

**NAME:** Shawn Bratton  
**PARTY:** Non-Partisan  
**SEEKING:** State Court Judge

**1. Why are you seeking the office?**

I want to continue to serve as a Gwinnett County State Court Judge in order to serve the community, by using the knowledge and wisdom acquired over my lifetime and legal career to solve legal problems. I have been a Gwinnettian since 1973, and am a product of our schools. I was appointed when I was 42 and I worked tirelessly as an attorney for over 11 years prior to my appointment. The last two years in private practice, I worked a second job as a part- time Magistrate Judge.

**2. What distinguishes your candidacy?**

Experience, dedication and focus are the distinguishing attributes of my candidacy. I have been a State Court Judge since 2014 and previously served as a Magistrate Judge for three years. Both as an attorney and as a trial judge, I have tried a wide variety of civil and criminal cases. My background as a military veteran, a prosecutor, a civil litigator, and a judge evidence that I respect the position (and the voter), by illustrating my focus on doing the work necessary to become qualified to seek this position.

**3. What is the proper role of a judge in interpreting the laws and Constitution?**

Judges are not policy makers. The proper role of a judge is that of the neutral application of the law as it exists, to a factual set of circumstances germane to the material issues of a given case. Policy arguments are more properly addressed through legislative and executive branches of government. On rare occasions a judge may be asked to make a ruling based upon the interpretation of a law or the Constitution and in those circumstances a judge looks to precedent and to legislative intent for guidance of such interpretation.

**4. What in your life experience makes you believe that you are or would be a good judge?**

My experience as a judge for the last nine years makes me very well qualified to continue in my role on the judiciary. I competed in the high school mock trial program the year that our courthouse opened. That experience planted the seed and set me on course. Anything worth doing is worth doing well. A judgeship

requires focus, discipline and responsibility. I have worked my entire legal career with an eye towards being a judge and even spent years working two jobs in order to serve the public in this capacity.

**5. What do you see as a new challenge for judges in a post-pandemic court system?**

The current pandemic situation raises several concerns, primarily the extraordinarily difficult task of holding jury trials which are the bedrock of the American Justice System. We simply cannot conduct them at present. Assuming that post-pandemic means that there is a vaccine to the COVID-19 virus, and things able to return to normal, it will take time for people to re-adjust to the idea of gathering in large groups – which is how juries are pooled. We will continue to social distance and jury selection will take much longer. It will slow the courts but we can and will overcome this obstacle.

**6. Please give a 100 word summary of your background:**

I was educated K-12 in Gwinnett schools, graduating in 1990 from Shiloh High School. I served in the US Navy on a nuclear submarine and held a top secret clearance. I then obtained my college degree from UGA in 36 months while working weekends. I was an engineering aide for Siemens and then attended Georgia State College of Law. During that time I clerked in Cologne, Germany, and then for Bobby Lee Cook. I also worked for The Federal Defender Program, and at the Georgia Court of Appeals. My experience includes criminal prosecution, civil litigation and two judgeships.A