

Texas Democratic Women of Collin County Candidate Survey

If you would like to be considered for endorsement by Texas Democratic Women of Collin County (TDWCC), please return this survey to Meredith Fisherman, TDWCC GOTV Co-Chair, at piper77@swbell.net no later than August 22, 2008. Please try to limit your answers to two pages. If you would like to also submit a one-page bio/fact sheet about yourself please do so.

Bios and candidate survey responses submitted will be posted on our website for members to review. We will be holding a virtual vote via email, since we are not having our regular meeting in August. Please note that only members will be allowed to vote. Anyone can join TDWCC through our website at www.tdwcc.org.

Should you have any questions, please contact Meredith at 214-417-6003. Thank you for your interest in TDWCC's endorsement.

1) What experience do you feel best qualifies you to be a Collin County Commissioner?

I am a business owner and the Managing Partner of Power Family Law, PLLC. My undergraduate degree is in accounting and I know how to read and understand budgets. Every day in my business I make managerial and budgetary decisions. In 1989, I received my law degree from Texas Tech School of Law. I practice in the area of family law and have over 18 years of experience in dealing in the areas of domestic violence and emotional abuse. Before entering private practice, I was a Legal Aid Attorney and assisted the most vulnerable in our community. I deal with issues concerning fair housing, child support, child abuse, elderly abuse, consumer fraud, and domestic violence. I have provided hands-on services to the community and am not a casual onlooker. I will bring these skills of leadership, negotiation, business acumen, and advocacy to the Commissioner's Court. A partial list of my accomplishments is set forth below:

CERTIFICATIONS/SPECIALTIES:

- Bar Admission: Texas, 1989

EDUCATION:

- Texas Tech School of Law, Lubbock, Texas, JD, 1989
- Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX BBA in Accounting, 1986
- Clear Lake High School, Houston, Texas

PUBLISHED WORKS:

- Voices of Collin County - Dallas Morning News
- Alimony in Texas, what you need to know, Legal Front
- Family Law Case Update, Poverty Law Conference

HONORS AND AWARDS:

- Charter Lifetime Fellow, Collin County Bench/Bar Foundation
- Burns Scholarship Recipient
- Television Appearances --
 - Plano Profile
 - Eye on Texas (CBS)
- Radio Appearances --
 - McQuiston Talk Show (KERA) Radio
 - Program Host on *Law for the People*, KNON 89.3 FM (1999-2002)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS:

- Lion's Club of McKinney
- Rape Crisis Center of Collin County (Now Turning Point)
- Tough Love, Fort Worth, Texas
- Kiwanas Club of Lakewood
- Collin County Social Service Association
- Hope's Door - formerly Collin County Women's Shelter
- The Woman's Center in Richardson
- Poverty Law Conference, Austin, Texas
- SMU School of Law
- Collin County Community College - Paralegal program

FRATERNITIES/SORORITIES:

- Phi Delta Phi, Legal Fraternity
- Delta Sigma Pi, Business Fraternity
- Golden Key Honor Society

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- Texas Housing Law Task Force of State Bar of Texas - Texas Lawyer's Care (1993-1995)
- Domestic Violence Task Force of the State Bar of Texas - Texas Lawyer's Care (1993-1996)
- State Bar of Texas (1989-present)
- Family Law Section Member of State Bar of Texas (1993-present)
- Certified Alternative Dispute Resolution Mediator (1996-present)
- President, Plano Bar Association, 1997
- President-Elect, Plano Bar Association, 1996
- News Letter Editor, Plano Bar Association, 1994-1996
- President, Collin County Social Services Association, 1998
- Vice President, Collin County Social Services Association, 1997
- Member, Board of Directors of Rape Crisis Center of Collin County, 1997-1998

- Charter Life Fellow, Collin County Bench - Bar Foundation
- Treasurer, Collin County Bench-Bar Foundation, 2001-2002
- Member, Board of Directors, Collin County Bench-Bar Foundation, 1998-2001
- Chair, Collin County Bench-Bar Conference, 2000
- Past Legal Liaison to Collin County Women's Shelter (now Hope's Door)
- All Saints Catholic Church, Dallas Texas, Parishioner
- All Saints Catholic School
- All Saints Catholic School School Advisory Committee (SAC) Board Member 2007-present
- Spanish Speaking Democrats of Collin County
- Texas Democratic Women of Collin County
- Associate Member of Collin County Texas Coalition of Black Democrats
- Executive Committee Member, Democratic Party of Collin County
- Democratic Precinct Chair, Precinct 67
- Member, International Society of Decorative Painters (SDP)
- Donor, Decorative Arts Collection (DAC)
- Librarian, Yellow Rose Chapter of Society of Decorative Painters

2) *What are the three biggest problems facing the County today and how would you fix them?*

1. Wasteful and incompetent administration in Collin County government.
2. Costly pay raises and perks that the Commissioner's Court has repeatedly voted for itself, all at the cost of depriving other County Departments, such as the sheriff's office and the health department, of critically needed resources to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Collin County.
3. Outbursts of bigotry that abuse our citizens, embarrass the county statewide, and waste the taxpayers' money in lawsuit settlements

As a business owner, I am stunned by the lack of business expertise possessed by the Commissioner's Court. As a business owner, I will manage your tax dollars as carefully as I manage my business finances. Your tax dollars will be spent on those things that matter most to the citizens such as public and safety.

3) *What steps would you take to improve the availability of indigent healthcare in Collin County?*

I would eradicate wasteful spending that is continually authorized by the Commissioner's Court. I would actively seek grants from private and public funding sources to alleviate the taxes burden to the citizens.

4) *Should immigration status be a factor in receiving healthcare in Collin County?*

Immigration is and always has been the purview of the United States government. The Commissioner's Court has no authority to manage, limit, or otherwise change United States Immigration policy. To ensure the public health and safety, all persons who reside in Collin County, regardless of immigration status should receive health care. All citizens benefit from a healthy community. All citizens are in danger if we have an unhealthy community.

5) How would you make the Collin County Commissioners' Court more open and accessible to the public?

The Commissioner's Court facility should be larger to accommodate hundreds of citizens. Citizens should be able to speak first. I have observed our County Judge make several citizens wait for hours for their opportunity to speak to the commission. As your commissioner, I will always put the needs of the citizens first and insist they have the first word. After all, the citizens are the boss – not the Commissioner's Court.

6) Do you believe Collin County's infrastructure is sufficient for our projected growth? If not, what would you do to improve it?

No. I would end wasteful spending on the commissioner's court and dedicate those hard-earned tax dollars to pay for a much needed infrastructure expansion. The District Court expansion has been neglected and reforms are needed now. Traffic problems remain and are only becoming more problematic in Precinct 4. The majority of the road expansion initiatives that have been approved ignore the pressing problems of the citizens in Plano. Any plans for expansion include the use of toll roads for financing. And the tolls will remain – even after the road is paid for – to fund roads in other parts of the state. Therefore, the citizens in Plano will forever pay for tolls and pay taxes to the county. Collin County should form a separate entity to study and recommend the needs for road and bridge infrastructure. This entity must lobby on behalf of our citizens to give us fair representation for the multitude of taxes we pay to the county and the State of Texas.

7) How would you revise the County tax system?

The reliance on residential taxes will no longer be a boon to the county. As the mortgage crisis barrels through our county, foreclosures are on the rise, sales are on the decline, and property values will become stagnate or decrease. Attracting businesses – both large and small – is a must for Collin County to support the exponential population growth. Businesses increase the tax base – not only by the taxes they pay to the county, but by introducing more dollars into our infrastructure. More business brings more jobs to the county. This will stimulate the economy and take a huge tax burden off the shoulders of all of us who pay taxes.

8) What experience and/or skills do you have that would assist you in getting things done in a Republican-controlled Commissioners' Court?

As an attorney, the majority of my professional career has been working in the courts of Collin County. The District Court Judges and many community leaders are members of the Republican Party. Throughout the years, I have gained their trust and through my own achievements and qualifications have been successful in reaching consensus. I will advocate when necessary. As a certified mediator, I have honed my negotiating skills and understand how to move opposing parties toward common ground.

9) Are you committed to ensuring in Collin County government there is diversity among employees?

Yes. Collin County government should reflect the diversity of the community in which we reside.

10) Are you committed to ensuring in Collin County government there are worker discrimination protections and equality in pay?

Yes. Collin County Government is terribly lacking in this area. To run Collin County like a business requires adherence to the laws regarding discrimination in employment and equality in pay. County employees should be free from harassment and discrimination and equality in pay is a must.