time, I can say that her strength of character and commitment to justice was deeply felt and greatly appreciated.

After serving Blaine County for 10 years Yvonne went on to work for Montana Legal Services. This was about the time that I began work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a Victim Specialist serving the Rocky Boy and Fort Belknap Indian Reservations. In her capacity as an

attorney serving victims of Domestic Violence, Yvonne assisted many of my victims, helping them to obtain orders of protection, dissolutions of marriage and developing parenting plans.

Most recently I have had the pleasure of working with Yvonne in her position as Tribal Prosecutor for the Fort Belknap Tribe. She also serves as a Special Assistant United States Attorney for the United States Attorney's Office. Yvonne has established a reputation as a fair and honest prosecutor and during the five years she has served the Fort Belknap Reservation she has earned the trust and respect of the Tribal community.

Throughout her career Yvonne has proven herself to be a tireless public servant. She has gained experience and developed proficiency in many areas of the law and has experience working in Federal, State and Tribal Jurisdictions. With this wealth of experience, it is my belief that Yvonne is the best candidate for District Court Judge for the 17th Judicial District.

Thank you for taking the time to allow me to express my support for Yvonne Laird.

Respectfully Yours,



Heather Maclean
Victim Specialist
Federal Bureau of Investigation
P.O. Box 1040
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-7181 (wk)
(406) 390-3146 (cell)
Heather.maclean@ic.fbi.gov

Fort Belknap Indian Community



Fort Belknap Agency
656 Agency Main Street
Harlem, Montana 59526-9455
PH: (406) 353-2205
FAX: Council - (406) 353-4541
FAX: Departments - (406) 353-2797

September 28, 2016

Fort Belknap Indian Community
(Tribal Govt.)
Fort Belknap Indian Community
(Elected to administer the affairs of the community and
to represent the Assiniboiné and the Gros Ventre
Tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation)

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005
mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

RE: Letter of Recommendation – Yvonne Laird

Dear Commission:

Please accept this letter of recommendation of Yvonne Laird for the position of District Court Judge of the 17th Judicial District of Montana. Ms. Laird will take to the judiciary her manner of addressing issues in a fair, well-informed and very professional manner.

Ms. Laird started work with the Fort Belknap Indian Community (FBIC) in 2011 as a general prosecutor. Part of her duties was to establish the Office of the Prosecutor and train an assistant prosecutor.

In April 2012, under a pilot program with the U.S. Department of Justice pilot program Ms. Laird was hired as a Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) with the Fort Belknap Indian Community. The project received renewed funding in 2015. Under the development and direction of Ms. Laird, it has expanded to include a Victim Witness Specialist and Administrative Assistant as well as her continued tutelage of the general prosecutor. The SAUSA position also requires representation in federal court as well as the Fort Belknap Indian Community Court and requires her to be knowledgeable of both federal and FBIC laws and procedures and to interact with individuals from both jurisdictions.

During her tenure with the Fort Belknap Indian Community, Ms. Laird has consistently displayed exemplary legal and ethical skills in carrying out her job duties. She has conducted herself in a professional manner at all times. While performing her prosecutorial duties, Ms. Laird has also acted in an administrative capacity and as a teacher and mentor to her staff; a prosecutor, victim witness specialist, and an administrative specialist.

I strongly believe that Ms. Laird will uphold her judicial obligations in the same ethical and professional manner as she has consistently displayed and would be a great asset to the bench. Please do not hesitate to call me at 406 353-8309 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark L. Azure".

MARK L. AZURE
President

Caryn Mace
PO Box 1333
Harlem, MT 59526

Judicial Nomination Commission
State of Montana
c/o Lois Menzies
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Dear Commission,

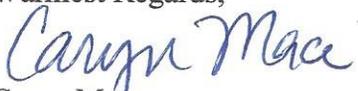
My name is Caryn Mace and I am writing on behalf of Yvonne Laird, regarding the position of the 17th Judicial District Court Judge. Yvonne has worked on the Ft. Belknap Reservation for five years. We met through our respective jobs; she is the SAUSA Attorney and I work in the Law Enforcement Administrative Offices. She is often in our office for meetings with my supervisors.

During this time I have gotten to know Yvonne very well and can attest for her character. She is very eloquent and sincere. She often is required to come into direct contact with less than desirable individuals while performing her duties and throughout it all, she maintains a very civil attitude. She is also extremely passionate about her work and is very dedicated to serving the people of Ft. Belknap to the best of her abilities. Her work is methodical while facing difficult people and situations.

She works with several programs and entities, including Social Services, Domestic Violence Programs, the Women's Shelter and the FBI. She is involved with the Child Protection Team and Multidisciplinary Team.

Her ambition and motivation are relentless. It is my belief that she would be an outstanding Judge. Thank you for your time and have a safe day.

Warmest Regards,


Caryn Mace

October 3, 2016

TO: Judicial Nomination Commission

FR: Janice Hawley

RE: 17th Judicial Nomination

Dear Members:

I am writing this letter of support for Yvonne Gaye Laird, 17th Judicial District Judge position that is currently being sought. I have known Yvonne Gaye Laird for well over 10+ years. As the former Personnel Manager for the Fort Belknap Tribe, I witnessed the strong work ethics that Yvonne possesses and recruited her to work for the Tribe. I have witnessed her strong compassion in working with Indian people and know that she has their best interest at heart. She has worked long hours for the Tribe to ensure that law is being upheld and individual rights are being protected. This is not only true for Indian people but also for non-Indian individuals as well. She possesses the skills and work ethics to become the newly appointed 17th Judicial District Judge. Not only does she possess the skills she also has the experience to support a well-appointed Judge.

I am asking that you fully support Yvonne Gay Laird, and appoint her as the next 17th Judicial District Judge. There is no other candidate that is best suited for this position and I fully support her appointment.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janice Hawley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Janice Hawley

PO Box 333

Harlem, Mt. 59526

STEPHEN A. GANNON
Attorney at Law

P.O. Box 337
1308 Franklin Street
Fort Benton, MT 59442

Ph. 406-622-3246
Fax 406-622-5847

September 30, 2016

Re: Judicial Nomination; 17th Judicial District

To: Judicial Nomination Commission

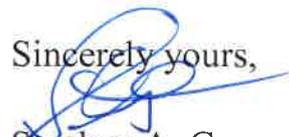
Please consider this a letter of support for Yvonne Laird.

I have known Yvonne for almost 20 years as a practicing attorney. Yvonne works hard, is intelligent, has compassion for the people she works with and is involved in her community. She grew up on a farm and ranch west of Havre, but has lived and practiced as attorney in the 17th Judicial District (Blaine County) since I have known her.

When we tried our first case against one another, years ago, I knew she was going to be a good attorney. She knew her facts, she knew the law and she was a worthy opponent.

I believe she would serve the people of Montana well as a judge. The qualities her agricultural upbringing helped instill would give the people of the 17th Judicial District a judge who would be organized, impartial, hard working and compassionate.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen A. Gannon
Attorney at Law

**CARLO CANTY
4 ELKHORN DRIVE
CLANCY, MT 59634**

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Ms. Lois Menzies
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3005

Dear Ms. Zadick, Ms. Bishop, Ms. Halverson, Mr. Englund, Mr. Harper, Mr. Larson and Hon. Judge Simonton:

I write to give my highest recommendation to Ms. Yvonne Laird as successor to the Hon. John C. McKeon as District Judge for the Seventeenth Judicial District.

For the few of you I do not know personally, I am currently a Partner at the Helena law firm of Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry & Hoven. I have been in practice for 26 years and historically served Montana as an Assistant Attorney General and County Prosecutor in Butte.

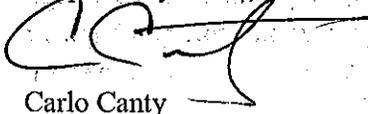
I came to know and respect Ms. Laird when she and I served as co-counsel for the State of Montana after a tragic homicide that took the life of Officer Josh Rutherford of the Blaine County Sheriff's Office. Leading this prosecution could not have been easy for Ms. Laird as Josh was her beloved friend. In spite of this, she drew upon her strength of character to meet this challenge with exemplary professionalism.

Ms. Laird and I worked closely together on every aspect of this capital case for over two years under the exacting and rigorous supervision of Judge McKeon. I have appeared before a great number of District Judges in Montana and can say without hesitation that I have never had a Judge demand more of my attention and effort than Judge McKeon. I can also say with confidence that I also learned more from him, and grew more as a person and attorney, than from any other experience I have had or will have during my career. Knowing firsthand the exacting requirements of practice and character established by Judge McKeon in the Seventeenth Judicial District, and what it will take to meet them, I can attest that Ms. Laird has been truly tested and is well-capable of continuing his legacy.

I also know Ms. Laird's family including her husband Myles. You simply won't find a more caring and hospitable group of people who personify what makes Montana great.

Once you've met with Yvonne, I have every confidence you will agree that she is truly worthy of the position she seeks and should be considered by Governor Bullock. I thank each of you for your service to the Judiciary and the State of Montana.

Respectfully Yours,



Carlo Canty

September 30, 2016

Judicial Nomination Committee
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of the Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am writing to strongly support the nomination of Yvonne Laird for the Seventeenth Judicial District Court of Montana.

I came to know Yvonne when I was hired as a paralegal to support the Domestic Violence Unit at Montana Legal Services Association. While all of the attorneys I worked with were great at what they did it became apparent that Yvonne was a valuable asset to our practice group. During case reviews and other staff meetings you quickly realized she had a wide array of knowledge and experience in not only family law matters but all other areas of the law. As I am sure you are all aware family law cases and especially those involving domestic violence often come with so many other legal issues. Having an attorney that understands this is invaluable.

As a non-attorney who has been in a position of working with and for Yvonne I can tell you that she treats everyone with the same level of respect. Yvonne was always there to help guide me through the learning curves and to make sure I understood not only the "how to" but the "why".

During my time at Montana Legal Services Association I not only provided paralegal support to the Domestic Violence Unit of Montana Legal Services but also coordinated pro-bono services in Yellowstone County. More and more litigants are self-represented. Yvonne has just the right temperament and skill set to work with self-represented litigants. She has compassion and understanding but also a keen awareness of the law. Yvonne would do all that she could to make the process as user friendly as possible and help ease some of the intimidation that comes with appearing in court.

I truly cannot think of a more well-rounded and qualified applicant to pass along to Governor Bullock for nomination than Yvonne Laird.

Sincerely,



Ariane Wittman

AW/

To whom it may concern:

Please consider Yvonne Laird
to the appointment of 17th district court

We've known Yvonne for years,
she has always been fair and
impartial in all her dealings within
the legal system.

While Yvonne served as Blaine
County attorney she had to prosecute
our juvenile son Ryan. Ryan had
many problems at the time and
Yvonne was very fair in her capacity
as Blaine County attorney. Our son
spent time in the White Water home
for boys, this was the best thing
for him as it kept him from going
to jail yet put him in a place to
help rehabilitate him. We know so
many people that have worked with
Yvonne, and they all say the same
thing, Fair and Impartial. That is
so important in today's society.

We feel that Yvonne is qualified to

Yvonne is very capable of running and winning a campaign as she has done it in the past. We think the people of Blaine county would love to see her on the bench.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely, Ruth and Robert Dannels

Billings:
D. Michael Eakin
Laurie Andreen Grygiel



Bozeman:
Jeannette Ellen Berry

Eakin, Berry & Grygiel, PLLC
Attorneys at Law

Via Email Only: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

Judicial Nomination Committee
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of the Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Yvonne Laird Recommendation Seventeenth Judicial District Court

I am writing to recommend the Commission select and the Governor appoint Yvonne Laird for the open judicial position in the Seventeenth Judicial District Court.

An increasing portion of a district judge's responsibilities is dealing with self-represented litigants. I have known Yvonne for approximately 10 years and know how she conducts herself in her practice. Yvonne has had a wide range of experience. She has served as County Attorney, staff attorney for Montana Legal Services, tribal prosecutor and private practitioner. She has had to deal with unrepresented adverse parties on a routine basis in both criminal and civil cases. She always treats the unrepresented with respect. She has the appropriate temperament and patience to deal with the self-represented.

I also know that Yvonne treats opposing counsel fairly. I remember a discussion we had about one attorney who was in ill-health but was trying to muddle through a hearing with Yvonne on the other side. While I do not remember the precise outcome, I do remember she had handled the issue in a way that was fair to opposing counsel and still protected her client's rights.

Certainly not to be overlooked are Yvonne's legal acumen and her work ethic. She brings the high-line ranch family work ethic to her practice of law. She is someone you can count on to get the job done. In addition, I trust her legal judgment implicitly.

I urge the Commission to forward her name to the Governor to be appointed as judge for the Seventeenth Judicial District.

Sincerely,

/s/ D. Michael Eakin

D. Michael Eakin

DME/aw

Keith Gustitis
1005 Ohio Street
Chinook, MT 59523
September 29, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

Thank you for reading my recommendation of Yvonne Laird as applicant for the 17th Judicial District Judge.

I am employed with Heberly & Associates, Consulting Engineers in Havre Montana as a draftsman. I have worked for Heberly for 14 years after graduating from MSU-Northern with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Design Drafting Technology. My occupation and company have given me the opportunity to work along the Hi-Line, into the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, and throughout the state thus allowing me to witness the diverse demographics of Montana.

I have known Yvonne and her family for 10 years through the community and our children. Our personal experiences have taken us through birthday parties, school events, casual gatherings, and 4H meetings/activities as of recently. Yvonne is an engaged parent and active in her community. On a personal level, I have observed Yvonne to lead by example and follow through with her intentions. She is open-minded and unbiased, regardless of the topic. Yvonne is very respectful and willing to listen, but careful in her legal work and community activities. She is truthful and sincere and treats everyone with kindness.

I believe that Yvonne has the diversity of legal experience, determined work ethic, insightful knowledge, and strong commitment to the Hi-Line which encompasses the 17th Judicial District, to be considered the next 17th Judicial District Judge. I strongly express my support for Yvonne Laird for this judicial position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Gustitis". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Keith Gustitis

Fort Belknap Law Enforcement

656 Agency Main Street
5219 Trailer B
Harlem, Montana 59526
(406) 353-2933 FAX (406) 353-2400

September 30, 2016

Ms Yvonne Laird, has been employed by the Fort Belknap Tribes since before I began working here in August of 2014. As she and I can both attest to; the environment is not always positively geared towards law enforcement.

Ms. Laird has shown great resolve in maintaining her professionalism and not being duplicitous, while dealing with others who are not so likeminded. She has prosecuted to the best of her ability, while dealing with a challenging court system and has worked very hard at ensuring that her clients are afforded justice.

It has been a pleasure working with Ms. Laird. She has assisted me with numerous professional situations and has been a wealth of legal information for myself and other police officers as well. She has also assisted me with training on legal topics that pertain the police officers.

I truly believe that Ms. Laird would be an asset to whatever position she is a nominee for. I'm confident that she would do a very good job should she be selected.

If you have questions feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Hawkan Haakanson Sr.
Chief of Police, Ft. Belknap Tribes
Harlem Mt. 59526
(406) 353-8307
hawkjh.81@gmail.com

Date: October 3, 2016

To: Judicial Nomination Commission

From: Havre Police Lieutenant, Tri-Agency Drug Task Force Project Director

Aaron Wittmer

Dear Judicial Commission,

I am writing a letter of support for Ms. Yvonne Gaye Laird for the 17th Judicial District Judge. I have known Ms. Laird since she was the Blaine County Attorney and then when she went onto being a special prosecutor for Fort Belknap Tribal Courts. During that time, Ms. Laird is a hard worker and highly motivated to put the best case before the court. I have had the privilege to have Ms. Laird prosecute drug cases while I worked as a Drug Task Force Agent assigned to the Tri-Agency Drug Task Force. Ms. Laird was always fair for both sides involved. I did not always agree with her decision but it was what was best for everyone involved. Ms. Laird was never heavy handed and had everyone's best interests at heart.

I am aware that Ms. Laird is a moral and ethical person. She would make the right decision, at the right time, for the right reasons. I have never heard her name being brought up in the next scandal that has been publicized by today's media. Ms. Laird holds the same moral and ethics towards the law enforcement officers as well as the community members. Ms. Laird believes that law enforcement must conduct themselves with the upmost high moral and ethical standards. If law enforcement personnel were to cut corners or did something improper during the investigation she would not continue to prosecute the individual and use it as a learning tool to mold officers in the high standards the court expects and requires.

I believe that if you choose Ms. Laird for the 17th Judicial District Court Judge you would not find a more level headed, hard working, ethical and moral person for this position. That is why I recommend Ms. Yvonne Gaye Laird for the next District Court Judge

Cordially,



Aaron Wittmer

Lieutenant

Havre Police Department

Baldwin Court Reporting Services
306 3rd Avenue
P.O. Box 1905
Havre, Montana 59501
stacy@baldwinreporting.com
www.baldwinreporting.com
406.879.8084



September 30, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

To the Nomination Committee Members:

This letter is to express my support for Yvonne Laird and endorse her for the 17th Judicial District Court vacancy.

I met Yvonne shortly after I began working for the 12th Judicial District Court as a court reporter almost twenty years ago. During the occasions that I have worked with her in a professional capacity Yvonne has always conducted herself with the utmost professionalism. Yvonne is a very talented and capable attorney and has experience in a number of areas of the law that will serve her well should she be appointed to the position of Judge of the 17th Judicial District Court. Yvonne has experience in criminal law and civil law and has also successfully negotiated several contracts with the Fort Belknap Tribal Government, where she has served as a Tribal Prosecutor for the past five years.

I believe that Yvonne embodies the qualities that one seeks in a Judge – loyalty, honesty, integrity, intelligence and diplomacy. It is my opinion that she would be an excellent Judge and would work hard for the people of Phillips, Valley, and Blaine County.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Stacy M. Baldwin'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stacy M. Baldwin
Registered Profession Reporter

October 1, 2016

To the Members of the Nomination Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of Yvonne Laird's nomination for the position of district court judge for the 17th Judicial District.

I first became acquainted with Yvonne when I moved from IL. to Montana in 1974 to begin farming with my husband, Verges. Yvonne and her family were one of our closest neighbors and also members of our church family. Yvonne would babysit for us on occasion. As our family grew we began to rely on Yvonne extensively, especially during Harvest. It gave me peace of mind to know that my three sons were safe and well cared for. Not only did Yvonne take care of the boys while Verges and I were on the combines, but she also cooked Harvest meals and delivered them to the field. At this time Yvonne was still in high school, but she performed her daily tasks as a person much older would have. Yvonne was consistently punctual, extremely conscientious and always compassionate and caring where the boys were concerned. She would, on a regular basis, 'go above and beyond the call of duty.' If she saw something that needed to be done Yvonne would take it upon herself to tackle the task whether she had been asked to or not. To say that Yvonne was extremely capable and consistent would be an understatement.

As Yvonne took in new challenges in college, law school and employment positions we saw the same qualities emerge. She was dedicated and hard-working, persevering in any goal she set before herself. Yvonne was always committed to excellence in her performance and strived for perfection.

Yvonne Laird is an exceptional individual who is concerned about her family, her community and her state. She is now and has been involved in activities that her daughter participates in including 4-H, school and church events, and Girl Scouts of America. It is easy for me to say without any hesitation that Yvonne is a well-rounded, intelligent, concerned and caring person who always strives to do her best. We firmly believe that Yvonne would be an impartial and fair minded judge.

Please consider Yvonne Laird as a nominee for the position of district court judge for the 17th Judicial District.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter in support of Yvonne.

Sincerely,

Verges and Noreen Aageson

Handwritten signatures of Verges and Noreen Aageson. The signature for Verges is written in a cursive style, and the signature for Noreen is also cursive and appears to be written below Verges's signature.

September 23, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P O Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3005

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

Although I've never before taken an active part in the political arena, I feel compelled to write in support of Yvonne Laird as Seventeenth Judicial District Judge. I have personally known Yvonne for well over ten years. More than familiar with Montana's Hi-Line, she is an asset to her community and her profession.

Yvonne has actively availed herself to community service. Since 2007, Yvonne has been a member of the Board of Directors of HRDC Region 4. She is active in her church, 4-H, and provided leadership in successfully raising over thirty thousand dollars for a family battling the father's cancer.

Yvonne is dedicated not only to her family, friends, and neighbors, but to the justice systems of our nation. She has served as both a Deputy County Attorney and County Attorney. Through her recent professional relationships with the Fort Belknap Indian Community, she has become an influential bridge between cultures, certainly of benefit for Montana judgeships.

Personally, I know Yvonne to be compassionate, yet grounded in reality. She demonstrates high ethical standards. She's proven herself to be an intelligent, independent, open-minded thinker, listening to both sides of a situation before offering advice or making any decision. Yvonne is organized, timely, and efficient in managing her professional and personal responsibilities. Without hesitation, I am proud to support Yvonne in her application for this judgeship. Yvonne Laird will be an asset to the judicial system.

If I can be of any assistance to your consideration of Yvonne, please feel free to contact me at (406)945-1785 or P O Box 276, Harlem, Montana 59526. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay Schmitt
Mother and Grandmother
Retired Special Needs Teacher

October 3, 2016

TO: Judicial Nomination Commission

FR: Tescha Hawley, MSW, MHA

RE: 17th Judicial Nomination

Dear Members:

I am writing this letter of support for Yvonne Gaye Laird, 17th Judicial District Judge position that is currently being sought. I have known Yvonne Gaye Laird for well over 20+ years and fully support her appointment as the 17th Judicial District Judge. Yvonne and I have worked together professionally in various different positions. Yvonne has displayed strong leadership skills, remains fair and impartial to very complex situations and upholds the law to its fullest extent. She has extensive experience in working with all areas of the law which include working in Indian Country, which at times is very challenging and complex. Yvonne is very credible and honest in her work ethics and will make a great 17th Judicial District Judge.

I am asking that you fully support Yvonne Gay Laird, and appoint her as the next 17th Judicial District Judge. There is no other candidate that is best suited for this position and I fully support her appointment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tescha Hawley, MSW, MHA

PO Box 1152

Harlem, Mt. 59526

September 30, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court of Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Judicial Nomination Commission:

This letter is in reference to the nomination of Yvonne Gaye Laird for District Court Judge for the 17th Judicial District to fill the seat to be vacated by Judge John McKeon.

It is my pleasure to recommend Yvonne Gaye Laird. I have known Ms. Laird for the past 20 year and have had the opportunity to observe her as an outstanding mother, community member and practicing lawyer.

While serving as Blaine County Superintendent of Schools for 23 years I had the pleasure of having Ms. Laird represent our county as Blaine County Attorney from December 1996-2006. During those nine years I found Ms. Laird to be knowledgeable of school law assisting me with school hearings, tuition issues, truancy issues and all other matters. Ms. Laird responded timely to those requests of my office keeping Blaine County from any further litigation. I respect Ms. Laird for her integrity and willingness to assist others both in her profession and community.

It is my opinion Yvonne Gaye Laird would be an excellent choice and that your committee find her favorable to be nominated for the position of district court judge for the 17th Judicial District (Blaine, Phillips and Valley counties.)

Sincerely,

Carol L. Elliot



*Bardanouve Ranch
PO Box 193
Harlem, MT 59526*

Sept. 29, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

To whom it may concern:

Please consider this a letter of recommendation for Yvonne Gaye Laird, applicant for the position of district court judge for the 17th Judicial District.

As a personal friend and colleague of her husband, Myles, I have known Yvonne well for over ten years. In my opinion, her qualifications for this position fall into two distinct categories: professional and personal.

Her professional training and experience is well-documented on her formal application. She is a former county prosecutor, currently operates her own private law practice and is an advocate for victims of violent crime and domestic abuse on the Fort Belknap Reservation. Her professionalism and legal knowledge has earned her the respect of all who work with her. In addition, I can attest to the fact that she is untiring in her search for truth and justice.

Yvonne's personal qualifications for the position of District Court Judge are multi-faceted. First, she is intelligent, analytical and reasoning. She holds herself to high moral and ethical standards, and has a reputation for being honest and fair. Yvonne also has superior communication skills and listens to others, even as they express opinions which may differ from hers.

I unreservedly endorse Yvonne Laird's candidacy for District Court Judge. She has the qualities, both professional and personal, to be an exemplary judge Montana will be proud of. I am available to answer further questions at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth J. Kuntz

Elizabeth J. Kuntz
(406) 353-2806
bookladyjik@yahoo.com

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Fax (406)-357-3177**

Judicial Nomination Commission
% Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Yvonne Gaye Laird – Judicial Application for the 17th Judicial District Judge.

Dear Judicial Commission Members:

It is a privilege to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Yvonne Laird.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Laird both personally and professionally for the past 20 years.

I have owned and operated Bear Paw Title Insurance Company for 20 plus years, serving Blaine, Hill, Phillips and Valley Counties. I have worked in the same office building as Yvonne when she was the Deputy Blaine County Attorney. I have observed her stellar work ethic and willingness to listen to everyone and anyone. She has an exceptional legal mind and the ability to navigate through the most simple to complex issues that may be requested of her. She does this both accurately and efficiently. Her integrity, honor, dedication and commitment are exceptional and of the highest standard of the legal profession. She is also an excellent Mother and wife and a very gracious contributor to the community. I have watched her over the years, work tirelessly and with great dedication to her cases.

I know her to be open minded in all issues and extremely good at articulating her position. I believe that she would be fair and impartial on all issues that would come before her as the District Judge. Over her career she has had the opportunity to represent people in all facets of the law, both as a prosecutor and independent council and has done an exceptional job at both. She is currently a Special Procescutor for the United States Attorney's Office on the Fort Belknap Indian Community prosecuting sex crimes.

For the attributes stated above I feel she is the right and best choice for the District Court Judge.

Respectfully submitted



Pauly B. Miller