

2018 Merrimack County Attorney Candidate Packet

Robin Davis (D)

Paul Halvorsen (R)

All information contained in this packet was provided voluntarily by the candidates themselves, and the original Candidate Information forms are on file at the Baker Free Library, Bow, NH.



509 South Street, Bow, NH 03304
www.bowbakerfreelibrary.org
info@bakerfreelib.org

[This page intentionally left blank]

Robin Davis

Democratic Candidate, Merrimack County Attorney



Political Experience: I am not a professional politician. This is the first elected office that I have sought.

Education: JD UNH Law (formerly Franklin Pierce Law Center), 1997; BA Keene State College in Psychology and Sociology, 1992; Associate Degree in Chemical Dependency.

Profession: 1999-2002: Assistant Merrimack County Attorney; 2002-2003: Associate, Flood Professional Association; 2003-present: New Hampshire Public Defender's Office.

Organizations/Affiliations: American Legion Post 112; New Rye Congregational church, deacon and choir member.

Family Information: I live with my husband, Joe Davis, on our mini farm with our donkeys, dogs, and other animals. I have a large and supportive family in Merrimack County.

Why are you running for Merrimack County Attorney?

In the face of the opioid epidemic, we need a new approach to punishment and rehabilitation of drug crime offenders. The prisons will be there, but incarceration is not always the most productive and cost effective approach. We need more treatment options to reduce recidivism.

What do you think are the top three (3) issues facing the County right now?

1. The drug epidemic
2. Mandatory minimum sentences that eliminate discretion in the criminal justice system.
3. Efficiency in confronting increased case loads associated with the Felonies First procedural reform.

How will your skills/background contribute to the position you are running to fill?

My experience as a trial lawyer in Superior Court and in the circuit courts throughout Merrimack County, coupled with my educational background in chemical dependency, have given me an understanding of the forest and the trees in our county's criminal justice system.

Paul Halvorsen

Republican Candidate, Merrimack County Attorney



Political Experience: Twice elected to the Concord City Council

Education: Juris Doctor, Franklin Pierce Law Center (now University of New Hampshire School of Law); Master of Forensic Science, The George Washington University; Master of Public Administration (Administrative Organization and Management), Golden Gate University; Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, Minot State College.

Profession: Attorney and career prosecutor for the City of Concord (I have practiced only criminal law for 18 years, 15+ years as a career prosecutor and 2+ years as a Public defender)

Retired US Air Force officer and pilot.

Organizations/Affiliations: National District Attorney's Association; American Academy of Forensic science; Disabled American Veterans (life member); The American Legion (life member); Air Force Association (life member); Military Officer's Association of America (life member).

Family Information: Married

Why are you running for Merrimack County Attorney?

I am running for Merrimack County Attorney because I have the experience and background necessary to lead the office and address the main issues facing Merrimack County. I made Merrimack County my home after retiring from a 21+ year Air Force career. Since moving to Merrimack County, I attended law school at Franklin Pierce Law Center (now known as the University of New Hampshire School of Law) and was twice elected as a Concord City Councilor, worked as a Public Defender, and am now a 15+ year career prosecutor for the City of Concord. I know the problems facing Merrimack County and the office of the Merrimack County Attorney. I want to continue to work hard to make Merrimack County a better place to live.

What do you think are the top three (3) issues facing the County right now?

I see the three major issues facing the office of the County Attorney as: 1) drug offenses; 2) drug-related offenses (such as thefts and assaults associated with drug offenses), and 3) how to effectively address the treatment needs of drug offenders.

In reviewing the Merrimack County Superior Court August 2018 indictments, I calculated that almost 45% of those indicted were charged with some serious drug offense. While the three hardest hit areas of the county are Concord, Franklin, and Hooksett, no part of the county is untouched by the drug crisis. As one can expect, the number of overdoses and deaths, as well as the number of times Narcan is used in one or more of these jurisdictions, tracks the use of drugs. Data from the NH Medical Examiner's Office indicates that Concord and Hooksett have the highest number of overdose deaths. The NH Bureau of EMS reports that Concord and Franklin have the most occurrences of Narcan use. The drug problem reaches down to our youth, too. I've seen drug abuse in children as young as 12 and 13. Indeed, in July of this year the Concord Patch reported that a 17-year old in Pembroke was driving around with "an AK-47, methamphetamine, crack cocaine, and a pistol." If the illegal use of drugs is not a pressing issue facing our county, our police, and our residents, I don't know what is.

Illegal use and sale of drugs generates related crime. I believe, from my over 15 years of prosecution, that a large portion of theft-related crime is somehow related to the illegal use of drugs. I also believe that drug involvement generates a large number of assault-related offenses and even homicide. You'll remember in 2017 the Concord Monitor and the Concord Patch carried reports of a drug sale, in Concord, that resulted in the death of a 23-year old.

Available treatment for those struggling from a drug addiction is limited. The New Hampshire Drug Monitoring Initiative for July 2018 identifies only three drug treatment providers in Merrimack County. One facility is in Concord, and two are in Franklin (one for men and one for women). While the Superior Court administers Drug Court and the Department of Corrections has the Successful Offender Adjustment and Re-entry program (SOAR), use of those programs is reactive, implemented only after someone is already court-involved. While the office of the County Attorney is involved only after a crime is alleged to have occurred, I believe it's important to work toward effective use of limited resources. Evaluating how recent federal grants and statewide program initiatives (the recently Hub and Spoke concept for self-identification and treatment being one) will impact sentencing recommendations is clearly a consideration for the office of the County Attorney.

How will your skills/background contribute to the position you are running to fill?

I have a depth and breadth of experience that is directly related to the skills needed by the County Attorney. My experience and skills span almost 40 years of public service.

I know the issues a county attorney must address on a daily basis. I've been in court almost every working day for 18 years, with 15 of those years as a prosecutor in Merrimack County. I've appeared in Superior Courts in at least three counties and in at least eight District Courts in four counties. I've also participated in scores of administrative hearings. My trials have included felonies and misdemeanors and I've initiated several appeals to the New Hampshire Supreme Court.

My education and teaching experiences are directly related to the practice of law, personnel management and the budgeting process. In addition to earning my Juris Doctor, my formal education includes a graduate degree in Forensic Science from The George Washington University and a graduate degree in Public Administration from Golden Gate University. I've taught financial management and personnel management at the undergraduate level as well as criminal justice at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. I conducted Forensic Science research at the US Secret Service

Forensic Laboratory in Washington, D. C., attended Forensic Science training at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA, and authored original research in the Forensic Sciences.

The experience I have in federal and local municipal budgeting and resource management allows me to analyze budgetary and personnel requirements as well as set priorities. I was twice elected to the Concord City Council where I was involved in policy coordination, budgeting and staffing for the third largest city in the State. IN the military I commanded an administration unit responsible for almost 200 personnel, frequently directed the flight operations of 19 aircraft, and was involved in management of a multimillion dollar budget.

I can see the biggest problem we face – drugs – from the local level with my 15 years as a prosecutor in Concord. I also understand the larger issue of how drugs arrive in our community and the need for a team effort to meet the problem head-on. As an Air Force officer, I commanded counter-drug missions in South Florida and the Caribbean and, working with agents from both the Drug Enforcement Administration and Customs, interdicted large volumes of cocaine and marijuana bound for the United States. When I was assigned to a command center in Panama I directed thousands of reconnaissance missions throughout Central and South America gathering intelligence on narcotics trafficking. I know the need for interagency cooperation and coordination.

An effective County Attorney needs a balance of leadership skills, financial management skills, legal knowledge, courtroom experience and the ability to think ahead and do long term planning. My almost 40 years of public service experience clearly gives me those necessary qualities.