

HOUSTON

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS NEWSPAPER©



William "Bill" MCLEOD

**2018 Candidate running for Judge,
County Civil Court at Law #4**

Paid Political Ad by William "Bill" McLeod, Kirina McNamara. In compliance with the voluntary limits of Judicial Campaign Fairness Act.



And Now, A Different Kind of Candidate Letter from Judicial Candidate William “Bill” McLeod

Hello Harris County:

My name is Bill McLeod, William “Bill” McLeod, and I’m on your November ballot. I am a proud Democratic candidate running for a judicial position right here in Harris County. And I want to make a difference in our community, by using my life experiences to assist me in my quest to fight for a better world.

To understand who I am -- why I believe what I believe and why I am running to represent you in our courts -- there are some things you need to know about me. So I want/need to take this moment to talk directly to voters in Harris County, Texas. The things I want to discuss aren’t all easy to talk about, but they are all very important to me. And if I am going to pursue elected office to make a difference, I want to dive right into them, no matter how difficult they might be, because that is how we make progress.

Let’s start here: I was born with white privilege. It’s a fact, a fact we don’t talk about enough. I see the racism and inequity of our system. I abhor it. But I am still privileged.

My best use of that privilege is to: acknowledge, understand and leverage my privilege for justice instead of personal gain by staying in my lane in the fight.

My journey toward a louder and louder acknowledgment of my privilege and the fight against racism started from day one because I grew up around pain. As a child, I was repeatedly bullied, and called names including “adoptee boy.” My pronouncing of words and names has gotten better, those that know me today, yes, it is better. I felt pain. My red hair and my learning troubles were not yet celebrated by me as that space was lonely inside and very frightening and not understood, I grew up in the 1960’s.

Sometimes I see that despair in our young children today, I worry, and that stirs me to anger as I do not believe that any child should suffer alone and hide the darkness they feel behind tears. But that darkness is their light, as it was mine when nurtured with understanding and support, being embraced in that lonely place is freeing and can unleash an amazing life journey. Even if a child does not seem to be reaching out, he or she is, trust me I know, so take the time and listen to a child that seems to be going down the wrong path, it is a cry for love, understanding, and help that we mustn’t push aside.

When I read words as a kid, they jumped around like James Harden driving to the hoop, I could not read from the pages of a book, but hold the book up in the mirror, I was good! I couldn’t understand why I had so much trouble when my two amazing brothers and my beautiful, loving sister were all so smart. No matter how hard I tried, these things didn’t change. They were things I could not change about myself, things I simply had to deal with and personally overcome, never have wanted sympathy, as a matter of fact, I never have written about my personal space, but felt the time was right and important to



share. I hope only that my sharing more about me helps those who look at me as a distraction, start to see my force as their force to be reckoned with by those who want to discount instead of build.

I have one brother who is still with us, And, his struggle with addiction has been painful for him. My love for my brother, caring for him in his space is personal as he grows through his pain, it is my pain also as is the pain of losing a sibling.

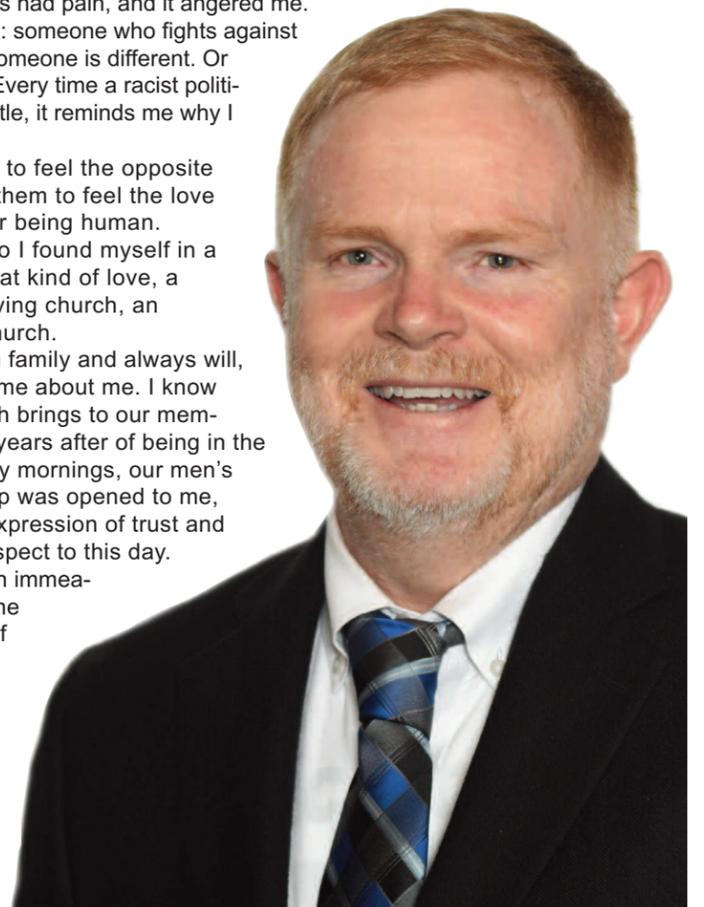
My sister who I to this day admire and cherish go to her at the drop of a hat for support when needed at any time for any reason she is there for me as is her loving husband. You see as kids our family was torn apart, and we were separated. The pain of being away from my sister lives with me, as does the loss of my oldest brother. But guess who took me to a place of healing and understanding my sister, which I will always love her for her strength and unyielding love she has for me. We have cried a lot of tears together and spread to many ashes.

And I knew others had pain, and it angered me. It made me who I am: someone who fights against those who say that someone is different. Or “scary.” Or “not us.” Every time a racist politician uses a dog whistle, it reminds me why I am in this fight.

I want everyone to feel the opposite of that pain. I want them to feel the love they deserve just for being human. Nearly a decade ago I found myself in a place where I felt that kind of love, a beautiful, caring, loving church, an African American church.

I love my church family and always will, and they feel the same about me. I know the safety our church brings to our members. Almost seven years after of being in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings, our men’s Sunday school group was opened to me, which was a deep expression of trust and love, I honor and respect to this day.

My life has grown immeasurably because of the love and openness of the sharing and expressions of understanding of the world experiences that so many of my church brothers have shared, allowing me the honor of



being in their space, not to affirm but to listen, laugh with and grow together.

The Crossing has always been there for me and together Denise, and I attended our church until



she was laid to rest after a lengthy battle with cancer. Our church family was always there for my soul-mate Denise, who I loved very deeply in life, who had to leave me. But before she did, she gave me so much love to share with the world; I can only honor that gift every day which brings peace to my soul.

Cancer is evil; it takes beautiful people away from us before their time for no reason. But cancer does not discriminate. It's our health care system that discriminates.

Denise had to continue working after her diagnosis because of the much needed and unaffordable treatment if she did not have the company insurance, a luxury few people have -- and can afford. After a few months, with her health declining, her company fired her and told her she could go on Cobra, if you did not know Cobra ends, and does not wait for our health to improve the days go fast with the feeling of desperation on your heart, that desperation was on mine. What we went through was something no one should ever have to deal with. Especially while they are fighting for their life. So when I express my beliefs about health care as a human right and not a privilege, that's the passion you hear in my voice. I am speaking for those whose voices that have been silenced by the injustice, called a health care system we are currently under -- and yes, I do mean under. But I believe a new day is coming!

Please do not mistake my broken-heart for anger, but understand: while I have passionately fought for real health-care support, Republicans in the State of Texas continue to slash social programs and justify their behavior through demagogic scare tactics. The far right labels every policy to safeguard people from corporate corruption, the Insurance Industrial Complex, and pharmaceutical price fixing as "liberal socialist giveaways," usually followed by a racist slur toward the black community or immigrants who simply come here for a better life.

Politicians who don't see the need for people to have that kind of basic support fail the empathy test for public servants.

They spend time getting corporate hand-outs instead of handing out turkeys during the holidays. When they do charity, it's to make themselves feel better, not fight poverty and hunger. It's no way to run a county, and it's no way to run a country. It's not leadership.

I want to make a difference, and I know making a difference means giving time and resources to those who need

them year-round. ANYONE who knows me from the day I stepped foot on the grounds of Thurgood Marshall School of Law knows I work hard and work long hours to succeed.

For me, the difference is a strength. The people I have always gravitated toward have seen it that way, too. Special education for me and my other friends in elementary school was something that we needed to be wanted and thankful for its advantages. I do not see learning challenges as a flaw, but celebrate the ability to connect and a way to help make a difference in a person's life.

By helping a child hold on to their dreams and goals that are fortified in adulthood, long after the child moves on and no longer after the child can remember the community of angles making that difference is itself the magic of love. By making that child stronger, allowing a star in each child's eye to shine in a way that might not have transpired is a blessing to everyone in our community.

I will bring that same philosophy into the courtroom. I will bring value to our society and our community at large and ensure that EVERYONE has access to the RESOURCES of the court, that serves black and brown neighborhoods and other communities of color, and anyone else who comes before the bench, with fairness and justice.

Amazingly, I have been criticized by Republicans in the past because I believe that outreach is the responsibility of elected official in the judiciary, and I will take the time to reach our communities right here in our backyards. The fight for justice includes social justice!

Getting into neighborhoods and talking and listening with the people of Harris County about what they see, feel, struggle with and the victories that are theirs to own matters.



Fighting the school-to-prison pipeline matters. Fighting income inequality matters. Our continued fight for all of our marginalized communities matters. Fighting for excellence, and equal education for every child matters. Continuing to fight for "ALL" of our neighborhood schools matters. I think you get my feelings on needing to stand up and fight for what is right and not what is easy.

The system (i.e., money) in place is and has been out of control, doing nothing but attacking our national treasures: our children. Our Black and Brown schools are particularly under attack, threatened with closure by the Texas Education Agency.

Our schools have increasingly become militarized, even as they have become more underfunded. Police, iron-fisted disciplinary measures, and early childhood suspension rob children of their future during early elementary school. High stakes testing reduces resources and strains their teachers. Schools get chartered by corporate giants or closed in favor of other corporate experiments that steal resources from our kids and hand deliver them to right-wing politicians in Austin's greedy towers. Child detention centers open up at the same rate as private prison expansion, filling ICE contracts to enrich the donors of corporate class politicians.

Right here in Houston, we've had to fight as a community with everything within us to make sure that defenseless children are protected, and are not jailed in a facility located on Emancipation Avenue -- just down the street from the home stadium of our world champion Houston Astros. There's nothing more ironic than putting a baby jail on Emancipation Avenue, a street named for freedom. Our baseball team, down the street from a baby jail, celebrates home runs with thousands cheering the home team on. Shame on us! Where is the outrage? We should be calling for that place on 419 Emancipation Avenue to be closed immediately. As should all of the other baby jails in existence, and the ones currently being built or in the works.

And to make matters worse, the contractor, Southwest Key, is a \$478 million per year non-profit with a CEO who makes roughly \$1.5 million per year in salary. Southwest Key previously hired a border guard who only escaped child pornography charges due to the statute of limitations. They also want to put a charter school on-premise so they can reduce the corporate school to prison pipeline from a pipeline to a hallway, OMG this cannot be allowed!

For all of these reasons is why I am fighting. Children do not need to be separated from their families, treated as less-than, or arrested. They need to have people around to love them build and guide them, social growth programs which are added value to a child's life at a fraction of the cost of detention

centers, juvenile homes and mass commoditized foster care centers.

The curtains in my chambers, if I am so lucky to be elected by the people of Harris County, will remain open so anyone can see the true workings of blindfolded justice administered fairly and impartially.

My heart tells me there is an urgency that we cannot just sit back and be unseen; I want to be as effective in the courtroom as I want to be outside the courtroom. To have the opportunity to touch the soul and hearts of all our communities in Harris County is a requirement of the job, not a pastime to be used for political gain.

Recently, an amazing advocate for children asked me: "Who loves a child more than any other person?" Her answer: Parents, and often moms.

Still, mothers in Texas suffer one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the developed world. As a result, the child suffers during and after separation from their mother. So we must fight back against draconian immigration policies, private insurance companies that fail to protect our children's welfare, and the foster care system being used disproportionately as a means to break up our black and brown



families. And trust me, much of this will change with new leadership, and new leadership is coming to the courthouse in Harris County Texas in the very near future!

All of these issues I've mentioned in this open letter are all interconnected and are all near and dear to my heart. They are all issues I can take on in my way, as a fair arbiter of justice on the bench. I hope I can earn your vote in November (or even better, during early voting, starting October 22nd) not because I want a seat of power or even because I am a Democrat, although I am plenty proud of my party. I hope I can earn your vote because I connect to issues, people, and the scales of justice in a personal way. And when elected on Tuesday, November 6, 2018, I promise to stay honest, loyal and true to following the constitution and the rule of law every day I wear the robe. In doing so, I believe I can bring love to communities and justice to our courts.

I hope you will join me in our fight.

With gratitude,

William "Bill" McLeod

**William "Bill" McLeod
for Harris County Civil
Court at Law No. 4**

Pol. Adv. by William "Bill" McLeod, Kirina McNamara. In compliance with the voluntary limits of Judicial Campaign Fairness Act.

WWW.MCLEODFORJUSTICE.COM