**2016 North Carolina General Election Candidate Questionnaire**

**Name as it appears on the ballot:  Abe P. Jones  
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Years lived in the district: about 50 years**

**Questions:**

1. What inspired you to run for North Carolina Court of Appeals Judge and if elected what do you want your legacy to be after you leave?

I was inspired to run for this position because I saw a need for a more informed and balanced perspective on the Court of Appeals, and I knew I could fulfill that void. I also believe that the current Court of Appeals lacks a sufficient amount of trial court experience. In my career, I have been able to approach the law from just about every angle. Before the bench, I have served as both a prosecutor and defense attorney in criminal cases and represented both plaintiffs and defendants in civil cases. Behind the bench, I presided over many cases as a long-standing Superior Court judge. Due to the extensive balance and scope of my experience, a truly unbiased legal perspective makes me uniquely prepared for this position and is the legacy I hope to leave behind.

1. In your opinion what is the biggest issue on the minds of North Carolinians right now and how do you believe you could have the biggest impact?

Overall, I think there is a lack of trust between constituents and the elected officials and law enforcement they rely on. As someone who respects the police, is culturally competent, pays close attention to implicit bias, and strives to be both firm and fair, I think I can have the biggest impact by staying informed of diverse perspectives and remaining loyal to the law at the same time. While this balance is sometimes challenging, I have found that it is not impossible. Continued legal education and the everyday work of a jurist should include becoming further educated about the challenges fellow North Carolinians are facing by the people who face them.

1. What policy areas are the most important to you and if elected what changes would you make?

The lack of funding for the courts and more incarceration alternatives are both issues that are important and need to be addressed through the legislature. A few other issues are punishment-driven rather than justice-driven prosecution, ineffective rehabilitation within the prison system, and a lack of attention to victim’s rights across the board. These are all issues that the justice system as a whole needs to collaboratively evaluate and reform. If elected, I would push for more comprehensive rehabilitation for juvenile offenders in particular. I think giving young people a greater chance at rehabilitation and development is paramount to our future.

1. As a large community organization we don’t always agree with each other on the best way to accomplish many of our projects, but we always work together to get the job done. In what way do you believe you will be able to work together with members of the opposite party to work together?

I have a long history of valuing and seeking out differing opinions to make the most sound arguments and judgments I can. Throughout my career, I have made it a point to have intentional conversations and at times, spirited debate with people who do not share my beliefs. In my experience as a Wake County Commissioner, I had my share of friction with other members, but we always remained respectful of one another, and because of this, we have remained friends long after our work together. I think that as a public servant, my main duty is to the people I serve. I try to use public need as a guide first before anything else. This can easily translate into the courtroom. My broad experience from several angles of the bench makes me particularly suited to constantly shifting my perspective in the pursuit of justice for all.

5. Just for fun: North Carolina doesn’t have an “official State dessert”, but if we did what would you want it to be?

Yellow cake with chocolate icing. Yum!