

## **Sue Enloe**

### **1. What specific experience, skills or qualities make you an effective clerk of the circuit court?**

Being the Clerk of Circuit Court is a very serious responsibility. You affect people's lives drastically. I believe you need to be a strong leader, you need to care about people. I have worked for Rock County for over 40 years, 19 years working at the Sheriff's Office and 24 years in the Clerk of Court's office. I started in the Clerk of Court's office as a Deputy Clerk and later promoted to Chief Deputy. I've been a Courtroom Clerk. I believe my 40 years of experience serving the citizens face to face, day to day has given me the ability to understand the needs of the people of Rock County. For 24 years in the Clerk of Court's office, I worked side by side with Judges, with the Prosecutors and with the Defense Attorneys. I have worked for 4 different Clerks of Circuit Court and I've seen what works and what doesn't. I have a good working relationship with local and state law enforcement agencies, Department of Corrections, State Public Defender's office and private attorneys. I know Court procedures. I know policy. I believe I have the ability to lead with fair and strong leadership and integrity and fairness to everyone involved. I will answer my own phone. I will answer my own email. I am not a politician. My heart is with the citizens of Rock County and its Court system.

### **2. If elected, what would your top three priorities be?**

First and most important priority is quality customer service. I know citizens want to be treated with respect and be offered any services we can offer them. Citizens who can't afford an attorney, come to the office looking for help. We can give advice that's not legal advice that can point them in the right direction. I believe that it is very important that the clerks are educated so that they understand the difference in giving legal advice and giving legal information. We don't make policy in the Clerk's Office. We are there to enforce the rules of the Court and to maintain the Court record for trials and maintain the public record. It is my goal that every customer of the Clerk of Court's office will walk away feeling the office has been courteous, respectful and helpful.

Secondly, in order for the citizens of Rock County to receive the best service, the most efficient and knowledgeable service that they are entitled to, the staff has to be properly trained. Over the last few years, the Clerk of Court's office has lost several of its most experienced clerks and with that being the case, I believe it makes it more important than ever that the elected Clerk be someone with experience. Studies show that the #2 reason that people leave their employment within the first year is because of inadequate training. The staff needs to be trained not only in their duties, but also in customer service so they can ...

### **3. Do you propose any changes in the way the office would be run? If so, what are they?**

The Clerk of Court's current office hours, which are 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM, are a disservice to the citizens of Rock County. The Courthouse is open 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. If elected, the Clerk of Court's office will be open to the public from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

## **Jacki Gackstatter**

### **1. What specific experience, skills or qualities make you an effective clerk of the circuit court?**

I have almost 4 years of experience as your elected Clerk of Circuit Court. I have a total of 15 years in the Clerk of Circuit Court Office and 24 years as County employee. I am an active member of the Wisconsin Clerk of Circuit Courts Association and a member of the Executive Board for the Association.

I have attended manager training seminars and continuing education offered by Rock County and the Clerk of Courts Association. My training, maturity and experience has taught me how to de-escalate confrontational situations and avoid the need to call for law enforcement. There is no substitute for patience, listening and situational awareness. Those skills are often put to the test with members of the public whose anger and emotions are elevated by the legal matters that bring them into the courts.

I view myself as coach rather than a boss. I lead by example and no job in the office is beneath me. I will step in where needed to maintain a working office. The practical experience gives me a leg-up when it comes to cross training staff.

I have attended Diversity & Inclusion Trainings to gain a better understanding of our work place and the role each of us plays. The trainings have also aided me in hiring, training new staff, improving the workplace culture and serving the public.

### **2. If elected, what would your top three priorities be?**

If re-elected my number one priority is to complete the transition from paper files to electronic files. I commenced the transition from paper files to electronic files in Rock County two years ago. It is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2019. I will use new technology and update processes to continue to create efficiencies that save tax payor dollars. I reduced staffing levels through attrition and made it easier for the public to file papers and have access to Court records.

My next priority is to continue my work to improve the public's experience with my office and to insure the safety of the public, court officers and my staff. Court matters often cause duress and emotional strain. I will continue to train my staff to de-escalate situations that have potential to become confrontational.

My third priority would be to maintain the good working relationships that I have established since I took office. Those relationships include the Judges, DA's Office, Sheriff's Office, County Administration, Child Support, Mediation, and the State Public Defender's Office. I took office in 2015 and since then, three of the seven judges who were sitting on the bench have retired and a another was elected to the Court of Appeals. A fourth judge will be retiring in August of this year and his appointed replacement will be sworn in in September. That's a big change and developing good working relationships with the new judges is vital to serving the residents of Rock County

### **3. Do you propose any changes in the way the office would be run? If so, what are they?**

Recently, I made the change from three divisions within my office to two divisions. The change offers more opportunity for cross training of staff within the office. The cross training will further increase the

efficiency of the office. Due to the implementation of electronic filing, job positions are currently evolving to include new job duties while eliminating former job duties. As electronic filing evolves more changes will come. It's my job to insure staff evolve with these changes. With continued training, I have confidence in my staff to meet these new challenges.

## **Peter Severson**

### **1. What specific experience, skills or qualities make you an effective clerk of the circuit court?**

Experience does matter, not just the quantity but the quality. I have worked for the last 13 years for the Wisconsin Supreme Court. I worked for the Consolidated Courts Automation Program (CCAP) which provides most of the hardware and software used by the entire court system. This has given me the most current experience with the greatest depth.

I know the software. I know the hardware. I know how to work with people. I am prepared for the changes that are coming. I have connections with Clerks of Court around the State. I know which ones are doing good work and will take their best practices to make Rock County operate at peak efficiency.

The Court system has gained many efficiencies due to the software that I helped design, test and then support. I am now working for the Dane County Clerk of Courts using the knowledge that I gained at the State to help Dane County function better. I am learning what things are working and what things are not working in the second largest County in the State. It is this knowledge that I will bring to Rock County.

Last but not least, is that I am fiscally conservative. I am going to work to maximize revenues while keeping costs down, including ending unnecessary overtime. I will try to find ways to reward workers for a job well done, but will also demand that productivity comes with the salary that is earned.

### **2. If elected, what would your top three priorities be?**

Restore office morale:

I want to make the Clerk of Courts office the best office to work for in the County. Instead of having unfilled vacancies as there are right now, I want to fill vacancy from internal posting because employees want to work at the Clerk of Courts office. I want to have staff with long tenures that find their time to retire. I want to find as many ways as I can to allow employees to grow, to learn new processes, to take on new responsibilities. I want my workers to feel safe, respected, and appreciated.

Get eFiling working correctly:

Since at least 2013, all Counties had the opportunity to learn eFiling by using the system voluntarily. Most of the Counties that had used voluntary eFiling have been having a fairly easy time transitioning to mandatory eFiling. When I take office, I will use my knowledge of the system to find efficiencies and process corrections, to have filings processed in a timely manner without the use of staff overtime. eFiling is supposed to speed up the process not slow it down.

Establish better communication with the Judges and Court Commissioners:

I want to meet with the Judges on a regular basis, to understand their thoughts on running the Court System. Changes can be attempted unilaterally, but they won't work. I have some ideas that I would

like to try, starting a legal resources center and opening remote locations where customers can conduct business with the Courts. These things won't happen overnight. ...

**3. Do you propose any changes in the way the office would be run? If so, what are they?**

I do not like top-down management styles where someone above you dictates the way work is to be done with no say given to the employee that is doing the work. My style of management will be collaborative. I will have the final say in matters, but my decision will be based on information obtained by talking to the workers. Not just a select group of worker, but all of them. They are doing the job, they know it best. I want to set goals and meet them together.

The issue of cross-training has already been an issue in this race. Employees need to be cross-trained to cover for other employees for the benefit of the organization as well as the benefit of the employee. I will use cross-training to allow employee to gain new skills and find the position that best suits them. I have the background from training staff around the State to set up training plans that will work in Rock County.

I will be a presence in the office. I will be available to the public in person, on the phone, via email. I will be available for worker to come discuss issues with me and I will be working alongside them to improve the workflow of the office. I or a representative from the office will attend every Public Safety and Justice Committee meeting, which is the County Board Committee that oversees the Courts. I will also regularly attend County Board meetings.