

OPENING STATEMENT

Good afternoon Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Bill Wenzel, and I am simultaneously honored, excited and a little nervous to be appearing before you this afternoon. To be considered by this Committee for appointment as a judge of the Superior Court is quite an honor, and it is rather daunting to think how I might present myself as worthy of your consideration.

I want to start by thanking Governor Rell for nominating me, and each of you on this Committee for the opportunity to come before you.

I live in Fairfield, Connecticut, and have for approximately 25 years. I grew up in and around New York City. My interest in the State of Connecticut began when I met my wife, Eileen Burns of Naugatuck, while we were both undergraduates at Colgate University. In 1975, we were married in Naugatuck and have been happily married since then. Eileen is my most loyal supporter and I would not be before you today without her.

Shortly after our marriage, we left Naugatuck for me to attend law school at the University Tulsa College of Law. Somehow the study of law was a natural fit for me, and I graduated in 1978 with high honors and having served as Editor-in-Chief of the Tulsa Law Journal. I served one year as law clerk for the Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern and Eastern Districts of Oklahoma and then went into private practice.

When Eileen and I returned to Connecticut, we came to live in Fairfield. I joined the law firm of Goldstein & Peck in Bridgeport and continued my practice in a broad range of the law, but principally, in civil litigation. In 1988, I joined the litigation department of the law firm then known as Pullman, Comley, Bradley & Reeves in Bridgeport. For the past 20 years I have had

the opportunity to litigate and try cases in the probate courts, superior court, district courts and a number of arbitration forums. I have argued approximately 12 cases before the Connecticut Supreme Court and Connecticut Appellate Court, and a slightly smaller number before the Second Circuit Court of Appeals and other appellate courts. I have had the opportunity to represent individuals, businesses and municipalities, both as plaintiffs and defendants, in our court system. Early in my practice, I handled criminal, family and personal injury matters. Later, my practice came to focus more heavily on the defense of health care providers in medical malpractice or licensing disputes, intellectual property cases and employment and discrimination matters. Ultimately, however, the weight of my practice has always been in the area of complex commercial and civil litigation.

My wife and I have three children, and this naturally led to our involvement in the Fairfield school system. I began coaching youth soccer and this led to my service on the Fairfield Town Youth Council. That, in turn, led to my appointment to the Fairfield Board of Police Commissioners, where I served from 1989 through 1999. I have had the opportunity to serve on a number of other civic and charitable organizations.

I seek appointment to the Superior Court as an opportunity to serve the community with the same level of commitment and zealousness which I have tried to bring to my practice. The citizens of Connecticut are deserving of the best and, if approved, I will always strive to deliver that standard. I have been extraordinarily blessed during my practice and whatever talents or qualifications for this appointment I might possess, they come about simply from following the example of those attorneys with whom I have worked and of those judges before whom I've had the opportunity to appear.

If approved by this Committee for appointment as judge of the Superior Court, I offer my unconditional assurance I shall never betray your trust or disappoint your confidence in me.

I want to thank you once again for this opportunity to appear before you and welcome your inquiries and questions.

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