

The Columbus Dispatch

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Local judicial candidates took the high road

Belinda S. Barnes

Before election season fades from memory, one group of closely watched candidates deserves special recognition for their sensible and above-board conduct. Congratulations to the men and women who ran for judicial seats in central Ohio.

They fought their campaigns with passion and integrity -- and did it without the misleading campaign materials and virulent attack ads that mired contests for most other public offices.

Praise is also due to the Republican and Democratic parties of Franklin County. They displayed complete and wholehearted support for the voluntary process judicial candidates agreed to in abiding by the guidance of our Judicial Campaign Advertising Committee. As part of this process, our bipartisan group prescreened hundreds of ads and campaign materials to make sure they met the higher standards required by judicial ethics. The vast majority met that high standard.

When ads were problematic, we began a dialogue with the candidate and changes were quickly made. Only four cases went to full hearings, and in the end, every ad was properly changed and approved by the committee.

It is possible to make your best case to the voters without demeaning the office you will ultimately win or lose. This is important throughout our government, but especially when the candidate becomes the presiding judge in a courtroom of law, the keystone of our system of justice. Judicial candidates showed us democracy's higher road.

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