

Warren Campaigns for Judge

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successful trial lawyer. He has fought for affordable housing, for example, as a long time legal counsel for Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc., the African American-led housing provider in north and northeast Portland.

Warren's history with PCRI goes back to its beginnings in the early 1990s when hundreds of Portland families were left in the lurch by an unscrupulous mortgage company which scammed unsuspecting families out of their homes.

Warren said the late Gretchen Kafoury, then a Portland City Council member, came to him and asked him to represent — for free — a new nonprofit to rescue those properties and help people get their homes back. The mortgage company was eventually exposed in the press and was convicted of racketeering and fraud.

"That was an easy yes," Warren said. Initially, he helped 49 out of 50 displaced people get their homes back, except for one owner who wanted to remain a tenant. He also helped PCRI acquire 300 other properties that had gone to default and rehabilitated them with help from the city through a community block grant.

Warren grew up in Portland, and first attended Jefferson High School before graduating from Sunset High School in Beaverton. He received his bachelor's in economics and a master's in business administration from Willamette University in Salem and finished law school at Arizona State University College of Law in 1988.

He mentions the years of experience representing people who can't afford a lawyer and his help to other disadvantaged people, like those experiencing mental health issues, as examples of why he would be a good judge.

"I think people should vote for me because of what we're trying to do now as a community with respect to affordable housing and getting the homeless off the streets," he said. "I want them to know I really care about people and I would significantly take in every person's individual circumstance into consideration."

Warren said 95 percent of a circuit judge's cases concern criminal law, and having handled more than 1,000 cases in court, including 100 homicide cases, he has plenty of experience as a criminal defense attorney. But he also wants voters to understand he also knows the prosecutor's side of issues.

Warren serves as a member of Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill's citizen budget advisory committee, a position he says helps him promote good public safety policies. Underhill has endorsed him in the election.

"People's safety is my biggest priority," Warren said. "You have to be able to evaluate the person who comes before you. It's one thing to be in possession of a drug needle; it's another to be charged with attempted murder. Are they a danger to the community or are they a flight risk? You've got to really assess that."

Warren has won many awards for his work over the years. He said one that he's most proud was being presented the 2018 Multnomah Bar Diversity Award. But instead of just accepting the honor, Warren gave the entire bar a PowerPoint presentation on why diversity is important — and profitable.

"I had received a study from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where they got \$1 million for researching diversity and found it was really profitable: Organizations that had both men and women working together was 40 percent more profitable than firms that just had homogenous groups of all men or all women," he said.

Warren cited another study



Ernie Warren Jr., a candidate for Oregon Circuit Court Judge for Multnomah County and a lifelong advocate for justice issues, proudly displays the 2018 diversity award he received from the Multnomah Bar, the group representing all lawyers in Multnomah County.

that looked at the diversity backgrounds of the 100 most profitable of Fortune 500 companies.

"Again, the most profitable corporations are the corporations that are most diverse," he said. "God doesn't make any mistakes, so that was my argument — diversity is profitable and morally correct."

The five other candidates for Circuit Court Judge, 4th District, Position 12, are Assistant U.S. Attorney Adrian L. Brown, Multnomah County Pro Tem Judge Monica Herranz, and attorneys Sonia Montalbano, John E. Schlosser and Rima Ghandour.

Important Election Looms

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Ballots were mailed out from the Multnomah County Elections office last week and must be returned to county election officials by 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19 in order to be counted. And for the first time, return postage will be paid thanks to a new state law by the Oregon Legislature. If ballots can't be in the mail by May 14 in order to arrive in time they should be dropped off at an official county elections drop boxes, according to elections officials.

In Portland, Mayor Ted Wheeler is running for a second term in a contest that drew 18 other candidates, including Teresa Raiford, a political activist from the African American community who started Don't Shoot PDX to demand accountability for senseless gun deaths and has joined other Black Lives Matter activists to demand police reforms.

Mingus Mapps, a public policy consultant with deep roots in the black community is running against his former boss, City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly. The race has eight other candidates, including former Mayor Sam Adams, the first openly gay office holder in Portland whose term was

embroiled by a sex scandal with an 18-year-old intern. In another open position, nine candidates are running to replace retiring City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, including Isham "Ike" Harris, a black pastor and school bus driver and Carmon Rubio, the executive director of the Latino Network.

Loretta Smith, the former Multnomah Commissioner and long time member of Portland's black community who worked for years in Sen. Ron Wyden's office, once again seeks a seat in Portland city government, this time to complete the term of Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish who recently died in office. The special election comes two years after Smith finished second in a historic contest in which Jo Ann Hardesty was elected the first African American female on the Portland City Council.

Ernest "Ernie" Warren of Portland's African American community is running for a rare open position on the Oregon Circuit Court for Multnomah County. Warren has 31 years of experience as a criminal defense attorney in Portland. He's been endorsed by Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill who is retiring at the end of his term.

For a position as Metro Coun-

cilor, black activist and former executive director of the Qcenter, Carmon Whitten, is running in a contested contest with four other candidates.

In most of these local races, if no candidate receives the more than 50 percent of the vote necessary to win outright, the top two finishers will face off in the November General Election. In the special election to fill the term of the late Commissioner Fish, if no candidate receives a majority, a special runoff election will be held on Aug. 11.

In a partisan contest for U.S. Congress representing the Portland area, Earl Blumenauer faces a challenge for the Democratic Party nomination from Albert Lee, a member of Portland's black community and a former college dean.

State Rep. Tawna Sanchez, a member of Portland's Native American community and director of Family Services at the NAYA Family Center in northeast Portland is running unopposed for re-election in the Democratic Primary. There is no Republican in the race.

Multnomah County Commissioners Sharon Meiran, Jessica Vega Pederson and Lori Stegmann are also all running for re-election unopposed.

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