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Four More Superior Court Candidates Receive ‘Qualified’ Ratings

By SHERRI M. OKAMOTO, Staff Writer

West Los Angeles arbitrator/mediator Elizabeth A. Moreno, Deputy Public Defender C. Edward Mack, Deputy City Attorney Chris Garcia, and Deputy District Attorney Edward Nison have all received “qualified” ratings from the Los Angeles County Bar Association’s Judicial Election Evaluations Committee, the MetNews has learned.

Moreno said time constraints apparently required the group to combine its initial evaluation of her with the appeals process, so her rating represented both her tentative and final rating.

“It is what it is,” she said, commenting that the evaluation process “seemed to be tougher this year” than in previous election cycles. The candidate opined that “all attorneys are very competitive and we all want the highest rating,” but that “qualified” was “a really good rating.” The fact that “I’m qualified to be a judge... is what it comes down to,” she said.

Mack said that he had not challenged his “qualified” rating even though he was not happy with it. “Such is life,” he remarked.

In his 2004, 2006, and 2008 election bids Mack received the same rating.

“I’ve done this enough times to know and understand the system,” he explained, lamenting that the judicial election process is about “politics.”

Nison said that he had challenged his tentative “qualified” rating but the committee had upheld its decision on appeal. He declined any further comment. Nison was rated “not qualified” in 2004 and “qualified” in 2006.

Garcia’s campaign consultant, Hal Dash of Cerrell Associates, confirmed that his client was evaluated as being “qualified” but declined to make any further statement.

Moreno, Mack, Nison and Garcia are vying in the June 8 primary against Beverly Hills practitioner Mark K. Ameli, Los Angeles Superior Court Referee Randolph M. Hammock, Hawthorne Deputy City Attorney Kim Smith and San Pedro attorney Kendall C. Reed for the seat being vacated by Judge Emily Stevens.

This election is Hammock's second bid for a judgeship, and he was rated "well qualified" in 2006 while still in private practice. Both he and Ameli reported "qualified" ratings on Friday.

There are a total of 15 candidates competing for three open seats this election cycle and three incumbent judges facing challengers.

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