

David Halbrooks  
2924 East Linnwood Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53211

City Clerk  
c/o Ronald D. Leonhardt  
Council Administrator Manager  
Room 205, City Hall  
200 East Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

CITY OF MILWAUKEE  
2003 JUL 16 PM 4:07  
RONALD D. LEONHARDT  
CITY CLERK

Dear Mr. Leonhardt,

Please consider this letter as an application for temporary appointment to the position of judge in Branch 1 of the Milwaukee Municipal Court. I believe that I have the experience and the temperament to perform the duties of a judge. For the past sixteen years I have worked as a prosecutor and as a litigator for the cities of Madison and Milwaukee. I have also used my legal and organizational skills to help redesign the municipal court to create a more efficient operation. The skills that I have honed during these endeavors would serve me well in this new challenge.

As a prosecutor I have represented the city on literally thousands of municipal ordinance violation cases. While my practice in the court has mainly involved building code cases, I have prosecuted every type of case including traffic and criminal counterpart ordinance violations. But, most important to me is my work on the housing cases. I have long taken satisfaction in visiting neighborhoods in Milwaukee and seeing buildings that were the subject of lawsuits that I filed and knowing the people living or working in those buildings are safer as a result of my

actions. During the hundreds of hours I have spent on these cases in the courtroom I have developed a thorough working knowledge of the legal aspects of the ordinance enforcement process. This experience has given me an intimate understanding of not only processes involved in the court management of a municipal case but of the individuals and their roles in the Milwaukee Municipal Court. I have developed a reputation as a tough but fair prosecutor. If I am chosen for this position, I will bring the same ceaseless effort and devotion to the bench as I do in my present position and I will not need on the job training.

In addition to municipal court, my practice has expanded over the last eleven years to include the prosecution of public nuisance actions on behalf of the City of Milwaukee. The support of my supervisors and the city policymakers has allowed me to use my innovative and creative skills to address situations which have nagged city government and neighborhoods for years. Some of the cases I have had the opportunity to bring include the following:

1. Fox Valley Property Flipping Case

While the newspapers have been filled with stories of real estate flippers using various fraudulent mortgage schemes, the issue was first spotlighted when I filed a lawsuit which resulted in the court putting 62 properties permanently into receivership. The city single-handedly saved dozens of properties in many neighborhoods. Without city action the houses were headed straight for demolition. The attention this case generated has spurred many state regulatory changes and federal prosecutions. Milwaukee is now in the national forefront in ending these criminal practices.

2. Injunction Action Against Street Prostitutes

I filed a lawsuit against several dozen known street prostitutes. These individuals had lengthy prostitution records. Their activities attracted drug dealers and other criminal activities to several city neighborhoods. The areas were so well known and patronized by prostitution solicitors that no woman could walk down the street without being propositioned. As the criminal courts became totally ineffective in solving this problem, the city watched as three of its neighborhoods were being destroyed. In the city's case the

court agreed that the prostitutes activities were a public nuisance and enjoined their unreasonable behavior in these areas.

3. Nuisance Action against Main West Condominiums

Several murders at this improperly managed condominium resulted in my filing this action which demanded not only changes in rental practices but also in unsafe conditions at Main West.

4. Woodlands (North Meadows) Condominium Complex

Over the last several years, I have led an effort to rehabilitate this troubled condominium complex on the City's northwest side. The former North Meadows had been the site of thousands of crimes as the conditions at the 576 unit complex deteriorated. The culmination of this work occurred in February of 2000, when the City took control of the complex. I formed a team which has now eliminated many of the serious problems at the site.

5. Oversold Riverside Concert

A concern for the safety of concert patrons led me to take action to prevent an oversold rock concert from proceeding in the original venue, where it would have presented a serious hazard in the event of an emergency.

6. Closing of the Cobra Club

I also took action on behalf of the city to close an afterhours club that was the site of constant illegal activity. The club was ruining an eight block area in Milwaukee and was taking up hundreds of hours of police time.

7. Illegal CB Radio Transmissions

Using a new legal approach to avoid the issue of federal preemption I have successfully sued landlords who allowed their premises to be used by tenants with illegal CB booster

equipment. These profane broadcasts were blasted into neighbors audio components. Findings of public nuisances allowed for abatement of these activities. This solution crated significant national attention including Court TV and TV talk shows.

While these cases were innovative, the majority of building code nuisance and drug house nuisance cases have become routine as I have helped to design the city's Nuisance Abatement Program which includes the Nuisance Abatement Team. The team is made up of additional attorneys, police officers, building and health inspectors, and a non-profit housing corporation.

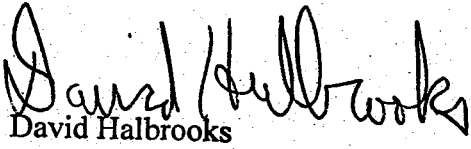
Now, when I sit down with a neighborhood group full of individuals who no longer have hope because of the devastating impact of a drug house, I can confidently tell them to "hang on" and when the team is done with its work they will have their peace and quiet back. I know that my practice has helped preserve the quality of life in Milwaukee. I believe that the understanding of citizens basic needs in an urban environment would be of significant value on the municipal court bench.

In addition to my litigation practice, as an Assistant City Attorney, the Municipal Court has also been my client. As such, in two separate instances I have had the opportunity to use my organizational skills to solve significant workload and efficiently problems in the court. In 1990 when the court operation and scheduling threatened to cripple ordinance enforcement, I drafted a proposal to implement a pre-trial process. The proposal was adopted in whole. Suddenly the caseload glut cleared and as an additional benefit the city saved thousand of dollars in police overtime with the drop in trials. And, as staff to the Municipal Court Needs Evaluation Study Committee I drafted the necessary legislation to create and implement the use of Court Commissioners in Municipal Court. I believe these actions have helped to save the municipal court and to allow all lawyers and litigants to efficiently move through the process to obtain justice. I would continue these efforts if elevated to the bench.

In closing, I believe the examples I have provided indicate that I care deeply about the City of Milwaukee. I take my position and my responsibility very seriously. One of the easiest things for a new judge or prosecutor to learn is how to exercise their power, one of the most

difficult things to learn is how to use their discretion. I have been in the trenches for many years learning to make decisions worthy of the public trust. When I combine this knowledge and judgment with my boundless energy and creativity I believe that I have the skills to be a very good municipal judge. I look forward to the opportunity to answer any questions.

Very Truly Yours,

  
David Halbrooks

Attachments

# David R. Halbrooks

2924 E. Linnwood Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53211  
(414) 332-1763

## EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin Law School Concentration in Municipal Law	JD/1987
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Urban Affairs GPA 3.95/4.00 Master's Thesis: The Use of Political and Socioeconomic Characteristics in American Cities as an Explanation of Council-Manager Government Abandonments.	MS/1982
University of Wisconsin-Madison (Honor's Degree) Concentration in Urban Studies GPA 3.5/4.00	BS/1980

## WORK EXPERIENCE

City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI City Attorney's Office – Assistant City Attorney Prosecution, building code enforcement and nuisance abatement	1990 - Present
City of Madison, Madison, WI City Attorney's Office – Assistant City Attorney Prosecution and building code enforcement	1988 - 1990
Lathrop and Clark, Madison, WI Law Clerk – Municipal law issues	1986 - 1987
State of Wisconsin, Madison, WI Legislative Aide, Rep. Walter J. Kunicki	1985 - 1987
City of Madison, Madison, WI Law Clerk – City Attorney's Office	1986
City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI Law Clerk – City Attorney's Office	1985
City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI Department of City Development – Housing Specialist	1983 - 1984

## HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

State Election Board member Chairperson	1995 - Present 1997 - 1998
Business Journal's 40 Under 40 – Milwaukee's Leaders for the New Millennium	
Completed 13 marathons (26.2 miles)	
Dean's List, Sophomore Honors, Omicron Delta Epsilon (Economics Honor Society)	
Many honors and acknowledgements for neighborhood and community groups for service to local residents.	

# David R. Halbrooks

2924 E. Linnwood Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53211  
(414) 332-1763

## EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin Law School Concentration in Municipal Law	JD/1987
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Urban Affairs GPA 3.95/4.00 Master's Thesis: The Use of Political and Socioeconomic Characteristics in American Cities as an Explanation of Council-Manager Government Abandonments.	MS/1982
University of Wisconsin-Madison (Honor's Degree) Concentration in Urban Studies GPA 3.5/4.00	BS/1980

## WORK EXPERIENCE

City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI City Attorney's Office – Assistant City Attorney Prosecution, building code enforcement and nuisance abatement	1990 - Present
City of Madison, Madison, WI City Attorney's Office – Assistant City Attorney Prosecution and building code enforcement	1988 – 1990
Lathrop and Clark, Madison, WI Law Clerk – Municipal law issues	1986 – 1987
State of Wisconsin, Madison, WI Legislative Aide, Rep. Walter J. Kunicki	1985 – 1987
City of Madison, Madison, WI Law Clerk – City Attorney's Office	1986
City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI Law Clerk – City Attorney's Office	1985
City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI Department of City Development – Housing Specialist	1983 – 1984

## HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

State Election Board member Chairperson	1995 – Present 1997 – 1998
Business Journal's 40 Under 40 – Milwaukee's Leaders for the New Millennium	
Completed 13 marathons (26.2 miles)	
Dean's List, Sophomore Honors, Omicron Delta Epsilon (Economics Honor Society)	
Many honors and acknowledgements for neighborhood and community groups for service to local residents.	