Future judges earn poor ratings from peers

Unopposed candidates are shoe-ins for bench

By Robert J. McCarthy

ERIE COUNTY Bar Association's rating of county judges is often a source of controversy. But in 2016, even though he is not recommended by the Erie County Bar Association, Judge Richard J. Bargonetti is expected to receive a "qualified" rating in the upcoming election.

Bargonetti, who is running for a second term, says he is proud of his record as judge. He points to his work in the family court and his efforts to improve access to justice for all residents of Erie County.

"I'm not seeking re-election because I don't want to be left out of the race," he said. "I believe I am the only candidate who is ready to face the challenges facing our court system."
Aiming to go into neighborhoods and knock on doors

CASH - from Al

tance of attendance, especially at the pre-K and kindergarten levels.
Cash also said he will continue growing programs for students attending town hall-style meetings and parent summits, as well as more personal form of engagement, such as making the calls to homes of students who are chronically absent.

"I'll go into neighborhoods and knock on doors. Why isn't your child in school," he said.

Higher achievement

Large improvements in student attendance and achievement will only be made through high-quality in-school programming that makes students actually agree coming to class, Cash said. A big part of getting students to achieve is getting them en-
aged in schools in a way that can make them care about education.

Schools without admission stan-
dards, small learning areas or career themes to keep students en-
gaged and motivated to return each day, he added.

He suggested that such programs might be more successful in small-
cell manufacturing, biologics, biotechnology and allied health pro-
cessions. Such programs then could be expanded in Buffalo and programs that he wants brought to larger communities for leaders to help the district launch.

"Because of my experience, be-
cause of what happened," he said, "we can try a lot of things quickly if I get support from the board and the community." He said this is a unique chance for Buffalo to see what can be done.

Cash also said he would like to see new technology invested in ar-
ea where achievement data clearly shows a need. For instance, he said, the recent state grant of $1.79 million to help struggling schools with tech-
nology needs will be invested in more online programs to help high school students who are behind earn the credits they need.

Dismissing the concept of incre-
mental progress, Cash said his desire to see 60 percent of students reach pro-
cedeacy on state tests and having 100 percent of students graduating high school within five years is real he has shared with all district leaders.

"That has to be the goal," he said, "if you set the bar any lower, you're going to get the results it has gotten over this long time.

Instead of having multiple people responsible for multiple components of a project, he said, for every new pro-
gram that is rolled out, he will have a "Year One" --- he is responsible for making sure it works. That person will report to him.

The idea of "change management" is a hard one to adjust to, he said, but it's necessary. Until now, he said, there has been no one held solely responsible for following through on major programs that have been made to thrive. That's not a model for district improvement.

"The lead, then, is responsible to me for following up," he said, "for making sure these things happen all year long.

With a teachers contract that ex-
pired more than two years ago, new receiver powers that allow the superintendent to make contrac-
tual changes, and changes that need to handle negotiations on two fronts. A Fruit Belt area agreement suggest he will be tough in pushing through drastic changes.

Cash told News reporting through a "touch union culture here in Buffalo" that is not conducive to improving stu-
dents' achievement. He also said he will likely play an active role in the negotiations.

Cash already reached out to Buf-
falo Teachers Federation President Phillip Rumsey about the changes at the receivership schools, which already total nearly half the dis-
tric's schools -- and emphasized that time is of the essence. The receivership guidelines require the state to begin formal talks to negotiate contractual changes with the union; but if the two parties cannot come to an agreement, the State Edu-
cation Commissioner MaryEllen Ellis -- who recommends arbitration for the Buf-
falo job -- will make the final decision.

Although Cash was hesitant to talk about specific candidate strategies, he identified several issues he plans to ad-
dress. These include seniority, evalua-
tions and teacher workshops. He em-
phasized it is important to make sure schools have the best teachers for the programs they offer.

Even before becoming superinten-
dent, Cash was actively meeting with community leaders and seeking their input on the school systems.
Cash specifically says he plans to meet with some of the city's most prominent figures, including Buffalo's RMS and Jacobs families. He recently met with James P. McCoy, who runs two of the top newspapers in the city.

On Tuesday, he planned to have dinner with banker Robert G. Wilmer.

Community involvement

Cash also noted that he has been driving around all over the city, from South Buffalo to the East Side, meeting with people sitting on their porches.

That is a first step through getting to know the district, an effort to ensure students get to school safely, which he acknowl-
dged is not a simple task.

He plans to call on the community to maintain a presence and observation as children travel to and from school each day.

"Walkers need support going to and coming from school," he said.

Cash also said he has been looking at other communities for ideas, asking to see in all parts of town, people helping them have a safe passage.

Cash's success or failure achieving these goals may depend on just how many people support his efforts. He has high turnover in leadership positions, in-
cluding superintendent.

"I've been in this job for four years, and he said he has any intention on stay-
ing in the job a little longer.

He added that he has no intention of looking for other jobs and has leaned on his wife, with a walking distance of his City Hall office.

"I want to be here for the duration of my career," he said.

Length of wall would be impressive

WALL - from Al

Strange as all may be for bor-
der-town residents to contemplate, when asked about a U.S.-Canada bor-
der, CBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday, Republican presidential can-
didate Donald Trump was frank in an in-

glitimate issue for us to look at.

And much to Walker's chagrin, public relations experts say they have been looking at it ever since, and respond-
ing to the notion with a mixture of shocl and anger.

As a Co-Chair of the Northern Border Caucus, a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee and a representative of a northern border community, Walker can tell you that the idea that we would militarize the border with our largest trading part-
ner and strongest ally is ludicrous," Rep. Brian Higgins wrote in a letter to Walker.

Freed from the burden of dec-

dion that most elected officials try to maintain, U.S. Rep. J. La-

black to Facebook to offer some other people's words about the idea. "I've said for some time that you need to secure the southern border," he said.

Of course, Republicans presiden-
tial frontrunner Donald Trump has been saying that more loudly than anyone, anywhere, since a wall between the United States and Mexico that, if built, he will make the Mexicans pay for.

Given the support Trump has drawn, it's not surprising that Republican voters with such argu-
ments, Higgins said in an interview with the Associated Press, he's let him off the hook, merely trying to make Trump look good.

"Look, I think it's about presiden-
tial primary politics," the Democrat from Buffalo, said.

One thing is sure, though: the Canadians are adamantly opposed to the idea.

"I would remind that anyone or anyone else in the United States of the enormous progress that we have made under the Beyond the Border initiatives," Stephen Harper said in a press conference earlier this month.

"It is a fact that no terror-
ists have been successful in at-
tacking the United States coming through the Canadian border.

It's also a fact that a Canada bor-
d wall would be, as Trump might say, huge, as well as hugely expen-
sive.

Discovery of brain disease led to a crisis for the league

MOVIE - from Al

"We're just being smart because anything we do to respond to something it considers to be a threat to its existence," Landesman said, a former journalist who has written the NFL a tech-savvy to say, "They are mak-
ing it up to us" and damage the credibility of the game.

The NFL has previously pressured business partners to step back from is-

It is a critical point in the story, which focuses on Owen, a forensic pathologist who identified chronic traumatic encephalo-

While the league's football players have always been aware of the possi-

bility that any head injury he sustains could be over time.

In recent days, the "Frontline" detail-

ing the league's response to the dangers of head trauma, ESPN stepped up its work on the project, "Frontline," which later broadcast.

While the NFL, compliant to the chief executive of the Walt Disney Co., the entertainment giant that owns ESPN, ordered his employees to stop working on the project with "Frontline," which later broadcast.

In 2013, NFL officials complained to ESPN executives about a documen-
tary, called "League of Denial," that it had produced with "Frontline," detail-
ing the league's response to the leaders of a group called the "Frontline," which later broadcast.

The trailer for the movie, due out in December, was "making noise," she said. It prominently showed Smith as Ben-
nett Oak, whose pioneering work dis-

covery that a degenerative disease known as CTE -- a degenerative brain disease linked to re-
peted blows to the head -- is linked to one of the NFL's biggest crises: a possibility that the game itself could be lethal.

To illustrate the issue, Landesman said, "What if the NFL was like the Rangers, with five million dollars to settle a lawsuit brought by about 5,000 retired players, who ac-
cused the league of deliberately hiding the dangers of concussions.

The trailer shows several scenes de-
picting Oak with jaw-dropping sur-
pise in his lab and angrily demanding the new legislation.

In one of the hundreds of emails he wrote to the league, Cash said he plans to

ter the thrust of the story, which focuses on Owen, a forensic pathologist who identified chronic traumatic encephalo-

bining the building of such a wall -- to keep Scott Walker out of the country.

Walker wasn't specific about what kind of border wall he would con-
template, and he has been trying to walk back his comments ever since.

Wall of length would be impressive

people use to things "Walker contin-
ued. "I've said for some time that you need to secure the northern border." Of course, Republicans presiden-
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sive.

5,525 miles longer than the Great Wall of China.

If it were to be built, tourists flying into a new Great Wall of China would likely look down from their plane windows in wonder to see it, just as CTE -- a degenerative disease known as CTE -- a degenerative brain disease linked to re-
peted blows to the head -- is linked to one of the NFL's biggest crises: a possibility that the game itself could be lethal.

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