



Since 1915

Dean Derby, CIC, Agent
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September 16, 2016

Dear Governor Bullock,

It is my honor to recommend Rienne McElyea to replace Gallatin County District Court Judge Salvagni.

I've known Rienne McElyea for 19 years in a number of capacities. Our children have grown up together and my wife and I consider her family. We've spent countless hours hiking, skiing, dining, and socializing with friends as well as supporting a diverse array of local cultural events. I've also worked professionally with Rienne advising on insurance related issues for her clients.

Rienne has an outstanding work ethic and is well known for her professional integrity in the Bozeman community. She possesses the combination of intellect, compassion, and fairness that would benefit all from the bench. She's a voracious reader and is quite frankly one of my very favorite people to dive into conversation with. She's approachable and if she has an ego, I've not seen it.

Rienne's been a reliable and unwavering confidante throughout our 19 year friendship. She's one of the very few people I know I can count upon, and I treasure her. I'm confident that Rienne McElyea would serve our county well, fairly, and admirably as Gallatin County District Court Judge. I give my highest recommendation for your nomination of Rienne McElyea.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Derby", is written over a light blue circular watermark.

Dean A. Derby

Cook, Kevin

From: MT Supreme Court,
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2016 4:21 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- McElyea

From: Melissa Blessing [<mailto:mwellsblessing@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2016 9:46 AM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: Recommendation letter for Rienne McElyea

To the Judicial Nomination Commission,

I have known Rienne McElyea for some 20 years. We began as acquaintances sharing a book group until, over 16 years among the same 11 women, we became good friends. Ten years ago when I tried to avoid divorce, and then came to accept it's necessity, Rienne offered knowledgeable support and a breadth of understanding which provided firm ground on which to work for a good result. When I required thoughtful attention to a complicated estate restructuring and sought not only expertise but creativity for our outcome, I chose to hire Rienne and was eminently satisfied that I had.

What makes the above unusual is that Rienne and I come from diametrically opposed political backgrounds. I don't think we have ever voted for the same candidates for any position, and yet somehow we've spent 20 years agreeing, disagreeing, and thoroughly respecting one another for our views and perspectives. Rienne is highly intelligent and takes little at face value. She looks for the viewpoint that's not being spoken for, and asks expansive questions. If you give her an excellent reason to re-examine a long held ideal she has the sophistication and composure to embrace new possibilities, the humility to expect evolution, and the resolve to make determinations. Rienne is, in short, her own person: opinions, imperatives and objectivity balanced by a healthy respect for what life has yet to teach her.

I encourage you to carefully consider Rienne H. McElyea for District Court Judge.

Sincerely,
Melissa W. Blessing

Cook, Kevin

From: MT Supreme Court,
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2016 4:29 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- McElyea

From: Janel Trowbridge [<mailto:jtbozeman@live.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2016 5:36 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Cc: Rienne H McElyea
Subject: District Court Judge Nomination

Dear Governor Bullock and the Judicial Nomination Commission,

My name is Janel Trowbridge my family and I have lived in Bozeman for 15 years. During this time I worked for Lexis-Nexis, as the Director of Affinity Marketing for the West, and owned a small business. My love for Bozeman drove me to sit on the board for Rotary as well as Family Promise, and to volunteer for community events. While with Lexis-Nexis, I worked with the legal community in 15 states. I had the good fortune of spending time with influential attorneys, judges and Supreme Court Justices including the State Bar of Montana's Executive Director Chris Manos, Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy and Judge Lance Ito.

It has come to my attention that as a result of Judge Salvagni's retirement you will be appointing a new District Court Judge. I hope you have had the pleasure of meeting Rienne McElyea. I have known her for 13 years and believe that her intelligence, common sense and tenacity would serve the judiciary well. She is well thought of in the community as an independent thinking woman of strong integrity whose temperament and non-disparaging demeanor allows her to work with people of all view points in a professional manner.

It is my sincere belief that Rienne would make an excellent District Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Janel Trowbridge

Sent from Surface

8401 Goldenstein Ln
Bozeman, Mt.
59715

September 12, 2016

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

Dear Ms. Menzies,

I would like to take this opportunity to share my support for Rienne H. McElyea to fill the position of District Court Judge. I have been a resident of Montana and the Gallatin Valley for fourteen years. I have known Ms. McElyea for the majority of this time.

I have had the opportunity to spend time with Rienne McElyea under a variety of circumstances, and have grown to respect her judgment and strength of character. She takes seriously her commitment to family, career, and community. Her experience, temperament and intelligence would be valuable assets to the judicial system.

Respectfully,

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

Martha Y. Hendricks

Edmund P. Sedivy

275 S Hanley Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718
(405) 586-6367

September 15, 2016

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

RE: Rienne H. McElyea

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this recommendation of Rienne McElyea for her application for appointment to the vacant judgeship of the Eighteenth Judicial District, State of Montana.

I actively practiced law in Gallatin County, Eighteenth Judicial District for over fifty years and had the opportunity to witness the character and abilities of most all of the practicing attorneys. I believe that Rienne McElyea is one of the most competent lawyers practicing in our area.

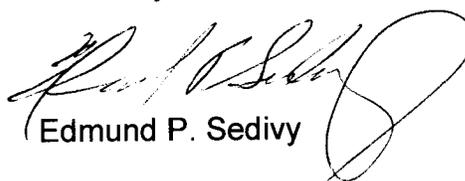
Foremost she consistently exhibited the highest of ethical standards in her practice with her clients as well as the courts and fellow attorneys.

Secondly, she regularly prepared well researched trial pleadings, briefs, motions and proposed findings and conclusions. Her oral presentations were efficient and compelling. She appeared to have devoted much time and energy to do the job right.

Finally, while she aggressively and professionally represented her clients, she maintained a respectful and cordial relationship with her opposing counsel and trial judge.

I believe Rienne McElyea's character and abilities would result in a very competent and respected judge for our district and I urge that her application be granted.

Sincerely,



Edmund P. Sedivy



Kilday & Stratton_{INC.}

Developers • Builders • Consultants

September 20, 2016

To The Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission

My name is James Kilday. I moved to Bozeman from Scottsdale, Arizona in 1999 and have resided at 11 Snow Creek Drive in Bozeman since 2001. I have developed master-planned communities, built several thousand homes, developed golf courses and club houses, commercial, industrial and high-rise office buildings and consulted with developers, builders and financial institutions both in Scottsdale and throughout the Sunbelt states for over four decades.

I am a Certified Public Accountant (1966), an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow of Stanford University's Graduate School of Business (1976) and attended the Senior Management Program in International Business at INSEAD, the European Institute of Business Administration at Fontainebleau, France (1994).

I continue to develop real estate, build homes and consult principally in Bozeman as a partner with Kilday & Stratton, Inc., a company I formed when the real estate market recovered in 2014.

During my four-decade career as a real estate developer as one might imagine, I have had extensive dealings with attorneys on a regular basis both in and out of the courtroom.

I met Rienne McElyea when I was interviewing attorneys for a divorce suit. She was the fifth attorney I interviewed and as that interview approached, I was concerned as the previous four attorneys I had met with were disappointing to say the least. The divorce was shaping up to be somewhat acrimonious and there was a complicated pre-nuptial agreement to be dealt with which I expected the other side to challenge and attack with vigor. I needed the best family law attorney available and based on my experience to date I was rapidly losing confidence that I would find someone to successfully represent me.

So, based on the results to date I approached the initial interview with Rienne McElyea with considerable trepidation. I quickly briefed her on the salient parts of the pre-nuptial agreement which I felt would be the other side's primary focus and how their interpretation of that document could impact the cost to me in the event our position did not prevail. One cannot imagine my relief when she asked me several very poignant and relevant questions and made several observations which drove directly to the core issues of the pre-nuptial agreement and how they might be dealt with defensively to our benefit. I retained her on the spot.

With Rienne's knowledge, competent guidance and clear-eyed vision we successfully negotiated the rocks and shoals of the case and were able to reach agreement, which was completely satisfactory to me, in the second mediation session.

There are a lot of things that I can say about Rienne McElyea's competence having worked closely with her on an extremely difficult case for almost a year. But, the most important one is that Rienne numbers among the most competent and capable attorneys I have ever had the pleasure of dealing with and I have no doubt that she is one of those most qualified attorneys you could select to fill the position of District Court Judge for the Eighteenth Judicial District.

Respectfully submitted,


James M Kilday
Owner and Partner

3476 East Shore Drive
Helena, Montana 59602
September 19, 2016

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

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am pleased to be writing this letter of recommendation in support of Rienne McElyea in her bid for appointment to the position of District Court Judge. My name is Linda Koelzer, a middle school teacher of three separate Histories and a section of English, retired from the Three Forks School District since 2009, now residing at Canyon Ferry Lake. I became acquainted with Rienne, when a good friend of mine passed away, and I was in need of a lawyer to guide me through the Personal Representative's maze of duties.

Rienne McElyea is a focused, organized individual, who successfully combines these traits with common sense, an honest approach, and heart. All of which have been priceless in keeping me on track while I'm navigating the legalities of a rather convoluted probate. She is always available to help find an answer to a dilemma. I appreciate her sound advice, her guidance, her professionalism, and her sense of humor which could make me laugh during some rather stressful moments. I have no doubt, that as a District Judge, this very professional woman, blessed with these qualifications, would be an asset to any courtroom.

Respectfully,



Linda Koelzer

TARLOW & STONECIPHER, PLLC

ATTORNEYS

JOHN H. TARLOW
TOM W. STONECIPHER
MARGARET C. WEAMER
MATT J. KELLY
ANNA M. WILLIAMS
MATT J. PUGH
AMY C. McNULTY

1705 WEST COLLEGE STREET
BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59715-4913
PHONE (406) 586-9714
FAX (406) 586-9720

September 28, 2016

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

Via Email
mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

RE: Rienne McElyea

Dear Commission:

I write to strongly endorse and support the candidacy of Rienne H. McElyea as the successor to Judge Salvagni in the Montana Eighteenth Judicial District Court.

I have been in active, private practice for 42 years, 18 in Chicago, the last 24 here. In that time I have litigated extensively in federal and state courts and worked on appeals in the Seventh and Ninth Circuits. This has yielded experiences before many, many judges. Based on that experience, I believe Ms. McElyea is extremely qualified to become a district court judge.

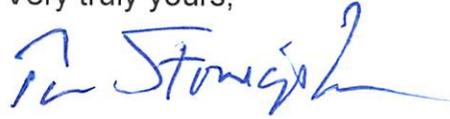
In my experience, Ms. McElyea is smart, diligent, empathetic, and not at all jaded from an extensive practice that has included a concentration in family law. I have seen her stand up to formidable and high-profile (at least for Montana) opponents. She has, in my experience, always handled herself well in those situations, being respectful and non-confrontational while remaining a zealous, effective advocate for her clients, persistent, focused on them and their interests. She has, in my view, absolutely the right temperament to serve as a judge and be fair, impartial, and extraordinarily effective, regardless of the temperament of whomever may be representing litigants before her.

Ms. McElyea has raised two sons with her husband, Russ McElyea, has been actively involved in community efforts and endeavors, and is well grounded as a parent and an active participant in the life of Bozeman. These qualities and experiences also acquit her well to serve as a district court judge.

I admire her greatly and give you my strongest recommendation in support of her candidacy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Stonecipher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "S".

Tom W. Stonecipher

TWS/jms

TARLOW & STONECIPHER, PLLC
ATTORNEYS

JOHN H. TARLOW
TOM W. STONECIPHER
MARGARET C. WEAMER
MATT J. KELLY
ANNA M. WILLIAMS
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Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Rienne H. McElyea

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I write this letter in support of your consideration of Rienne H. McElyea to be appointed Judge in the Eighteenth Judicial District.

My name is Buzz Tarlow and I have been in private legal practice in Bozeman for 27 years. Our firm is primarily a business oriented law firm and my practice is primarily in the field of construction law.

I have known Ms. McElyea since she came to Bozeman more than 20 years ago and have had an opportunity to have a few cases with her over those years.

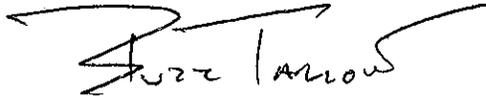
Rienne has always approached the private practice of law with dignity, a pleasant demeanor, and an open mind toward resolving legal issues. I recall working on a fairly complex case against her many years ago and I was impressed with her knowledge of the law, her ability to cogently express her client's position and, perhaps most importantly, her ability to listen to the arguments that I expressed on behalf of my client. It was a pleasure dealing with her and since that time I have remained on a very friendly basis with her.

I think that Rienne exhibits all of the best qualities necessary to be an effective District Court Judge. She is an excellent listener, humble, and hard working. She has extensive knowledge of domestic relations law which, although I do not practice in that field, I understand it to be of very significant importance in the day to day work of a District Court Judge.

I am confident that Rienne would be a very hard working and competent addition to our bench here in Gallatin County. Her personality, enthusiasm, and dedication all demonstrate to me that she would be an excellent judge.

I hope that you will give Ms. McElyea's candidacy careful consideration. I support her enthusiastically.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Tarlow". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John H. Tarlow

JHT/jdw

CC: Rienne H. McElyea
One West Main
Bozeman, MT 59715

September 26, 2016

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

Dear Nomination Committee,

Over the years, I have written many recommendation letters but never one with such magnitude. Recommending an individual who is charged with meting out justice and upholding civil and criminal law in our society needs to be an individual with a very special balance of talents. It takes more than simply knowing the law. It takes someone to apply the law fairly.

Rienne McElyea possesses the knowledge, experience and practicality to hold the position of District Court Judge. I've known Ms. McElyea for nearly two decades on both a professional and personal level and can attest to her character strength, integrity and need to ferret out the truth in people. Furthermore, she performs these tasks with compassion and unwavering fairness.

Ms. McElyea is a devoted business woman, mother, wife and friend to many. She is a seeker of fairness and an amazing citizen of this community. I know we will all be well served to have her represent our judicial system, if appointed.

Thank you,



Dianne Click
Broker/Partner
Bozeman Broker Group
406 | 556-4555

Stewart Engineering

Frank M. Stewart, P.E.

◆ email fstewart@latmt.com

3250 Prairie Smoke Road ◆ Bozeman, MT 59715 ◆ Phone (406) 586-0790

September 27, 2016

To:

Judicial Nomination Commission

c/o Lois Menzies

Office of Court Administrator

PO Box 203005

Helena, MT 59620-3005

Subject: Recommendation for Appointment of Rienne McElyea as a Gallatin County
District Court Judge

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am very pleased to learn that Rienne McElyea has applied for appointment as a District Court Judge for Gallatin County, and I highly recommend her for this position.

I am a graduate of Montana State University and have been a resident of Gallatin County for approximately thirty years. I follow the local news fairly closely and understand that the District Court handles a heavy load of varied and sometimes complex cases. From my personal knowledge of Rienne's integrity, even temperament, efficiency and high energy level, I believe she is an ideal candidate for the District Judge position.

Rienne and her family have been personal friends of my wife and myself for over twenty years, and we have had the opportunity to spend quite a bit of time together and to discuss a broad range of topics over the years. Rienne has always impressed me with her interest in learning new technical information and her willingness to examine controversial issues from both sides of the argument. I consider Rienne to be a very straightforward individual with very high principals. In addition, I have witnessed Rienne's sense of compassion when she provided many hours of care and companionship to a terminally ill mutual friend several years ago.

In summary, I believe that Rienne McElyea would make an excellent District Court Judge, and I will be happy to discuss my recommendation with anyone on the Nomination Commission who wishes to contact me regarding my thoughts on this issue.

Sincerely,



October 2, 2016

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

RE: Rienne McElyea

Please let me introduce myself. I am David Crawford, a Montana resident for 40 years and a resident of Bozeman for 31 years. I am a registered professional civil engineer and the president of a 100+ person, Montana based civil engineering consulting firm that started in 1965. I am a graduate of Montana State University, earning Bachelors of Science (1985) and Masters of Science (1987) degrees in civil engineering. I resided on the same dormitory floor with a current Gallatin County district court judge, John Brown, who may be able to vouch for my character. While at Montana State University, with John's encouragement, I became an ASMSU student senator. My wife is a long time teacher at Longfellow elementary school, and we have raised two sons in the community. Both are now attending universities in Montana.

I have been an expert witness many times, and in that role have testified in judge Holly Brown's courtroom. I have served jury duty in the Bozeman municipal court. I have attended a pretrial hearing in judge John Brown's courtroom, in a civil case. In these capacities, I have seen the importance of having an impartial, fair and professional judge.

Rienne McElyea is first and foremost a dear friend of mine and of our family. I met her and her husband Russ over 20 years ago and we have had many adventures together, with our children becoming great friends as well. My youngest son Jackson went to Austria on a Rotary Youth Exchange and lived abroad with host families for a year, about four years ago. While antelope hunting together, my son and Rienne's youngest son Reed discussed the program and Reed became inspired, applied, interviewed and was selected for an exchange. He then also traveled to Austria for a year with the same program. Both of our families have hosted international exchange students. Both my son and Rienne's son became incredible citizens of the world, in part due to these international experiences.

Rienne is also our attorney. She worked with my wife and me to create our estate planning documents, creating a will for us and thoughtfully guiding us in the difficult discussions about the eventual last days of our lives.

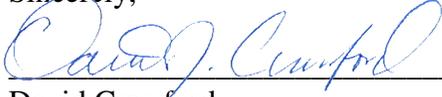
What I have observed in Rienne's roles as a friend, a mother, a wife and an attorney, is that she has a solid, friendly, but very firm way of treating people. And in her role as an attorney, she is very professional. She asks difficult questions to understand your motivations and values. As an attorney, Rienne has seen many of our friends and acquaintances. All of them have told us how happy they were to have Rienne as their advocate and attorney.

Being a judge requires clear reasoning and judgment, and a firm but understanding temperament. She must be a competent, independent thinker and must be fair and

impartial. I have seen, and so I know Rienne McElyea has these characteristics, and I strongly urge you to make her Gallatin County's next district court judge.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David Crawford
218 Lindley Place
Bozeman, MT 59715

October 4, 2016

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

Re: Rienne H. McElyea
Eighteenth Judicial District Judgeship

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

Judge Mike Salvagni has served Gallatin County and the Eighteenth Judicial District with distinction for over two decades and we appreciate his dedication to the legal profession. Rienne McElyea will be an excellent jurist and we are fortunate to have of person of her caliber and integrity apply to replace Judge Salvagni.

I have practiced with the Crowley Fleck law firm in Montana since 1995, the year I graduated from the University of Montana School of Law. In 2001, I moved from Billings to Bozeman, where I currently reside and practice. The primary focus of my practice is commercial and real property trial work. I regularly practice in both state and federal courts.

I have known Rienne professionally for most of the 15 years I have lived in Bozeman. Rienne is an exemplary lawyer. She is intelligent, articulate, diligent, and understands the trial court's critical role in applying the law to each case before the court. At a minimum, I think the public, and the legal system serving the public, expect every judge to have these qualifications and Rienne fits the bill perfectly.

However, district court judges do much more than apply the law and explain their rulings – judges work with court staff, lawyers, litigants, and the public at large to make our court system function properly. It is a demanding but important job that requires pitch perfect temperament. Rienne has the personality and temperament to be an exceptional judge.

Rienne is well known for being respectful and courteous to her colleagues, while also fulfilling her obligation to advocate for her clients. I have referred some very difficult family law matters to her over the years and I have never heard her clients, or her adversaries, say anything disparaging about her or her conduct. Rather, her clients commend her for bringing a sense of focus, fairness, integrity and calm to these difficult cases. These are remarkable qualities that will serve her, and the state of Montana, well if we are fortunate enough to have her take the bench.

Rienne has gained the respect of her clients and colleagues. I recommend her without reservation. Thank you for your work on the Commission and consideration of her application.

Sincerely,

CROWLEY FLECK PLLP

By



David M. Wagner



October 1, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to enthusiastically recommend Rienne McElyea as our next Gallatin County district court judge. I have known Rienne since 1993 and cannot say enough about the high quality of her character, her legal expertise and grounded decision making capabilities.

My husband, Bruce Combs, practiced with Rienne at the Berg Law Firm in the 1990's and I was able to witness Rienne's initial growth as an attorney first hand as I would visit them both onsite. She has always been bright, but it was a joy to watch how she deepened into the well-rounded legal practice with emotional intelligence. Rienne chose areas in which she could serve well and sustainably. It is no surprise, twenty-three years later that Rienne continues to be a highly-respected and sought-after attorney. Bruce and I have watched many burn out from the demands of litigation and difficult clients, yet Rienne's wise and centered nature has made her a competent legal resource to this day. I trust that she can serve on the bench with this same commitment and full engagement for decades to come.

As a long time Community Mediation Center mediator, I was also lucky to serve with Rienne as a Small Claims Court mediation volunteer. We were always happy to have Rienne's expertise in this program.

Rienne recommended me to a client as family business dispute facilitator over the past decade. I was pleased to be able to support Rienne's work and be able to again witness her wise counsel with these clients. You land in competent and wise hands when Rienne takes your case. She understands the law and human nature and is based in solid ethics. Rienne is a clear thinker and I cannot think of anyone better to serve as our judge. We would frankly all be lucky to have this great mind and heart on our bench.

If you have any questions or wish additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me, deidre@combsandcompany.com or 406.522.8829. Thank you for your kind consideration of Rienne McElyea.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Deidre Combs

October 3, 2016

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

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Kathy Derby. I am a long-time Bozeman resident having grown up here, graduated from MSU, and explored a rewarding career in teaching at Anderson School for the last 27 years. My husband and I feel very fortunate to have established careers, and raised two children close to family and friends. I am honored to write this letter of recommendation for my friend Ms. Rienne McElyea.

Rienne and I met 20 years ago through mutual friends. We soon found many shared interests in the love of the outdoors, literature, cooking, and family. We have been fortunate to have the love, support and friendship of a large group of other long-time Bozeman residents. Many of the reasons I find Rienne to be a wonderful friend, are the same reasons I think she will make a valuable judge. She is thoughtful and caring when choosing her words, and forming her opinions. I can trust her to be honest and balance facts with empathy and sympathy for both sides of an issue. Rienne takes pride in working hard and asking tough questions. She plays a well-respected part in the Bozeman community and cares deeply about the issues surrounding its people. She is adventurous, is sure of herself, and her abilities to practice law. When she commits to a task, she is all in, and sees it through to the end. She finds ways to make the things that are important to her happen. She leads an organized, disciplined, and balanced life. Rienne loves to be mentally challenged, always moving forward in life. She surrounds herself with strong men and women of conviction. Rienne is dependable, professional, and holds things in confidence. She will make a fine and fair judge.

Sincerely,

Kathy Derby
501 W. Arnold
Bozeman, Mt. 59715

LAW OFFICE OF KATHARINE E. LEQUE, PLLC

25 Apex Drive, Suite B, Bozeman, Montana 59718
katharine@lequelaw.com • www.lequelaw.com
Phone: (406)404-1106

October 10, 2016

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

Via E-Mail:
mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

Re: Rienne H. McElyea
Eighteenth Judicial District Judgeship Vacancy

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

I write to recommend Rienne H. McElyea for the Eighteenth Judicial District Judgeship vacancy in Gallatin County, Montana. I had the honor of working closely with Rienne while I was employed as an Associate Attorney at Berg, Lilly & Tollefsen, P.C. from April 2014 to September 2015. During that time, Rienne assisted me with various litigation matters, including multiple guardianship and domestic relation cases. Rienne also taught me the importance of giving back to the community through volunteer work and serving on the boards of non-profit organizations.

In September 2015, I decided to open my own practice. Opening a law practice just three years out of law school is both exciting and stressful, especially when pursuing a new practice area. I owe a great deal of my success this last year to a handful of mentors in the community, Rienne included.

I often see Rienne at the Gallatin Self-Help Law Center. Experienced attorneys such as Rienne are one of the many reasons why I volunteer. I recall one particular afternoon where neither Rienne nor I had a client. I seized the opportunity to ask Rienne about a family law issue and how to best approach the situation before she could leave. We pulled out a statute book and together we developed a strategy. I left that day feeling more confident because she had taken time to help me consider different aspects of the case.

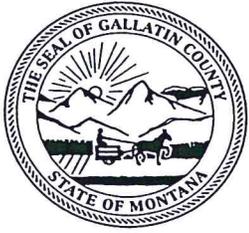
Rienne is extremely professional, hardworking, well-spoken and genuinely cares about the people she serves. I have seen her interact with several clients and admire the way she takes the time to explain the law in everyday terms. Her experience in the legal profession is evident.

Because of Rienne's commitment to the legal profession, I believe Rienne would make an excellent district court judge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katharine E. Leque". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Katharine E. Leque



JENNIFER BRANDON
CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR

CASSANDRA A. ERHARDT
MANAGEMENT SUPERVISOR

KATHY PUETT
TRAINING SUPERVISOR

DEPUTIES

JOLIE CHURCH

CAROL E. FILLBACH

LINDA M. JOHNSON

ANDREA C. STIEG

BARBARA HANOSEK

JESI STAHL

DON ADAMS

CARA EDGERLEY

EMMA POTRATZ

October 12, 2016

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

Re: District Court Judge Position – Eighteenth Judicial District

To Whom It May Concern:

I have worked with Rienne McElyea through the District Court system for more than fifteen years. In that time Rienne has shown herself to be an extremely qualified and knowledgeable attorney who puts forth her full effort in representing clients. Rienne's knowledge of the law and her ability to consider both sides fairly are beneficial for a candidate for District Court Judge.

I am also aware that even though Rienne is a very successful and busy attorney in the community, she willingly volunteers her time to be a mentor for other attorneys and to advise clients at the Gallatin Legal Assistance Clinic which provides free legal advice to low income individuals. She treats everyone at the clinics with a great deal of respect. Her willingness to volunteer shows her deep commitment to improving the legal system and providing access to justice for everyone.

All in all, I believe Rienne's knowledge, character, and temperament would be ideally suited for the position. She is an individual that our community would trust, respect, and be proud to call District Court Judge.

Cordially,

JENNIFER BRANDON
Clerk of District Court/Public Administrator

JB

September 15, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
Office of Court Administrator
P O Box 203005
Helena MT 59620-3005

RE: Rienne McElyea
Gallatin County District Court Judge applicant

Dear Commission:

I write in support of appointing Rienne McElyea to complete Judge Salvagni's term. Her experience, coupled with both a calm demeanor and impartial ears and eyes, will serve our community well in this role.

Rienne has been a friend of mine for 19 years. I have worked on campus at Montana State University all of these years, so it is as fellow 'hunting widows' that I have spent quality time with her. I have seen her in action as she handles situations containing strong opinions amid strong personalities not only within our circle of brides but within larger and extended group settings. I would select her as my attorney if such were allowed amongst friends, and do not have one shred of concern at her traits being anything other than a true boon to our court system.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Susan Fraser
610 W Lamme
Bozeman MT 59715
406.582.0932
sfraser@montana.edu

**Brenda R. Gilbert
District Court Judge
Sixth Judicial District
414 East Callender
Livingston, Montana 59047**

**Judicial Nomination Commission
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3005**

**Re: Reference for Rienne McElyea, Applicant for Eighteenth Judicial
District Court Judge position**

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing to you concerning the application of Rienne McElyea for the position of District Court Judge for the Eighteenth Judicial District Court. I am writing to provide a personal recommendation regarding Ms. McElyea's application.

I have known Ms. McElyea for over twenty years. During my time spent in private practice, I developed knowledge regarding her skill as an attorney, her character and her reputation in the legal community.

Ms. McElyea has the well-rounded legal background and experience in the practice of law to come to the bench well-prepared for the varied subject matter one encounters as a district court judge. She is, without exception in my experience, always well-prepared for her work as an attorney. Ms. McElyea has an excellent legal mind that she combines with a good measure of common sense. She has a good grasp of the big picture, while appropriately attending to detail.

It is Ms. McElyea's character that causes her to stand out as an applicant for the district judge position. In the many years when Ms. McElyea and I were both practicing law, we had a number of occasions when we were on opposite sides of cases where the circumstances between the clients were highly acrimonious. Despite this fact, Ms. McElyea

demonstrated tremendous professionalism and patience and she had the tools to diffuse conflict. In fact, we never had a cross word pass between us, in any case where we were opposing counsel. This level of patience and ability to move a situation forward in the face of conflict is crucial to a district court judge.

The experience of working with Ms. McElyea over the course of many years has given me great insight into her character. Ms. McElyea is honest and truthful. She has excellent moral character and a very strong work ethic. Ms. McElyea does what she says she is going to do. I trust her implicitly.

Ms. McElyea has an excellent reputation in the legal community, both locally and across the State. If appointed, she would come to the bench with the respect of the bar.

Ms. McElyea's combination of intellect, experience, character and patience would allow her to serve the Eighteenth Judicial District as an excellent district court judge. If I may provide you with any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Brenda R. Gilbert

October 6, 2016

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

Dear Members of the Commission,

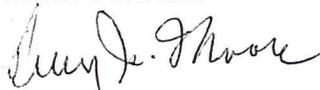
Rienne Hartman McElyea has submitted an application for appointment to the position of Judge for the Eighteenth Judicial District of the State of Montana. I urge the commission to include her name among those forwarded to the Governor for his consideration when making the appointment.

Ms. McElyea is possessed of all of the attributes we seek in any judge. She is patient, gives consideration of the opinion of others, is careful in her speech and has a calm and judicious temperament. These attributes complement her thorough knowledge of the law.

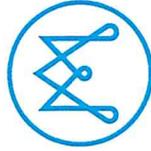
Her practice over the years has been diverse. It has provided her with an understanding of the many and varied circumstances under which the law must be applied -- fairly in every instance. As a judge Ms. McElyea would assure that each person accused of wrongdoing would receive the full protection of the law. Those who may have suffered damage or injury at the hands of others can expect respectful and even handed consideration of their claims.

I became acquainted with Rienne McElyea when she arrived in Montana several years ago. Over time I've found her to be insightful, articulate, resilient, principled and – perhaps of most importance – possessed of resolve.

Please include the name Rienne Hartman McElyea among those you submit to the governor for his consideration when he chooses a judge for the Eighteenth Judicial District.



Perry J, (Jim) Moore
1547 Hunters Way #214
Bozeman, Montana 59718



ELEMENT
LAW GROUP

October 4, 2016

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

RE: *Rienne McElyea's Application for Appointment to the Eighteenth Judicial District Court Judgeship*

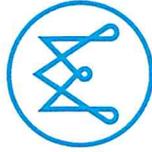
Dear Judicial Nomination Commission Members,

I am writing to you in support of Rienne McElyea as part of the invited public comment on the applicants for appointment to the Eighteenth Judicial District Court Judgeship. I have been a member in good standing of the Montana State Bar since 2010.

I have known Rienne McElyea for several years and she became my mentor early on in my career. Before I had the opportunity to work with her side-by-side, I knew Rienne was an ethical, intelligent, and polished attorney. Her trial experience is highly spoken of and her reputation in the Gallatin County lawyering community is stellar.

Rienne stepped in to mentor me when I needed senior advice on a complicated family law matter. She did so without hesitation. She was patient, took time to explain nuances of the law and practice, and revealed issues and strategies I would not have seen without her skilled guidance. She made sure I understood her insights and answered my questions completely. I am confident she knew this endeavor would be time consuming and sometimes challenging, but Rienne never shied away from acting as the most generous mentor.

Rienne has not only mentored me, she has also made herself available to young lawyers who participate in the Gallatin County Legal Assistance Clinic. Rienne is one of the cornerstone attorneys who keeps the Clinic functioning- serving both the needs of the community and the local bar. I am not aware of many other lawyers who take their commitment to public service and to the new generation of practitioners as seriously as Rienne.



ELEMENT
LAW GROUP

Through her mentoring, volunteerism, and excellent trial practice, Rienne has elevated the practice of law in our community. She is well known and widely respected. She is diligent on cases, is fair minded, and is the definition of professional. For these reasons, I believe she would make an outstanding judge if elected.

If I can speak to any questions about Rienne, I invite the Commission to contact me. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments.

Sincerely,


Kathryn C. Mazurek

October 7, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
Office of Court Administrator
Post Office Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3005

RE: Letter of Support for Ms. Rienne McElyea for the Eighteenth Judicial District Judgeship

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

It is with pleasure that I have an opportunity to submit this letter of support for Rienne McElyea to serve as the next Eighteenth Judicial District judge. Ms. McElyea is a fair, intelligent, thoughtful community member with many years of experience practicing law.

I write this letter as an active community member of Gallatin County for the last 17 years. I have served as a Guardian ad Litem for two years which afforded me the opportunity to understand first-hand how important a thoughtful judge is to the safety of our community. I believe Ms. McElyea has the integrity and the common sense we need as a community to continue the hard work of the Honorable Judge Salvagni.

As a current member of the Bozeman Business Improvement District (BID) Board, the owner of two businesses in Bozeman, and a commercial and residential property owner in the city, I support Rienne McElyea.

Sincerely,

Jolee Barry
406.570.9255
Bozeman, Montana 59715

Law Offices of
PETER N. SERINO, P.C.
P.O. Box 1912
Bozeman, MT 59771-1912

Telephone (406) 582-4919
Fax (406) 582-7406
pnserino@gmail.com

October 13, 2016

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

Dear members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am writing this letter to show my enthusiastic support for Rienne McElyea with respect to her nomination and hopefully appointment to the Montana Eighteenth Judicial District Court judgeship.

As a fellow member of the Montana State Bar, I have known Rienne for several years. I have also served with her as a member of the volunteer attorney group known as GLAC, which provides legal assistance to low income people of Montana. As a practicing attorney for the last 42 years both in Arizona and Montana, I feel that I am able to recognize potential judicial talent. My experience with Rienne has demonstrated she has the temperament, intelligence, and work ethic to make an outstanding District Court judge. She is well respected in our legal community, a fact that would underscore her likely success in the election process. I would encourage the commission to nominate Rienne McElyea to the Montana Eighteenth Judicial District Court.

Yours truly,



Peter N. Serino

c: Rienne McElyea

10/14/16

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

I am writing to give my wholehearted and earnest support to the appointment of Rienne McElyea as District Court Judge, filling the vacancy left by Judge Mike Salvagni. For the past 13 years I have worked for the Community Mediation Center in Bozeman, with most of that tenure as the Executive Director and Program Manager for the Low-Income Family Mediation Program.

Over the years I have seen hundreds of families come to the center for mediation. I also had many opportunities to deal with a number of attorneys in Gallatin County. At times, Rienne has come as the legal counsel for one of the parties. As you know, it's very important for the facilitative process that an attorney work with the mediators, other counsel present and the clients involved in the mediation process. I can say without bias that Rienne was always helpful to the process and able to put off an adversarial stance in favor of a more win-win process that helped both clients reach solutions that they could agree to in the process of mediation.

I found her to be fair minded, empathetic and supportive of the process. She was focused on what would most benefit the family and the children instead of "winning". Having worked with many of the attorneys in Gallatin County in low-income family mediation, I would certainly count her as one of the most competent attorneys in Gallatin County.

I believe Rienne will make an excellent judge. She is inclusive, accepting of diversity, acts with integrity towards all clients (regardless of their station and status), attorneys and mediators, and has a great deal of common sense.

I appreciate your serious consideration of this letter of support.

Respectfully submitted,



The Rev. Connie Campbell-Pearson

Former Executive Director Community Mediation Center, Bozeman

October 16, 2016

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

I enthusiastically write this letter on behalf of Rienne McElyea for the position of District Court Judge, 18th Judicial District, Gallatin County, Montana.

Rienne has been my wonderful, astute, thoughtful, extremely capable attorney for the past 5 years. Her wisdom, her sensible caring have been instrumental in creating documents that will contribute to a gentle and smart entry into the years I have left in my life, to the protection of my family upon my death.

In writing this letter, I sight the Preamble to the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct:

"An independent, fair, and impartial judiciary is indispensable to our system of justice. The United States legal system is based upon the principle that an independent, impartial and competent judiciary, composed of men and women of integrity, will interpret and apply the law that governs our society."

I have been an observer of the District Courts in Gallatin County for the past 10 years as a Chaplain at the Gallatin County Detention Center. I have no doubt in my mind that Rienne has the temperament, the common sense and tenacity for the job. Noting, again, the Preamble to the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct, I absolutely see Rienne fitting the description of those men and women of integrity who interpret and apply the law independently, fairly and impartially on the bench.

Thank you for considering my letter of recommendation.

Sincerely,



The Rev. Roxanne Klingensmith
1715 South Black Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59715
406.580.4748
julianofnorwich@msn.com

BERG, LILLY & TOLLEFSEN

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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Rienne H. McElyea
Lynda S. White
John T. Glover, Jr.
Bridget W. LeFeber
Jeremy J. LeFeber
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Telephone: (406) 587-3181
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E-mail: info@berglawfirm.com
Web: www.theberglawfirm.com

Ben E. Berg, Jr. (1916-2011)
Gig A. Tollefsen (Retired)

October 18, 2016

Via U.S. Mail and by email to mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

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

Re: Rienne H. McElyea

Dear Ms. Menzies:

Rienne McElyea has been my law partner since 1995. Prior to that time, she was an associate with our firm since 1991. I have worked with her on more cases than I can count. I have seen her in every conceivable professional situation. I have tried cases with her. I have sat in on client consultations with her. I have participated in law office meetings with her. There is no one more qualified to speak to her qualifications for the position of judge for the Eighteenth Judicial District than me.

I do not want to lose Rienne as my partner. I could not ask for a better one. But, she is clearly the best candidate for the position of District Court Judge for the Eighteenth Judicial District. I am putting aside my own selfish interest to support her for that position.

Rienne is a "people person." If someone needs encouragement, they can expect it from Rienne. If someone needs a person to talk to, they can look to Rienne. If someone needs something done, they can count on Rienne. That someone could be a client, staff member, associate, fellow partner, or the office handyman. It does not matter. Rienne has the time and interest to help everyone. I think a love of people is critical to being a judge.

Rienne is a strong, but sensitive, person. Rienne is not afraid to make hard decisions. At the same time, she does not make those decisions without serious consideration and an appreciation

for the consequences of those decisions on all concerned. I think a judge needs to be strong, but also be aware of the impact of his or her decisions on everyone affected by them.

Rienne has a steady moral compass. Rienne's commitment to doing the right thing has never wavered in all the years I have known her. She has always done the right thing no matter how difficult doing so could be. The ability to do the right thing despite countervailing pressures is critical to being a judge.

Rienne is not afraid of hard work. I cannot count the Saturday and Sunday mornings I have come to the office to find Rienne hard at work. I cannot remember a work day she came in late or left early. Rienne has always demonstrated her belief in hard work and willingness to devote the time necessary to perform it. The Eighteenth Judicial District is a busy one and needs a judge who is willing to put in the time and effort to meet those demands. Rienne will not shy from the demands of the workload carried by the judges of the Eighteenth Judicial District.

Rienne is acutely aware of the need to resolve cases quickly. She has represented hundreds of clients who have endured the legal process. Rienne knows that parties to litigation need quick resolution of their cases. I am convinced that Rienne will move her caseload along quickly, but with deliberation.

I know and respect all of the candidates for this position. But, Rienne is uniquely qualified for this position. For these reasons, I urge you to support her appointment.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Lilly

mjl/lj

KASTING, KAUFFMAN & MERSEN, P.C.

A T T O R N E Y S A T L A W

JOHN M. KAUFFMAN
JANE MERSEN
DENNIS L. MUNSON
LILIA N. TYRRELL

716 SOUTH 20th AVENUE, SUITE 101
BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59718
TEL: (406) 586-4383 FAX: (406) 587-7871
E-MAIL: kkm@kkmlaw.net

Of Counsel
KENT M. KASTING
WILLIAM B. HANSON

October 19, 2016

Via Email and U.S. Mail

mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

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

Re: Rienne McElyea

Dear Commission:

This letter serves as my support for Rienne McElyea to be recommended to Governor Bullock for consideration to fill the vacancy in the Eighteenth Judicial District as a result of Judge Salvagni's retirement.

I have known Rienne since 2003. She has an outstanding reputation in the legal community, and I often refer cases to her. We have had many cases against each other, and a large number of them have involved clients with emotions running extremely high. Rather than being blinded by the high emotions of a case, and allowing the situation to escalate (as many attorneys do), Rienne is able to compassionately guide clients through their cases so that they can move on with their lives. Despite the acrimonious nature of these situations, Rienne has always exhibited professionalism and patience. She and I have certainly disagreed on issues over the years, but always in a respectful manner and always toward the end of reaching an equitable resolution.

Rienne has been a fixture at the Gallatin County Legal Assistance Clinic. From my discussions with her, it is obvious to me that she feels very strongly about providing free legal services to the less fortunate, as well as mentoring less-experienced attorneys so that they may assist others.

I believe that Rienne possesses all the qualities necessary to be a success in this position. She works hard, is very smart, and has a great energy and temperament. Finally, she has common sense and the moral character that is required of a jurist. I have no doubt that any litigant or

attorney who appeared before her would be treated with respect and that her decisions would be based upon a fair and reasoned application of the law to the facts of the cases. She would make a great judge, and I hope you will strongly consider her application and forward her name to Governor Bullock.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. L. Munson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dennis L. Munson

KASTING, KAUFFMAN & MERSEN, P.C.

A T T O R N E Y S A T L A W

JOHN M. KAUFFMAN
JANE MERSEN
DENNIS L. MUNSON
LILIA N. TYRRELL

716 SOUTH 20th AVENUE, SUITE 101
BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59718
TEL: (406) 586-4383 FAX: (406) 587-7871
E-MAIL: kkm@kkmlaw.net

Of Counsel
KENT M. KASTING
WILLIAM B. HANSON

October 17, 2016

VIA US MAIL & EMAIL

mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

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

Re: Public Comment on 18th Judicial District Judge Applicant

Dear Commission:

I write this letter in support of Rienne McElyea's application to be appointed to succeed Hon. Mike Salvagni in the Eighteenth Judicial District. I have known Rienne since I moved to Bozeman more than 20 years ago. Her firm and ours have practiced with and against each other over that period of time. My recommendation of Rienne, however, does not come from experience practicing with or against her. Our paths rarely cross in the courtroom or on transactions. Rather, I am recommending Rienne because of who she is.

Having appeared before a variety of judges in various venues, I have come to appreciate certain qualities in the jurists. Judges who greet, and then treat, parties and their counsel cordially and fairly go a long way to calming turbulent emotions while instilling faith in the judicial system. Judges who are intellectually curious invariably have the work ethic to plow through well written (or poorly written) filings, consider the critical authority, ask the difficult questions and provide well-reasoned decisions. This intellectual curiosity also makes them keen observers, which helps in assessing the credibility of witnesses. Fundamentally, judges that work hard and do not lose sight of common sense best serve the judicial process. I do not believe one can learn these qualities; one either has them or does not. Rienne has them.

Over the years I have known Rienne, she has been with the same law firm in Bozeman. That type of relationship, which has spanned decades, speaks directly to how well she treats and gets along with others. Maintaining a law practice that focuses on family law makes her

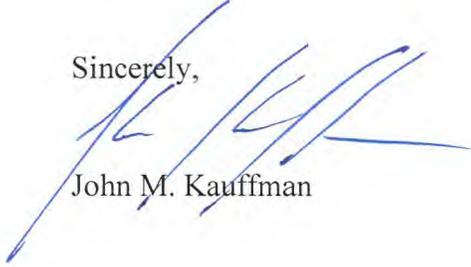
October 17, 2016

Page 2

appreciate the charged atmosphere of litigation and knowledgeable about the benefits that flow from showing respect for the opposing party and their counsel. Yet, the primary reason I am recommending her is that over the years I have developed the opinion that Rienne works hard, is intellectually curious and has common sense. Gallatin County and the Eighteenth Judicial District would be fortunate to have Rienne as a district judge.

For the foregoing reasons, I highly recommend Rienne McElyea as district court judge to fill the vacancy in the Eighteenth Judicial District.

Sincerely,



John M. Kauffman

October 19, 2016

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

Re: Reference for Rienne H. McElyea, Eighteenth Judicial District Court Judge Position

Dear Commission Members:

I have very deep roots in the State of Montana, as am a long time resident (close to 50 years), as well as a third generation Montanan. I have two degrees from MSU, Bachelors of Science and a Master's of Science. I have been a state employee for over 25 years. I met Rienne McElyea approximately twenty years ago. As good friends, we have shared much over the years. As a rule, I do not give our recommendations easily.

I honestly can give my total support to Rienne. Over the years I have witnessed her compassionate, empathetic, logical, thoughtful nature in many situations. She has a strong ability to communicate in a direct and efficient manner. She is even tempered, not afraid to speak her mind—yet she weighs her words carefully. Rienne is also an independent thinker who can easily command a room.

All of the above are characteristics I strongly feel are important for a judge. To be logical, direct, empathetic and even temperament. I feel the court would benefit from efficiency as well.

All in all, I can't think of a better person in the role of District Court Judge. I highly recommend Rienne McElyea and have no doubt she would excel in this position.

Sincerely,



Naomi Stewart
3250 Prairie Smoke Road
Bozeman, MT 59715

Cc: Rienne McElyea

Oct 14, 2016

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

Re: Rienne McElyea

My name is Daniel T Ritter and I have been a resident of Bozeman, Montana for the past ten years. Prior to living in Montana, I served in the U.S. Marine Corps for over 23 years stationed in numerous duty station both in the United States and overseas. I have a BA in Economics from Cal State San Marcos and a MA in Economics from the University of Oklahoma. I currently work as a Certified Financial Planner here in Bozeman and have worked as a financial planner and financial advisor since my retirement from the military. I served on jury duty in Judge Mike Salvagni's courtroom in 2015.

Rienne McElyea is a friend of mine and of my family. I have had the opportunity to observe her as both a friend and as her client. As my family's estate planning attorney, she has been nothing less than outstanding in handling our estate planning needs. I deal with numerous estate planning issues as a CFP and I have referred all of my estate planning clients to Rienne. I am quite confident in her abilities and know she will always provide accurate and competent results.

My personal and professional observations of Rienne have been extremely positive. I can count on her to always be professional, ask great questions and provide an uplifting attitude in any situation. With great enthusiasm, I recommend her to be the next District Court Judge. She truly possesses the characteristics of a judge that would be fair, impartial and fulfill her duties with integrity.

Sincerely,

Daniel T Ritter, CFP
CWO4 USMC Ret.

8936 River Rd
Bozeman, MT 59718

October 19, 2016

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

Via US Mail and Email: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

Re: Rienne H. McElyea Appointment to Gallatin County District Court

Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am writing to strongly encourage you to nominate Rienne H. McElyea to fill the Gallatin County District Court Judge position being vacated by Judge Salvagni.

I have lived and practiced law in Bozeman for over twenty years, and I am well acquainted with Rienne both professionally and personally. Rienne is extremely well-qualified to serve as judge. She has significant experience in most if not all the major types of legal matters that would come before her as a district court judge. I can attest that the quality of her legal work is excellent; that she is hard working and stays on top of her considerable work load. Rienne has extensive court room experience, and would be able to hit the ground running.

As for temperament, Rienne is just what we as citizens and fellow attorneys hope and expect for in a judge: she is serious, thoughtful, and careful, yet decisive. Rienne is open-minded and compassionate towards others. As judge I believe Rienne would be fair, but firm.

Finally, I believe it is of significant benefit to all of us as Montanans that Rienne, as a woman, would bring much needed additional diversity to the Montana bar. Less than a third of the district court judges currently are women, and this is an opportunity for the Commission and Governor to move the needle towards making our judiciary look more like the citizenry that go before them.

Thank you for taking my unqualified recommendation for Rienne H. McElyea into your consideration in making your appointment.

Sincerely,

C. Bruce Combs

Handwritten signature in blue ink, possibly reading "C. J. ...".

October 15, 2016

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

RE: Rienne McElyea

My name is Patricia Ritter and I am a resident of Bozeman, Montana. I have been a classroom educator for 26 years, and am currently teaching 5th grade for the Bozeman School District. I have known, Rienne McElyea, a nominee for the Gallatin County district court judge position since moving to Bozeman in 2005. I have come to know her as a person possessing all the qualities necessary to be an effective and outstanding judge for my community.

Not only is Rienne McElyea a seasoned lawyer with decades of experience in the legal system, she is also one of the most intelligent people I know. I attribute part of her intellect not only to her excellent formal education, but to her innate curiosity and desire to understand people. In my observations, Rienne is the type of person who continually asks questions and then listens intently to the answers. As a teacher, this desire to question, listen and learn is something I attempt to instill in my students every day.

Rienne is not only incredibly well-educated and an experienced attorney, but she possesses other characteristics important to the judiciary, as well. She is forthright, honest, articulate, and observant. She is such an approachable person and is authentically interested in others. She has an innate way of making those around her feel heard and important.

The Preamble to the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct states:

An independent, fair, and impartial judiciary is indispensable to our system of justice. The United States legal system is based upon the principle that an independent, impartial, and competent judiciary, composed of men and women of integrity, will interpret and apply the law that governs our society.

Rienne McElyea could not be better suited to the position of district court judge. She would be an incredible resource and asset to the judiciary. I would be hardpressed to find a more ethical, impartial, and competent individual than Mrs. McElyea.

Sincerely,

Patricia Ritter
National Board Certified Teacher
8936 River Rd.
Bozeman, MT 59718

PEGGY PROBASCO
2637 State
Butte, MT 59701

October 19, 2016

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

Re: Rienne H. McElyea

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to express my support of Rienne H. McElyea for the position of District Judge in the 18th Judicial District. I have known Rienne since I began working for the State of Montana in 1991 in an area which deals with attorneys across the state on a daily basis. She has always been prepared and cordial and more than willing to understand a process or nuance unfamiliar to her.

After a review of the attorneys who have submitted an application for this position, I fully understand the Board has applications from some distinguished attorneys well-versed in the law in the State of Montana. However, I believe Rienne is particularly qualified on the following grounds:

1. Rienne consistently works to understand her case and the applicable law while continuing to advocate for her client. She can disagree without being disagreeable. I believe this bodes well for a member of the judiciary in our state.
2. Rienne continually and systematically works through a case until its conclusion. While she makes use of time very efficiently (necessary to attend to the crowded docket of the 18th Judicial District), she does not sacrifice justice for speed.
3. Rienne is approachable by attorneys and litigants alike. In this legal climate where more litigants feel the need to pursue their case without attorney representation, it is important the litigants are heard, while holding them to the necessary standards to resolve a case within the law. I believe Rienne is particularly well-suited to this task.
4. Rienne is a well-respected attorney in the 18th Judicial District, having practiced there since 1991. She has mentored newer attorneys and volunteered at the Bozeman Self Help Law Center. She understands the need for guidance and information for new attorneys and litigants as opposed to any "trial by fire" or "scorched earth" approach.
5. Rienne would dedicate herself to the advancement of the judiciary in Montana with the same dedication she has given her practice since I have known her. She would prove to be a great addition to the bench in the 18th Judicial District.

My governmental practice occasionally takes me to the 18th Judicial District and I would be very pleased to present cases to Judge McElyea, knowing that she would weigh the legal issues carefully and rule fairly. I always enjoy practice in front of such judges, particularly when I do not succeed in the case, because I can see and appreciate the ruling as a furtherance of the law and justice. I have no doubt Rienne would be such a Judge and I highly recommend her to the Commission.

Sincerely,



Peggy Probasco
Attorney at Law

Law Office of Paul J. Luwe, PLLC

Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 11985
Bozeman, Montana 59719

PaulLuweLaw@aol.com
PaulLuwe@paulluwelaw.com

406-219-3850

October 20, 2016

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

**Re: Application of Rienne Hartman McElyea for
Eighteenth Judicial District Court Judge**

Dear Judge Simonton and Judicial Nomination Commission Members:

I am extremely pleased to write this letter in support Rienne Hartman McElyea for the position of District Court Judge for the Eighteenth Judicial District. Rienne possesses the necessary intellect, temperament, and integrity necessary to be a hardworking, efficient, and excellent jurist.

I have known Rienne professionally for over 20 years. By way of reference, I have been practicing law for 34 years. I was the Bozeman City Attorney from 1991 to 2008 and I retired from the United States Army Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Judge Advocate General Corp. I was also an adjunct professor at Montana State University in the Sociology Department. When I was serving as the Bozeman City Attorney, I was able to observe and interact with Rienne whenever she was defending individuals in city court or had any legal matters with the city. Rienne was professional and cordial in her dealings with city staff and the city prosecutor. Moreover, she quickly developed a reputation as a very good and competent defense attorney. She didn't waste the court's or the city's time with frivolous motions.

When I left government service to enter private practice, I consulted Rienne whenever I had a question about a domestic relations case. She was always willing to help and provide me with excellent guidance. Whenever Rienne would call me to consult about a military question that arose in her case, I found that she already had researched the issue and was extremely well versed in the nuances of the matter in question.

I believe that one of the best recommendations that an attorney can receive from another attorney is whether the attorney would hire the attorney to represent himself or herself. I did hire Rienne to represent me and would do so again if the need would ever arise again. When I went

through my divorce, I employed Rienne without hesitation to represent me. I was able to observed Rienne through the eyes of a client. I was impressed with Rienne's ability to get directly to the essential issues in the case. I was even more impressed in her understanding of and her ability to communicate the practical outcomes and effects of a client's decision or a legal issue in the case. Rienne is direct in her communications which I believe results in her efficiently handling of a case. Despite her directness, Rienne is also very compassionate. In my divorce after I finished my testimony, she recognized that even though I was an attorney that testifying had taken emotional toll on me so she took the time afterward to see how I was doing.

Rienne's professionalism, integrity, compassion, directness, and legal skills that served her clients well will likewise serve her and the public as a district court judge. In light of the recent nationwide public scrutiny of judges' decisions in sexual assault and rape cases, a jurist needs to be able to balance compassion with a practical understanding of the effect of their decision on the victim, defendant, and society within the confines of the Rule of Law. I believe that Rienne is able to navigate these difficult balancing decisions along with myriad of other decisions that a judge makes daily. I therefore enthusiastically and highly recommend Rienne be appointed to the position of district court judge in the Eighteenth Judicial District.

Very truly yours,

Paul J. Luwe
**Law Office of
Paul J. Luwe, PLLC**

**LAW OFFICE OF
CHRISTOPHER J. GILLETTE, P.C.**

11 EAST MAIN STREET
SUITE C
BOZEMAN, MT 59715

chris@cjgillettelaw.com
www.cjgillettelaw.com

October 19, 2016

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

RE: Eighteenth Judicial District Court -- Rienne McElyea

Dear Governor Bullock and Judicial Nomination Commission:

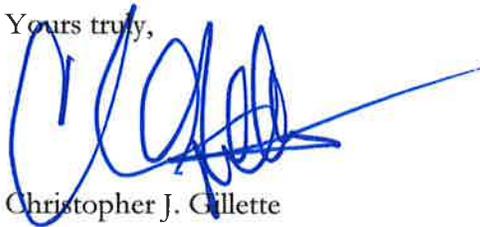
I am a family law practitioner in Bozeman, Montana. I have practiced family law for over 25 years in both Montana and Washington states. Since moving to Bozeman in 2005, I have had the distinct pleasure of practicing closely with Rienne McElyea as opposing counsel on many of my cases. I have also had the opportunity to get to know Ms. McElyea in social settings and on a personal level.

Throughout the many cases we have handled together, Ms. McElyea has demonstrated the utmost professionalism and ethical standards. The breadth of her knowledge of the law renders her a formidable and effective attorney; her humanity and compassion demonstrate a deep sensitivity to the needs of the families she serves. On a personal level, she maintains perspective and balance and my interactions with her have always confirmed her commitment to maintaining camaraderie within our profession.

I believe these qualities would also make her an excellent judge.

In my years as a family law practitioner, I have had the opportunity to work with many attorneys and other professionals. I have met none finer than Ms. McElyea. Please consider this my unequivocal endorsement of Ms. McElyea for judge of the Eighteenth Judicial District Court.

Yours truly,



Christopher J. Gillette

BERG, LILLY & TOLLEFSEN

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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Web: www.theberglawfirm.com

Ben E. Berg, Jr. (1916-2011)

Gig A. Tollefsen (Retired)

October 21, 2016

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

Via Email: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

Re: Rienne H. McElyea
Eighteenth Judicial District Judgeship

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

I write to endorse and support, without reservation, Rienne H. McElyea, as a successor to retiring Eighteenth Judicial District Court Judge Mike Salvagni.

I am a 2001 graduate of the University of Montana - Alexander Blewett III School of Law. I have practiced law with Rienne at Berg, Lilly & Tollefsen, P.C, first as an associate and then as a partner, for over 13 years. I consider her to be a valuable and important resource at our firm, and more selfishly, to my individual practice.

Over the past 13 years, I have witnessed Rienne demonstrate the qualities I believe make her well suited to become a district court judge.

Rienne is focused, knowledgeable, diligent and prepared in her legal pursuits. She has the experience, intellect, deliberate temperament and personality to dissect, analyze and solve complex legal issues for her clients. Rienne is also a thoughtful and genuine listener. She has the innate ability to understand what a person is trying to say, even if they are having trouble communicating their intent. Finally, Rienne has an efficient, engaging and confident demeanor which allows her to represent her clients at a high level, yet still relate to the personal side of her clients' issues.

Rienne is also an adept and keen administrator. In helping manage our firm, she is engaged, knowledgeable and decisive with regard to financial and business matters. Notwithstanding her strong grasp on the business side of the practice of law, she is also the "go-to" partner with regard to resolving interpersonal staff issues as the same arise from time to time, as she has a deftness and knack for resolving the same with

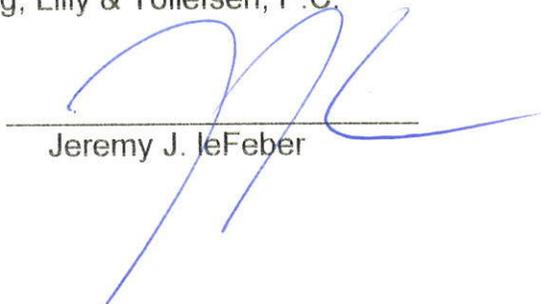
efficiency and fairness.

Based on my 13 plus years of day-to-day interactions with and observations of Rienne, I believe there is no better candidate to replace retiring Judge Mike Salvagni. Rienne possesses the qualities that will make her a great judge as well as an excellent administrator for the Eighteenth Judicial District. In my opinion the Eighteenth Judicial District and the residents of Gallatin County would be well served by having Rienne H. McElyea on the bench, and I wholeheartedly and without reservation recommend her for such position.

Sincerely,
Berg, Lilly & Tollefsen, P.C.

By: _____

Jeremy J. leFeber



BUCKLEY LAW OFFICE, P.C.

DANIEL P. BUCKLEY

Montana Trial Lawyers Association (MTLA)
Board of Directors, MTLA
Summa Cum Laude Graduate, Gonzaga Law School

American Trial Lawyers (named top 100 trial Lawyers)
American Association for Justice
Gonzaga Law Review

October 20, 2016

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Lois Menzies
Office of the Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Re: Judicial Appointment, Eighteenth Judicial District
Rienne McElyea

Dear Ms. Menzies and Commission Members:

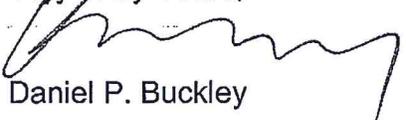
I am writing a letter of recommendation on behalf of Rienne McElyea who has applied for appointment to the Eighteenth Judicial District Court, for Judge Mike Salvagni's seat.

I have been practicing law in Montana for 22 years. I first met Rienne in 1994 when I was hired as an associate at the Berg Law Firm, in Bozeman. Rienne was working at the Berg Law Firm when I was hired. We practiced together for the next 10 years (until I left to open my own firm). I became intimately familiar with Rienne's work ethic over those 10 years and since then. She is a very hard working and diligent attorney. She maintains a robust practice for several simple reasons – she works hard, is very sharp, effectively represents her clients, and adheres to her good sense and integrity.

I have maintained a friendship with Rienne since leaving the Berg Law Firm. When attorneys leave a practice, relationships do not always carry forward. With Rienne however, it's easy to understand why a friendship did carry forward. She is a well-rounded person, always pleasant, respectful of others and just genuinely a nice person.

Rienne's hard work ethic, along with her balanced perspective of the law and pleasant demeanor, all combine to make a predictably good judge. She would be an asset to our judicial system in Montana and Gallatin County. For these reasons, I would recommend your diligent consideration of Rienne's application and referral to Governor Bullock. Thank you.

Very Truly Yours,


Daniel P. Buckley

WWW.DANBUCKLEYLAW.COM

125 WEST MENDENHALL ST., STE. 201 BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59715-3544 PHONE: 406-587-3346 FACSIMILE: 406-585-7654

* A PARTNER WITH ANGEL, COIL & BARTLETT

BERG, LILLY & TOLLEFSEN

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E-mail: info@berglawfirm.com
Web: www.theberglawfirm.com

Ben E. Berg, Jr. (1916-2011)
Gig A. Tollefsen (Retired)

October 20, 2016

VIA EMAIL TO mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

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

RE: Application of Rienne H. McElyea for position of District Court Judge,
Eighteenth Judicial District, Gallatin County, Montana

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing this letter in support of Rienne H. McElyea's application for the position of District Court Judge here in Gallatin County to replace the Hon. Mike Salvagni who is retiring effective December 31, 2016.

I have known Rienne since 1995 when I was hired as an associate attorney with this firm. Rienne had started here several years ahead of me. I have now practiced law here in Bozeman at the Berg Law Firm with Rienne for twenty-one years, sixteen of which as full partners in the firm. I can say without reservation that it has been my pleasure, privilege, and great fortune to have had Rienne as a mentor, colleague, and business partner for my entire legal career. I have seen her at work, both literally and figuratively, up close virtually every day for over twenty years, and I believe that this personal and professional relationship provides me (as well as our other partners here at the firm) with a unique insight into her character and capabilities.

Rienne has the special ability to handle and resolve complex, and often emotionally-charged, situations with a strong dose of common sense practicality, logical application of the correct legal principles, grace, warmth, fundamental fairness, and sense of humor, all of which will stand her in good stead in the role of District Court Judge. She is decisive, firm and assertive when needed, and has an innate understanding of "the right thing to do." Yet she is always open-minded and considerate of other reasonable viewpoints.

Her professional resumé speaks for itself. She has over two decades of experience in the practice of law in this community and in the courts of this Judicial District. During this time, she has built a successful private practice and a sterling reputation as one of the pre-eminent practitioners

in her field. I have no doubt that she has a clear understanding of the requirements of this position of District Court Judge, both the legal and administrative sides, and that she has the experience, ability, and will to meet and exceed those requirements.

In summary, I have the highest respect for Rienne's legal acumen, her ethical integrity which is beyond reproach, her sense of compassion, her ability to make difficult decisions, and her willingness to take on new challenges. I admire her dedication to this profession, her family, and this community. I cannot imagine a more capable or qualified candidate for the position of District Court Judge in this County, and I know that both Gallatin County and the Bar will be exceedingly well-served with Rienne McElyea on the bench. Although she will be greatly missed in this office and by myself personally as a colleague and law partner, I urge the Judicial Nomination Commission to act favorably upon her application and place her name before Governor Bullock for appointment to the position of District Court Judge. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John T. Glover, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

John T. Glover, Jr.

Cook, Kevin

From: MT Supreme Court,
Sent: Sunday, October 23, 2016 6:51 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- McElyea

From: Jena Nash Reno [<mailto:jena@jenareno.com>]
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2016 12:33 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Cc: Jena Nash Reno
Subject: 18th District Court Nomination/ Rienne McElyea

Dear Honorable Commission Members,

It is with great admiration and respect that I wholeheartedly support Rienne McElyea's application and appointment for the position of District Judge for the 18th Judicial District Court.

While I am sad to be loosing Judge Salvagni, there is no other candidate running in the 18th District with more integrity and honor than Rienne McElyea.

She does not see rich or poor, male or female, color or creed, Rienne speaks and treats those with whom she deals, all in equal manor.

If the blind lady, holding a set of scales, looked like any human person, she would look like Mrs. McElyea.

I firmly believe she is the epitome of what a fair and unbiased individual should behave like. She is an example in our community of generosity and genuine concern for all of the folks in our community and State. She is supportive and caring, and goes beyond excellence in her compassion and ability to be reasonable and fair.

How could we possibly even consider risking loosing her as our 18th District Court Judge?

It would sincerely be a detriment to the Gallatin Valley, and to the great State of Montana to loose this opportunity to put this fair and noble candidate through to the position of our newest 18th District Court Judge.

Commission members, and Governor Bullock, I am just a poor, old ,disabled blind woman. But even I can see that this is absolutly the best choice for the 18th District.

If I were to ever find myself in the 18th District Court, I can proudly say that I would be willing to not only stand, but accept judgement from Rienne McElyea.

Sincerely,
Jena Reno
5262 W. Durston St.
Bozeman, Montana 59718
406-920-1517

Cook, Kevin

From: MT Supreme Court,
Sent: Sunday, October 23, 2016 6:49 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- McElyea

From: Susan Swimley [<mailto:swimley@swimleylaw.com>]
Sent: Sunday, October 23, 2016 1:43 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: Montana 18th Judicial - McElyea

Dear Nomination Commission

I have known Rienne McElyea as parent wending our way through elementary school, middle school and high school with our children. Rienne has been steadfast and present for her family while maintaining a successful law practice. During our infrequent discussion of the law over the years, Rienne has always been prepared, thoughtful and positive.

Susan B. Swimley
Attorney and Counselor at Law
1807 West Dickerson, Unit B
Bozeman, Montana 59715
(406) 586-5544 (telephone)
(406) 586-3130 (fax)

The information contained in this communication may be confidential; is intended for the use of the recipient(s) above; and may be legally privileged. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any viewing, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication, or any of its contents, is strictly prohibited. If you received this communication in error, please return it to the sender immediately and delete the original and any copy from your computer system. If you have any concerns about this message, please contact the sender.

Cook, Kevin

From: MT Supreme Court,
Sent: Sunday, October 23, 2016 6:49 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- McElyea

From: Lynda S White [<mailto:lyndawhite@berglawfirm.com>]
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2016 4:59 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: 18th Judicial District Nominations

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

I am writing this letter in support of Rienne H. McElyea in her application to serve as Gallatin County's newest District Court Judge. I have known Rienne since she began her practice of law in Gallatin County. My first experiences with Rienne were as adversaries. As an adversary she was tough and always well prepared. She was also honest and of the utmost integrity; I could rely that she would always follow through with her word. Even though we were adversaries for 15 years, we also became friends. Rienne was always able to zealously advocate for her client's interest and at the same time, maintain cordial and friendly relationships with her colleagues. Ten years ago, I had the pleasure of joining the Berg, Lilly & Tollefsen, P.C. and becoming her partner in the practice of law. I have witnessed firsthand her incredible work ethic, professionalism with our colleagues, her compassionate and competent approach with her clients, her dedication to the rule of law, and her leadership within our business.

Rienne believes in being extremely well prepared in all that she does, whether it be writing a brief, preparing for trial or preparing for her next heli-ski adventure. She prides herself in a great work product and freely shares her time and expertise mentoring young lawyers as well as providing thoughtful insights to all of her partners. She has dealt with everything from extremely complex litigation matters to pro bono client assistance. She is very skilled in all facets of trial practice. Her depth of legal experience makes her uniquely suited to serve as our next District Court Judge.

In my experiences with Rienne in professional and social settings, she is well respected highly regarded by those who know her. I have known Rienne to be a person who is not afraid to speak her mind but can do so in an artful and articulate manner.

In addition to her very busy professional career, I have observed Rienne to be a devoted mother to two charming young men, and extremely dedicated to her husband and extended family. She brings to the Court a well-grounded balance of professional and community values that make her an asset to the judicial system.

Rienne H. McElyea possesses all of the skill, experience, professionalism and character necessary and vital for a District Court Judge. She will treat all litigants and parties fairly, her decisions will be well reasoned and timely, she will run her courtroom efficiently, transparently and most likely with a sense of humor. She has demonstrated all of these qualities in her practice, and with her friends and family. It is without hesitation that I highly recommend Rienne McElyea as the next 18th Judicial District Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Lynda S. White

Berg, Lilly & Tollefsen, P.C.
One West Main
Bozeman, Montana 59715

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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Lynda S. White
John T. Glover, Jr.
Bridget W. Iefeber
Jeremy J. Iefeber
Kellie A. Morton

1 WEST MAIN ST.
BOZEMAN, MT 59717

TELEPHONE: 406-587-3181
FAX: 406-587-3240

.....
Ben E. Berg, Jr. (1916-2011)

October 20, 2016

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

Via Email: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

Re: Rienne McElyea

Dear Commission Members:

I write to support Rienne McElyea for appointment as our next District Court Judge in the Eighteenth Judicial District.

I have practiced law for 15 years; the last 13 in the Bozeman community. I have been Rienne's business partner for over three years. In this time, Rienne has become a trusted friend and mentor who I admire and respect greatly. While I will be saddened to lose an integral part of our firm if she is appointed, I can say with confidence that Rienne displays several qualities that I feel are critical for our next District Court Judge.

First, Rienne's work ethic, intelligence and analytical approach are second to none. Rienne is routinely one of the first in the office and one of the last to leave. Her practice has recently focused on family law, estate planning and guardianship/conservatorship matters; however, these matters inherently involve complex real estate, commercial, contract, and employment components, as well as multifaceted financial considerations. When faced with unfamiliar issues, she rolls up her sleeves and thoroughly analyzes them. Rienne is not one to back down from challenging matters. Rienne climbs mountains to celebrate milestones. She auditioned for a role in a musical, simply to expand her horizons. Rienne embraces challenge with bravery, curiosity and resolve, characteristics that will well serve her as our next District Court Judge.

Rienne is a committed member of the Bozeman community. While maintaining a busy law practice and raising a family, Rienne has devoted significant time to the Gallatin Legal Assistance Clinic, providing pro bono services to qualifying individuals.

She has served on community non-profit boards, and devoted time and resources to Bozeman's schools and educational programs. Rienne and her family opened their home to international students in exchange programs. In the few years that I have known her, I have witnessed countless examples of Rienne's commitment to help individuals, simply because it is the right thing to do.

Most significantly, Rienne approaches situations with compassion and empathy for all parties involved. She takes people as they are; where they are. When a stranger walks in to our office, Rienne is always the first one to drop what she is doing and talk to the individual about his or her needs. I know that sitting in judgment of others is not a responsibility she will take lightly.

Rienne has earned the respect of her colleagues in the Bozeman legal community as a professional, intelligent and highly ethical attorney. I ask for your serious consideration of her application for nomination as our next District Court Judge.

Thank you for your service on the Commission and consideration of Rienne's application.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kellie A. Morton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kellie A. Morton

KASTING, KAUFFMAN & MERSEN, P.C.

A T T O R N E Y S A T L A W

JOHN M. KAUFFMAN
JANE MERSEN
DENNIS L. MUNSON
LILIA N. TYRRELL

716 SOUTH 20th AVENUE, SUITE 101
BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59718
TEL: (406) 586-4383 FAX: (406) 587-7871
E-MAIL: kkm@kkmlaw.net

Of Counsel
KENT M. KASTING
WILLIAM B. HANSON

October 23, 2016

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3005
Via electronic mail to: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

RE: 18th Judicial District Court open position

Greetings,

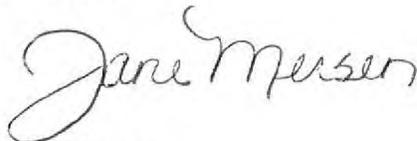
With this letter I am expressing my support for Rienne McElyea for the position of district court judge here in the 18th Judicial District. I have known and worked with Rienne for over 20 years and find her to be very hard working, diligent, intelligent and most importantly, fair.

I have had cases where I was adverse to Rienne and also had the opportunity to work with her on matters. In all instances she was collegial and fair, even when we disagreed.

I believe that Rienne possesses the necessary attributes to make an excellent judge. I also believe that she will work diligently to ease the back log of cases here. Many attorneys here are found waiting for years for rulings from the bench on family law matters: years, not months. I am confident that Rienne will work tirelessly to produce well thought out and **timely** decisions so that the people appearing before her can move on with their lives.

Rienne is patient, conscientious and strong enough to make the tough decisions required of a judge, however she is also understanding and kind. She will do the right thing, regardless of whether it's the popular thing. I think she is the best candidate for the position and urge you to forward her name to Governor Bullock for appointment to this very important position.

Sincerely,



Jane Mersen

BERG, LILLY & TOLLEFSEN

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Michael J. Lilly
Rienne H. McElyea
Lynda S. White
John T. Glover, Jr.
Bridget W. LeFeber
Jeremy J. LeFeber
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E-mail: info@berglawfirm.com
Web: www.theberglawfirm.com

October 24, 2016

Via Email: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

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

Re: Rienne H. McElyea
Eighteenth Judicial District Judgeship

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Committee:

It is my privilege to write a letter of recommendation for Rienne McElyea for the District Court Judge position in the Eighteenth Judicial District Court.

The purpose of my letter is twofold. First, to reinforce what many others have already conveyed to you – that Rienne is a highly respected practitioner who is distinctly qualified for this position. Second, to address the valuable opportunity provided by Rienne's candidacy to continue the progress we must make in diversifying our judiciary.

With respect to the first issue, Rienne has been my law partner for over 8 years. During that time, I have gained an appreciation for Rienne's legal as well as her management capabilities. I, like my other legal partners, know Rienne to be a strong, knowledgeable, and conscientious advocate for her clients. She does not shy away from challenges. She is decisive. I also know Rienne to take a reasoned and level-headed approach to challenging issues.

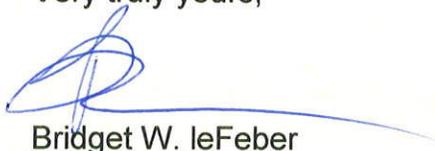
While carrying the load of a full-time practice, Rienne is also the unspoken CEO of our firm. Rienne has, without being asked, taken the lead in managing the business of our practice. Rienne has been integral to overseeing the financial side of our firm, as well as handling human resource issues.

While Rienne's qualifications and experience alone qualify her for the position, her candidacy also provides our legal community with a valuable opportunity to address the second reason for my letter. I, like Rienne, litigate. I have practiced for many years in the construction law section and continue to practice in this area today. As a litigator in this area, I am often the sole female. I litigate with male parties, against male attorneys, depose male expert witnesses, mediate using a male mediator, and a male judge presides over the matter. I highlight this not to suggest that I, or any other female is, or should feel, disadvantaged under such scenario - I firmly believe the opposite of that. I highlight this only to underscore that we still have much progress to make in diversifying all aspects of our legal system.

While, ultimately, the skill of a practitioner and not a practitioner's gender is what counts, the continued promotion of qualified women practitioners into high level public positions also *counts*. It counts in the mind of litigants who are told that our judiciary will fairly and impartially review their case. It counts to both female and male litigators who Rienne will help shape as professionals. It counts that the public see the continued advancement of professional and competent females into the important and highly visible position of District Court Judge.

I can think of no better candidate than Rienne McElyea to build off of the high standards for our profession established by Judge Mike Salvagni during his tenure.

Very truly yours,



Bridget W. leFeber

bwl:dg

KASTING, KAUFFMAN & MERSEN, P.C.
A T T O R N E Y S A T L A W

JOHN M. KAUFFMAN
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716 SOUTH 20th AVENUE, SUITE 101
BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59718
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E-MAIL: kkm@kkmlaw.net

Of Counsel
KENT M. KASTING
WILLIAM B. HANSON

October 24, 2016

Via Email and U.S. Mail

mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

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

RE: 18th Judicial District Judge Vacancy

Dear Committee Members,

I write you this letter to provide my thoughts on who would be most qualified to be appointed District Judge in Gallatin County.

As a family law lawyer for the past 43 years; a past president of the Utah State, Salt Lake County, and Gallatin County Bars; a Fellow in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; and a member of the Montana State Bar Ethics Committee since 1997, I believe I have the experience and insight to provide my opinion as to who would be most qualified to serve as our next District Court Judge.

I think the most important attributes any judge should have are:

1. Humility;
2. A good temperament;
3. A reasonably good knowledge of the law;
4. A strong work ethic; and
5. A desire to serve the public fairly.

I have reviewed the background and credentials of the individuals who have applied for this position and have concluded that some do not possess the above-described attributes to the extent necessary to be a good judge.

However, they say, "Cream rises to the top" and in this case, three of the

applicants, in my opinion, do have the necessary quantity and quality of the traits itemized above, to be considered for the position.

I would respectfully recommend that you send the names of:

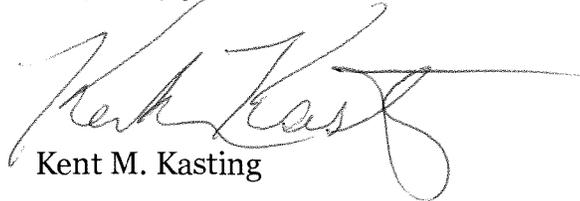
Magdalena Bowen;
Rienne McElyea; and
James McKenna
(Listed alphabetically not preferentially.)

to Governor Bullock for his consideration.

I have practiced law in the same community with each of these fine lawyers for the last 26 years and think any one of them has what it takes to dispense justice fairly, be kind, and respectful to those appearing in front of them and respect the role of lawyers as an integral part of our judicial system.

Thank you in advance for considering my thoughts and volunteer service. I know your deliberations will be thoughtful and thorough.

Very truly yours.



Kent M. Kasting

KMK/bas

Carmen McSpadden
4100 Pasha Lane
Bozeman, MT 59718

October 20, 2016

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

Dear Judicial Nominations Commission:

It is my honor to offer my highest recommendation to Rienne McElyea, who is applying to become a District Court Judge. Simply said, Rienne brings the experience, expertise and personal attributes to be your top choice for judge.

Let me tell you more.

For the past 13 years, I have been the director of the MSU Leadership Institute, a trainer for Leadership Montana and one of the top leadership consultants in the state. I have had the privilege of working closely with 100's of exceptional leaders. Rienne joins a select few of extraordinary attorneys and citizens that bring tremendous value and leadership to our community.

Rienne's personal and professional qualities are a match for the position of District Court Judge. She is well respected in the community, her professional reputation is topnotch and she is extremely hardworking. She has a strong commitment to everything she tackles, which means that she *will* get the job done with excellence and expediency.

Rienne is both firm and compassionate and she has the utmost integrity. She will be a judge that carefully listens, asks excellent questions, stays open and fairly decides the cases in front of her.

Additionally, and important to my recommendation, is my view as a Montanan. As woman in leadership roles in our state, I am enthusiastic about Rienne bringing more diversity to what is now a male dominated position in Montana. More than two thirds of our current District Court Judges are male. Your selection of Rienne helps to move the current gender inequity in the right direction.

For all of the reasons outlined above, I strongly encourage the Commission to submit Rienne McElyea's name to Governor Bullock.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Carmen McSpadden
406-599-5809

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2016 8:28 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- McElyea

From: Teresa Ax [<mailto:rockingtjranch@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2016 6:48 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Cc: Menzies, Lois
Subject: Judge appointment

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

I am writing a letter of recommendation for Rienne McElyea for the position opened by Judge Salvagni's retirement.

I feel very strongly that the person assuming this bench has great compassion for family and very strong understanding of a fair and equitable interpretation of law. This position commands someone with the ability to balance both sides of a position and work within the laws to determine a case with clear judgment. I feel this court also has the role to help guide both attorneys and clients to consider their cases carefully before they arrive. A judge needs to demand dignity during sessions and gain respect for the decisions passed down giving clear explanation for a decision not made in haste but with considerable attention to all details.

I am a professional woman and mother. I have had my own businesses for 40 years. I hold 2 college degrees. I have known Rienne for 10 years both personally and as my attorney for personal and business cases. She came highly recommend from many sources I have great respect and admiration for her approach to business practice, understanding people and the law. She has extensive experience in practice and is an extremely hard worker. As well she is a kind loving mother and faithful loving wife.

With my pass experience in the court system, I empathically recommend Rienne. I believe she has **all** of the qualities to assume this position and will be a tremendous asset to the judicial team of Gallatin County. It would be an honor for all clients to have her preside over their cases.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely
Teresa Ax

Teresa Ax / Owner



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Office: 406-585-0595

info@rockintjranch.com

www.rockintjranch.com

651 Lynx Lane, Bozeman, MT 59718



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Cook, Kevin

From: MT Supreme Court,
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2016 8:23 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- McElyea

From: Sunny Mavor [<mailto:sunny.mavor@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2016 10:41 AM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: Rienne McElyea

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

Dear Ms. Menzies and the Judicial Nomination Commission,

I have known Rienne McElyea for almost twenty years, and I thoroughly endorse her wish to serve as a Gallatin County District Court Judge. She is brilliant, insightful and principled. She is a deep listener and has always been gifted with discerning wisdom well beyond her years.

While the majority of our contact has been on a personal level at a monthly women's book club, I have also utilized Ms. McElyea's professional services. I found her to be the consummate professional, thorough, detailed and tough as nails.

The most meaningful word I can use to describe Ms. McElyea is integrity. She embodies the concept, and is an ideal choice to impartially preside over people of all walks of life.

Sincerely,

Susan Pendleton Mavor
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
2023 Stadium Drive, Suite 2B
Bozeman, MT 59715

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzie
Office of court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Rienne McElyea recommendation

Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission,

My name is Martha Collins and have lived in Bozeman for 25 years. I have served on numerous non profit and public boards including the Gallatin County Planning Board and the Bozeman School Board and Montana School Board Association. I am writing to whole-heartedly recommend Rienne McElyea to the position of Gallatin County District Judge. I have known Rienne for over 20 years as a friend and member of our book club. Rienne is a good listener, asks good questions, and demonstrates a calm and intelligent demeanor. Being smart as a whip, she keeps us on our toes with active dialogue and careful consideration of our opinions.

I believe that Gallatin County would benefit from having judge like Rienne. Please consider Rienne McElyea to the position of Gallatin county District Judge. She would make a fine appointment.

Respectfully yours,
Martha Collins

Martha Collins
858 Cobb Hill Rd,
Bozeman, MT 59718

October 24, 2016

Susan H. Higgins, LLC
7012 Lorelei Drive
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 209-3613
susanhhiggins@gmail.com

Judicial Nomination Commission
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mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

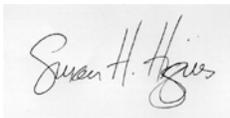
Dear Ms. Menzies and Judicial Nomination Commission Members,

It's a true pleasure to share a few words with you about my longtime friend, Rienne Hartman McElyea, during her bid as 18th Judicial District Judge nominee. I write as her friend, not a professional associate, though we have had many conversations about our work; I have always been struck by Rienne's exceedingly informed response, quick wit, and trusted judgment on all topics, even if we don't agree.

You will find no better nominee for this position than Rienne. I first met her when she relocated to Bozeman after her tenure at a firm in Denver, and have observed her leadership throughout her career in Montana and her unbiased perspective for what is fair and just in this landscape. She is extraordinarily sharp, creative and well spoken. She is someone I fully trust to do the right and smart thing, and I can absolutely see her in the role of District Judge. She is approachable, researched, compassionate, and fair in all things.

As you develop the short list of nominees for Governor Bullock's consideration, please make sure Rienne McElyea is there, as she will make a fine and trusted 18th District Judge

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan H. Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light gray rectangular box.

Susan H. Higgins