

# Arndorfer Law Firm, P.C.

*Brad L. Arndorfer*

(406) 252-3911  
email: [brad@arndorferlaw.com](mailto:brad@arndorferlaw.com)



PO Box 176  
Boyd, MT 59013  
FAX (406) 252-3951

August 31, 2020

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

Re: Palmer Hoovestal

Dear Commission:

I have known Palmer for many years. Although we work in different cities, his reputation is known throughout the state. He has spent many years in courts throughout the state litigating cases.

A strong trial lawyer along with a fair and honest assessment of facts is essential to becoming a Judge. I can say I am here to vouch for his ability and his integrity and disposition.

Thank you for your consideration of his nomination.

Yours Very Truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brad Arndorfer".

BRAD L. ARNDORFER

BLA/ja  
cc: file

# THE FEDERAL DEFENDERS OF MONTANA

ANTHONY R. GALLAGHER  
FEDERAL DEFENDER

MICHAEL DONAHOE  
DEPUTY FEDERAL DEFENDER

MARK WERNER  
SENIOR LITIGATOR

HEADQUARTERS OFFICE  
104 SECOND STREET SOUTH  
SUITE 301  
GREAT FALLS, MONTANA 59401  
(406) 727-5328  
FAX (406) 727-4329  
MONTANA ONLY (800) 823-5328

ASSISTANT FEDERAL DEFENDERS  
STEVEN BABCOCK - Billings  
EVANGELO ARVANETES - Billings  
GILLIAN GOSCH - Billings  
DAVID NESS - Great Falls  
R. HENRY BRANOM Jr. - Great Falls  
RACHEL JULAGAY - Great Falls  
JOSLYN HUNT - Helena  
JOHN RHODES - Missoula  
ANDREW NELSON - Missoula

September 7, 2020

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

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

**Re: Letter of Recommendation  
Palmer Arthur Hoovestal**

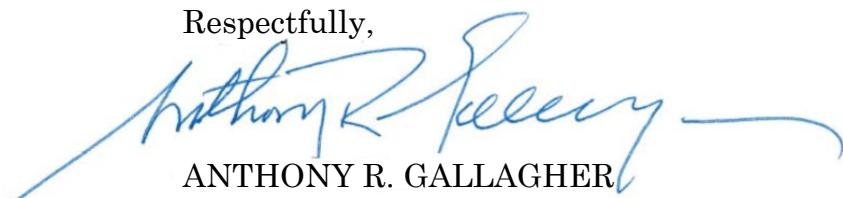
Dear Commission Members:

I strongly support the nomination of Palmer A. Hoovestal for the position of district court judge for the First Judicial District (Broadwater and Lewis and Clark Counties).

I have known Mr. Hoovestal for well over two decades. I worked with him in criminal cases, organizational matters, and bar activities throughout the years. No matter the task, he is always prepared: well versed in the law and fully conversant with the facts. He respects people no matter what their station or calling. Palmer's pursuit of justice despite the adversarial nature of the system is the hallmark of his practice and his life. He is a vocal advocate for reason seeking the best result in a fair and professional manner. His years as a successful practitioner bolster his academic credentials and make him well suited to be a judge.

Palmer Hoovestal's challenging and diverse life experiences enhance his qualifications for the rigors of judgeship. He is more than qualified to fill the seat to be vacated by Judge James Reynolds.

Respectfully,



ANTHONY R. GALLAGHER

ARG/mm

## Cook, Kevin

---

**From:** Menzies, Lois  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 8, 2020 9:42 PM  
**To:** Cook, Kevin  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Hoovestal

**From:** Michael Swingley <mswingley@lccountymt.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 8, 2020 3:28 PM

**To:** MT Supreme Court,

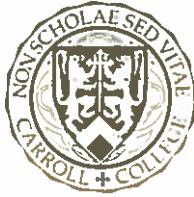
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Palmer Hoovestal

TO: Judicial Candidates Commission,  
c/o Lois Menzies.

Re: Palmer Hoovestal

I wish to recommend Palmer Hoovestal for the open District Court Judge position, First Judicial District Court. I have known Mr. Hoovestal for many years and have had the pleasure of having him practice before me for 10 years. In that time I have come to view Mr. Hoovestal as an attorney that always portrays himself as a consummate professional. Mr. Hoovestal is passionate about seeking justice for his clients and comes to court with well prepared and organized cases. His many years of knowledge, practicing in the State, local and Federal Courts makes him highly qualified for the position opened by the retirement of Judge James Reynolds. Mr. Hoovestal is a long time resident of Helena and a pillar of the professional community here. He is well respected by other attorneys and judges and is well known in the judicial system. I would be very satisfied with Mr. Hoovestal sitting in that open position and I request that the committee take him under serious consideration.

Respectfully,  
Mike Swingley



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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

September 8, 2020

RE: Palmer Hoovestal

Dear Commission:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support for Mr. Palmer Hoovestal in his candidacy for his application for the First Judicial District Judgeship. I have known Palmer both professionally and personally for many years and believe I can speak to his integrity, intellect, and honesty. Palmer is known well and very respected throughout Montana.

Palmer is a proud alumnus of Carroll College and we are proud to have him as a graduate of our institution. Palmer's extensive travel and his diversity of knowledge (musical, linguistic, and political) give him the kind of breadth human knowledge and judgement that I for one would hope to encounter should I ever come before the Bench. Palmer's wide range of friends and acquaintances include well respected lawyers, who have spoken to me of their admiration for his legal skill and knowledge, as well as other non-legal personal acquaintances who admire, as I do, Palmer's kindness, dedication, and perseverance in all of his pursuits, and enjoy his sense of humor and intellect.

I can think of no finer candidate for this position and I hope you will give serious consideration to Palmer, as he brings both deep legal knowledge and an unusual breadth of learning to this opportunity. I would be happy to speak with anyone further concerning his qualifications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John E. Cech".

John E. Cech, Ph.D.  
President

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Hoovestal  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 7:00:59 PM

---

**From:** Craig Shannon, 406-542-7500, 240 East Spruce Street, Missoula, Montana 59802  
<craigkevinshannon@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 14, 2020 10:28 AM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Palmer Hoovestal for the position of district court judge for the First Judicial District (Broadwater and Lewis and Clark Counties).

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

TO: Judicial Candidates Commission, c/o Lois Menzies

Re: Palmer Hoovestal

I wish to recommend Palmer Hoovestal for the open District Court Judge position, First Judicial District Court. I am a practicing lawyer and have known Palmer in that capacity since 1993. What I have observed in Palmer after all these years is his passion to seek justice for his clients while maintaining a sense of calm throughout that process reflecting a work ethic and temperament necessary to be an effective judge. Palmer is prepared and organized in the way he presents himself and his cases. This, along with his many years of knowledge, practicing in the State, local and Federal Courts makes him highly qualified to sit and act as a judge for his community. Mr. Hoovestal has earned the respect of his fellow residents and peers in Helena where he is recognized as a pillar of the professional community. I request that the committee take him under serious consideration when considering who to nominate for this position.

Respectfully,

Craig Shannon

Craig Kevin Shannon  
240 East Spruce Street  
Missoula, Montana 59802  
USA

voice 406-542-7500

(fax 503-715-9911)

**Missoula Offices**

Central Square Building  
201 W. Main Street, Suite 201  
Missoula, MT 59802

Phone: 406.728.0810  
Fax: 406.543.0134

[www.DMLlaw.com](http://www.DMLlaw.com)

**Hamilton Offices**

Hamilton Center  
1920 N. First Street, Suite C  
Hamilton, MT 59840

Phone: 406.961.9003  
Fax: 406.961.9004

[www.DMLlaw.com](http://www.DMLlaw.com)

Milton Datsopoulos  
Dennis E. Lind

William K. VanCanagan

▲ Terance P. Perry

◆ Molly K. Howard

Trent N. Baker

Peter F. Lacny

Joseph R. Casillas

George H. Corn

• Jason A. Williams

Edward "Jake" Miller

Matthew A. McKeon

Hannah C. Woolsey

Darla J. Keck [of Counsel]

September 16, 2020

Ronald B. MacDonald [1946-2002]

▲ Also admitted in Massachusetts

► Also admitted in North Dakota

◦ Also admitted in Washington

• Also admitted in Idaho

**VIA EMAIL ONLY**

Judicial Nomination Commission  
c/o Lois Menzies  
Office of Court Administrator  
[mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

***In re:* Application of Palmer Hoovestal, First Judicial District vacancy**

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

I write in support of Palmer Hoovestal being appointed as District Court Judge for the First Judicial District. I have gotten to know Palmer well while representing co-defendants in several federal criminal cases and also as an officer and member in the Montana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Palmer has numerous qualities that would make him an excellent judge.

First and foremost, Palmer's wide and diverse trial experience would serve him well on the bench. I cannot think of another Montana lawyer who has tried such a wide variety of cases in such different forums. Palmer practices civil and criminal law in state and federal courts state-wide. He also does state and federal appeals. There are few types of cases Palmer has not personally handled. In an era of increased attorney specialization in one area, Palmer's practice is unique. In my view, this broad range of practical

**Datsopoulos, MacDonald & Lind, P.C.**

September 16, 2020  
Page 2

experience in front of many different judges is the ideal background for a district court judge.

Second, Palmer is a courageous advocate who fights hard for his clients. He is not afraid of trying cases no matter the odds. As indicated in his application, he has stood up to injustices in trial courtrooms in very difficult situations, and has been commended by an appellate court for doing so. Palmer would approach difficult cases in his courtroom with the same courage and determination he has while in practice. As a judge, Palmer would do what he believed was right under the law no matter what political pressures a case may present.

Third, Palmer's work ethic would well serve the citizens of the First Judicial District. For nearly thirty years Palmer has maintained a private legal practice focused on litigation. Running a small business with employees and also maintaining a litigation case load is very hard and requires a tremendous amount of work. Palmer's proven work ethic should give you all the confidence that he can step into and run the busy docket of the First Judicial district.

Personally, Palmer is a well-rounded and kind person. He offers advice and insights on cases to his colleagues freely and is always available as a sounding board when difficult legal questions present themselves. He has been recognized by colleagues in both the Montana Trial Lawyers and the Montana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers as Trial Lawyer of the Year.

Palmer would be a respected trial judge and give all sides in his courtroom an impartial and thoughtful venue. I enthusiastically support his application.

Very Truly Yours,  
DATSOPoulos, MacDONALD & LIND, P.C.  
Peter F. Lacny

PFL:he



## HELENA VISION CENTER, P.C.

DR. DIANE M. GRAY  
DR. W. BRUCE COEN  
DR. NICOLE A. HENRIKSEN  
DR. MATTHEW J. NOTTINGHAM  
OPTOMETRISTS

534 N. Last Chance Gulch, P.O. Box 844, Helena, MT 59624  
(406) 442-6814 • Fax (406) 443-7732 • [www.helenavisioncenter.com](http://www.helenavisioncenter.com)

September 17, 2020

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

Re: Palmer Hoovestal

Dear Commission Members:

I am proud to recommend Palmer Hoovestal for District Court Judge of the First Judicial District Court. Palmer has been a close friend and acquaintance of mine for the last eight years. In those eight years I have observed Palmer on a personal and professional level. In all my experiences with Palmer, he has proven to be honest, fair, and logical. Palmer is a compassionate, hardworking, and experienced lawyer who has dedicated his life to the rule of law. In order to maintain a busy private practice, Palmer has remained organized and professional while pursuing a fair and unbiased determination for his clients. With court appearances at the local, state, and federal levels, Palmer has diversified himself within the judicial system making him a strong candidate for the First Judicial District Court.

As a local business owner and health care provider, I think Montana would be lucky to have such a distinguished person in this position; Palmer would fill the bench with the honor and respect it deserves.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures are shown side-by-side. The signature on the left is for Matthew Nottingham, O.D. and the signature on the right is for Helena Vision Center, P.C.

Matthew Nottingham, O.D.  
Helena Vision Center  
Helena, MT 59601  
(406)459-8854

**Jackson Law Firm, P.C.**  
**Counselors at Law**

Gregory A. Jackson

jacksonlawfirm@qwest.net

320 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601  
(406) 443-2140  
Fax (406) 443-3727

September 11, 2020

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

Re: Palmer Hoovestal

To the Honorable Judicial Nomination Commission:

This letter is to support and recommend Palmer Hoovestal for the position of District Judge for the First Judicial District Court.

I have been practicing law since my admission to the bar in 1973. For many years my practice was a general practice, handling virtually every type of civil and criminal litigation. The past 25 years or so my practice has been primarily criminal litigation, handling criminal matters from misdemeanors to death penalty defense. During my 47 plus years of practice, I have practiced in the majority of the Districts of the State, Federal District Courts and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. As a consequence, I have come to recognize what is required to be an effective judge, who is respected by the public, the members of the bar, as well litigants seeking justice.

I have known Palmer Hoovestal in excess of 25 years. Since that time I have observed his practice and skills, both legal and interpersonal. I am familiar with his moral and ethical character. I have tried criminal cases with him in Federal and State Court, which have been complex and lengthy. These cases include the "Freeman" cases, as well as a highly publicized state court case. These required working side by side with him both in and out of court for several months in preparation for trial and trial. I have also worked closely with him on appeals.

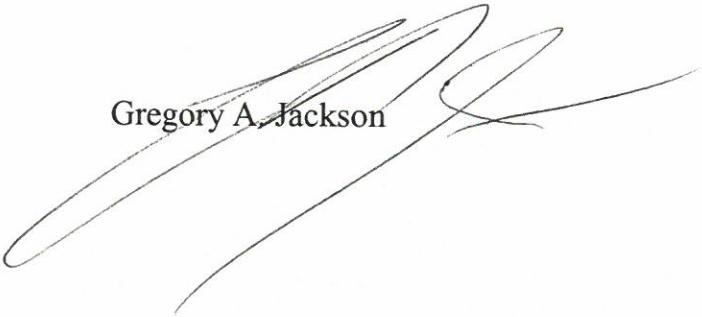
Additionally, throughout the years I have known him, I have referred and continue to refer numerous civil cases to him as he is experienced in both state and federal civil practice as well. All have been handled well and professionally.

Page 2  
Palmer Hoovestal Letter  
September 11, 2020

In summary, Mr. Hoovestal definitely possesses the requisite character, intellect, temperament, knowledge and, importantly, the wide range of civil, criminal and administrative experience to be an excellent District Judge. I highly recommend him for the position of District Judge.

Sincerely,

Gregory A. Jackson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory A. Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish on the right side.



ABIGAIL ROGERS LAW

ABIGAIL ROGERS LAW, PLLC  
234 E. Pine Street  
Missoula, MT 59802  
(406) 303-3671  
arogers@abigailrogerslaw.com  
www.abigailrogerslaw.com

September 19, 2020

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

Re: *Palmer Hoovestal*

Dear Commission:

I write to recommend Palmer Hoovestal for the open District Court Judge position in the First Judicial District Court.

I have known Palmer several years. I first met him at a CLE in Bozeman. Then, we separately represented co-defendants in a serious felony case in Lewis and Clark County. I have also had numerous interactions with Palmer at various courthouses and CLE's throughout Montana.

In every experience that I have had with Palmer, I found him to always be professional, well-prepared, and passionate about seeking justice for his clients. As a younger attorney, I have also really appreciated Palmer's willingness to share his experience and advice with me.

Palmer would be an excellent and revered district court judge. I respectfully ask that the Committee take Palmer under serious consideration when deciding who to nominate for this position.

Sincerely,  
ABIGAIL ROGERS LAW, PLLC

/s/ Abigail Rogers

Abigail Rogers  
Attorney/Owner

FAURE HOLDEN  
attorneys at law pc

Jean E. Faure • Jason T. Holden • Katie R. Ranta

September 28, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission  
c/o Lois Menzies  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005  
[mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

Re: Palmer Arthur Hoovestal

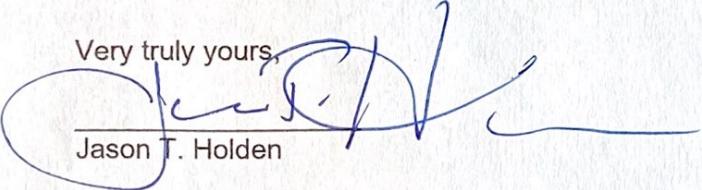
Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I have known Palmer Hoovestal for over twenty years. I first met him by watching him teach lawyers at continuing legal education (CLE) courses. I then had the opportunity to watch some of his trials. I knew that Palmer was a special attorney that only Montana could create. He was courageous, client-centered, and talented. He was willing to take on injustice where he found it and was brave enough to walk through the fight and the fire.

I then had the opportunity to work with Palmer as co-counsel and try a case with him observing my work. I believe he represented a witness or interested party. In any event, the irony was that I was using the outline (to cross-examine the witness) that he had shared at the CLE I attended years before. It was not lost on me that here was a fellow Montana lawyer who was not afraid to share his work to better the practice of law – regardless of whether it benefited his competition. It inspires me to do the same day-in and day-out.

The measure of a Judge should be whether they can relate to the people before them. The ability for redemption should matter. Palmer has shown that. He has illustrated a strength and determination that inspire those who know him. His name should be forwarded to the Governor for appointment as he has the ability to be supported in an election and will fulfil the qualities necessary of a true Montana Jurist. He would be dedicated to Justice and the Montana Constitution.

Very truly yours,

  
Jason T. Holden

FAURE HOLDEN attorneys at law pc

PO BOX 2466 GREAT FALLS, MT 59403 • 1314 CENTRAL AVE. • GREAT FALLS, MT 59401  
PHONE: 406.452.6500 • FAX: 406.452.6503 • [www.faureholden.com](http://www.faureholden.com)

# greenway enterprises, inc.

608 Lincoln Rd West, Helena MT 59602, phone (406) 458-9411, fax (406) 458 6516 [www.greenwayent.com](http://www.greenwayent.com)

Judicial Nomination Commission

c/o Lois Menzies

Office of Court Administrator

P.O. Box 203005

Helena, MT 59620-3005

[mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

Re: Palmer Hoovestal

Dear Commission Members:

I write in strong support for the nomination of Palmer A. Hoovestal for the open District Court Judge position, First Judicial Court.

I have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Hoovestal for 35+ years, both professionally and personally. In this time Palmer has always been honest and trustworthy, holding himself and those around him to the highest standards.

Professionally, Palmer's work ethic always assures that he is well prepared and versed in the subject matter at hand. Adding insight and professionalism to an oft chaotic work environment.

Palmer brings the same things that make him outstanding in his field to his personal life and relationships.

His drive and integrity have allowed him to be successful in his endeavors. I believe these are things that would make Mr. Palmer Hoovestal an excellent choice for District Court Judge.

Sincerely,

*Jim Ferriter*

Jim Ferriter

Construction Operations Manager

September 28, 2020

*Via internet email mtsupremecourt@mt.gov*

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

***RE: Application of Palmer A. Hoovestal for District Court Judge***

Dear Members of the Commission,

I write in enthusiastic support of the nomination of Palmer A. Hoovestal for District Court Judge in the Montana First Judicial District. I have encountered Palmer in many different professional venues during my own 25 years of practice. I have found him to be a consummate professional. He is just an outstanding lawyer and a credit to our profession.

The chief reason I write in support of his application is to emphasize the long-standing and multifaceted nature of his private practice and his experience as a litigator. A candidate for a trial bench such as this one should have engaged in an active courtroom practice and should have extensive litigation experience. Palmer is steeped in both, and to such a degree as is rarely encountered. His deep background spans the criminal, civil, and administrative arenas in both state and federal court. This professional experience upon which he could draw would be invaluable to him as a district court judge and, more important, invaluable to the jurisdiction he would serve.

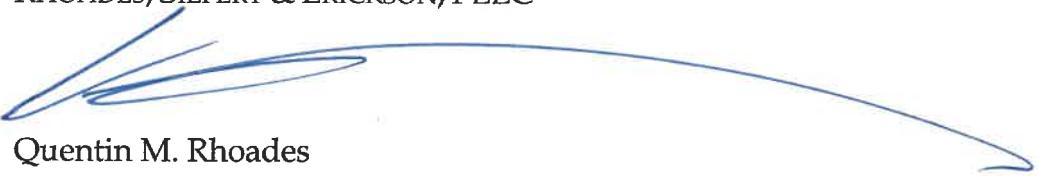
Palmer of course has all the other qualities of a good district court judge, including judicial temperament; courage; integrity; native intelligence; tireless work ethic; high skill in oral and written communications; commitment to the community; good health; and strong moral character. He is simply outstanding in every applicable criterion. His

Judicial Nomination Commission  
September 28, 2020  
Page 2

candidacy constitutes a rare opportunity for the First Judicial District – one which I hope Governor Bullock takes full advantage.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,  
RHOADES, SIEFERT & ERICKSON, PLLC



Quentin M. Rhoades

QMR/nrk

September 27, 2020

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

Dear Commission Members,

I write to you in support of the application of Palmer Hoovestal for the position of District Court Judge for the First Judicial District (Lewis and Clark County). I am now retired, but for 25 years I worked for the federal district court in Helena, and I would estimate that I observed Mr. Hoovestal's work in the courtroom in at least 200 proceedings. What I have observed is that Mr. Hoovestal is a dignified, serious, and hard-working attorney. I never knew him to be unprepared for court or to miss a deadline. Not only is Mr. Hoovestal a talented trial attorney, he is a reliable professional. His courtroom demeanor is respectful and pleasant to all, but I never doubted that furthering his client's interest was his central purpose.

Many defense counsel zealously represent their clients. What is more difficult to do is to fulfill one's duties to the court and to the public at the same time. Mr. Hoovestal very capably maintains his obligations to all three stakeholders by playing by the rules and serving the ultimate goal of justice.

There is no doubt in my mind that presiding over criminal trials and managing a busy criminal docket is one of the very most stressful and demanding aspects of a district court judge's professional life. It is fast-paced, it requires snap decisions executed in a public venue, and it is a high stakes activity, with life and liberty in the balance. A judicial appointee who is comfortable with criminal work *at the district court level* can hit the ground running with the criminal docket, providing a great advantage: the judge can then devote extra time and energy to the civil docket, which is equally as important as the criminal docket itself.

As a serious, reliable, and professional criminal trial attorney, Mr. Hoovestal possesses the requisite experience, work ethic, and temperament to successfully make the transition from the well of the court to the bench.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret K. Bentwood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Margaret" on the first line and "K. Bentwood" on the second line.

Margaret K. Bentwood, Esq.

629 Iowa St.

Helena, MT 59601