

Justice Charles W.
Johnson

For State Supreme Court
Position 4

**JUSTICE CHARLES JOHNSON SEEKS REELECTION TO THE
WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT**

Sunshine Week Highlights Importance of Open Government Issue in Court Races

March 17, 2008 (for immediate release) – In 17 years on the Washington Supreme Court, Justice Charles Johnson has earned the trust of Washington citizens by protecting their rights and by fairly and accurately applying the laws that serve them. Today, Justice Johnson announces his bid for a fourth six-year term on the state’s highest court, where he will continue to safeguard citizen rights.

“Sunshine Week is the perfect time to announce Justice Johnson’s reelection campaign because it reminds citizens across the state that the right to scrutinize government must be guarded vigilantly,” said attorney Stuart Morgan, chairman of the Johnson for Justice campaign committee. “The courts play a critical role in ensuring that governments strictly follow voter-approved laws requiring openness and accountability. Justice Johnson has been praised for his keen understanding of the spirit and meaning of those laws.”

Newspaper commentators around the state agreed with Justice Johnson’s strongly worded dissent in the recent “Soter” case, which involved the citizens’ right to know about the tragic death of a child who was fed nuts on a school field trip despite a severe nut allergy. Justice Johnson wrote that the school district could not hide behind the attorney-client privilege to conceal its role in the child’s death.

While the presidential race will dominate attention this election year, Washington voters have shown a growing awareness of the importance of judicial races. They know that their individual rights and freedoms, and the balancing of the awesome power of government, depend on fair-minded jurists like Justice Johnson. He welcomes this heightened interest and invites voters to consider his outstanding qualifications.

Justice Johnson has the longest tenure of any member of the court. He has earned respect and trust by authoring principled opinions on the pressing legal issues of our times. He is known as a constitutional scholar. Above all, he is known as a champion of the citizens. Here is what some of his supporters have to say:

- *"Justice Charles Johnson understands that the people have a right to know what their government is doing. He has been a consistent and strong voice on the court in favor of public disclosure."*
- **Toby Nixon, former state legislator, and leading advocate of open government**
- *"For over ten years, Justice Johnson has served as Jurist in Residence at Seattle University Law School, teaching State Constitutional Law, and has been actively involved with our students in promoting issues of social justice and improving access to justice for all citizens."*
- **Kellye Testy, dean of Seattle University School of Law**
- *"From mill worker to three-term Supreme Court Justice and constitutional law instructor, Justice Charles Johnson remains dedicated to protecting people, their property, our environment and the rule of law."*
- **Former Supreme Court Justice Faith Ireland**
- *"Justice Charles Johnson has proven intelligence, integrity, fairness and impartiality as a member of the State Supreme Court, and has dedicated himself to improving the fairness and equality of justice for all persons."*
- **Former Supreme Court Justice Charles Z. Smith, retired**

Justice Johnson understands the concerns of ordinary, working citizens – the same people he served as a solo practitioner during the first 14 years of his legal career. Before following his father's footsteps into the legal profession, Justice Johnson was a laborer in a Tacoma lumber mill.

Justice Johnson has demonstrated a passion for equal justice for all persons. As co-chair of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission, and co-chair of the Equal Civil Justice Funding Task Force, he has worked to balance the scales for those who are less privileged. Among his many honors, he received the Liberty Bell Award in 1994 for his commitment to citizens of limited means gaining access to our justice system, and he was recognized by the American Bar Association's Council on Racial and Ethnic Justice in 2002 for his commitment to equal justice.

"I look forward to receiving the same broad, bipartisan support that I enjoyed when I was elected to the court in 1990, 1996 and 2002," said Justice Charles Johnson. "I am pleased to be a part of an exciting and important election year."

Justice Johnson is an expert in the Washington State Constitution, which is even more protective of individual rights and freedoms than the United States Bill of Rights. He has taught a comprehensive seminar about the State Constitution at Seattle University Law School since 1995, and regularly lectures on it at colleges and high schools.

Justice Johnson cares about our children. He has served for more than a decade as a board member of the Washington Association for Children and Parents, supported youth programs including the Hispanic Academic Achievers Program and Children's Home Society, and volunteered as a book reader at a Tacoma elementary school.

He is deeply rooted in Tacoma, where he was born and attended high school. He and his wife, Dana, live in Gig Harbor.

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