

Questions for the Record
Hearing: Nominations
June 19, 2013
Submitted by Senator Amy Klobuchar

Questions for Madeline Hughes Haikala:

1. If you had to describe it, how would you characterize your judicial philosophy?

Response: My judicial philosophy is grounded in the concept of respect: respect for the rule of law, respect for litigants, respect for the institution of the court, and respect for the balance of powers. Respect for the rule of law cabins every decision that I make as a judge. Respect for litigants gives lawyers and their clients (and *pro se* litigants) freedom to choose their strategies and develop their cases within the bounds of the rules of procedure and evidence. Respect for the institution of the court demands that I engage in no conduct that impugns the integrity of the court. Respect for the balance of powers among our three co-equal branches of government requires that I exercise only the powers of judicial office and that I leave to the legislative and executive branches of government the work that the Constitution assigns to them.

2. What assurances can you give that litigants coming into your courtroom will be treated fairly regardless of their political beliefs or whether they are rich or poor, defendant or plaintiff?

Response: I have tried to set a tone in the courtroom that reflects my commitment to fairness and equality before the law. At my investiture as a magistrate judge, I quoted the following passage from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "[T]here is one way in this country in which all men are created equal – there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller . . . in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal." Litigants coming into the courtroom have the assurance that I have studied their case with an open mind and that their personal beliefs and demographics have no bearing on the court's evaluation of the issues presented.

3. In your opinion, how strongly should judges bind themselves to the doctrine of stare decisis? How does the commitment to stare decisis vary depending on the court?

Response: District court judges must bind themselves closely to the doctrine of stare decisis. As a magistrate judge, I have demonstrated commitment to applying binding precedent from the United States Supreme Court and from the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.