

2017 Candidate Questionnaire

**SECTION I**

**BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION**

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

| First Name   | Middle Initial or Nickname | Last Name          |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Mitzi</b> |                            | <b>Johanknecht</b> |

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

**King County Sheriff**

3. Are you the incumbent?  Yes  No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

**23 years in Seattle, 17 years in Legislative District 34**

5. How long have you resided in King County?

**51 years**

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan?  Partisan  Nonpartisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

**CAMPAIGN CONTACTS**

Campaign Name: **Mitzi For Sheriff**

Address: **PO Box 20664**

City/State/Zip: **Seattle, WA 98192**

Campaign Phone: **206/470-9836**

Campaign E-mail: **info@mitziforsheriff.com**

Campaign Website: [MitziForSheriff](http://MitziForSheriff)

**POLITICAL BACKGROUND**

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

| Public Office | Elective or Appointive? | Dates Held | Leadership Role (if any) |
|---------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| <b>N/A</b>    |                         |            |                          |
|               |                         |            |                          |
|               |                         |            |                          |

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

| Office Title | Year of Run |
|--------------|-------------|
| <b>N/A</b>   |             |
|              |             |
|              |             |

## SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
  - **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
  - **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
  - **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?
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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

**I am an experienced law enforcement leader with a track record of success. I am running for Sheriff because I believe the people of King County and the employees of the Sheriff's Office deserve a progressive law enforcement leader who will restore honor and integrity to the Office of Sheriff and return focus to the business of public safety. After over 32 years of law enforcement experience, I am both prepared and excited to change the direction of the King County Sheriff's Office.**

1. **Return focus to public safety by addressing crime and traffic issues affecting our communities. This is accomplished by leveraging technology to target high impact offenders and locations. We will connect with public and use their knowledge and observations to provide better law enforcement services. Public safety is a team sport and we must use innovative, collaborative approaches to prevent crime.**
2. **I will prioritize building community trust and support through direct involvement with neighborhoods, communities, and businesses. I intend to listen in order that I truly hear people's concerns. We will collaborate with our communities to improve our performance and the quality of life of those we serve. We will restore internal controls and training to reduce risk to the public and deputies.**
3. **I will employ modern management techniques and principles. I will collaboratively design and implement strategic and business plans that guide decisions and measure effectiveness. We can't improve what we do not plan for and measure. The command leadership will engage employees in decision-making. I will identify and promote experienced, educated, talented and ethical people to leadership positions.**
4. **The Sheriff's Office should be a model of dignity and respect in our communities. We need experienced and ethical law enforcement leaders. The Sheriff and her leadership should set the example for all Office members and make the people of King County proud. Our accountability system should be fair and predictable, and all policies and rules will apply to the Sheriff, appointed staff and commanders, not just the rank and file.**

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

**You must be trustworthy to be trusted. Trustworthiness is my most important personal and professional characteristic.**

**As a law enforcement leader, it is imperative that we earn the trust and support of our public and those we serve with. Our legitimacy is granted by those we serve and they must trust us to grant it. I also believe that treating people with dignity and respect, listening to them and trying to align their expectations with our abilities to conduct police work to their standards is our primary mission.**

**I also put a premium on collaboration. As the world gets more complex, the expectations of our communities change. While recognizing that not all communities want the same thing, we must work together to develop a public safety strategy that is satisfactory to all, and makes everyone safer.**

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

**In 1992, a deputy job was announced in the Sheriff's Office intra-departmental bulletin, and no one was applying for the position. At the time, I was a deputy at our Southeast King County Precinct and I was heavily involved in training new entry-level deputy recruits, but I was intrigued with the concept of the job assignment. The bulletin asked for a deputy to work under a Federal Drug Elimination Grant in public housing. This was my first opportunity to work with other agencies and non-profits. Our collective assignment was to reduce drug and alcohol dependency in families and youth, through non-traditional (on site) services and available to all residents.**

**My responsibility and priority was to build community trust and support, to establish relationships with youth and families built on trust, and to promote safety and security in the complex. I was there to support families, keep them safe from people peddling drugs on or around the housing campus, and to offer assistance and resources. If needed, I would take reports from residents who were crime victims, pass on criminal activity to other investigators for follow-up, or work with parents whose children were at risk. I made every effort to avoid arrests, but being fair and consistent when arrests were required was my most sacred duty.**

**Our community was diverse, with many immigrant families from Eastern Europe and Southeast Asian countries. Included with those families were many diverse Americans, often third or fourth generations trapped in the cycle of need. This was the first time in my life that I witnessed and experienced inequity and social justice issues every day. I was lucky. I was born and raised in Seattle/Burien to two loving parents and in middle class family of five kids. I always had food, clothing and shelter. I would not struggle in school or have to fight for a college education. And now I was learning firsthand, every day, what it was like to need, but be too proud to take a handout if your friends were around.**

**I have accomplished many things and received numerous awards and commendations in my life. None of these compare to the simple satisfaction I had each day, working in this community with residents, visitors, and other service providers. Gaining the community trust was challenging and took months. I learned how to listen, how to be kind without being condescending, and to relish the opportunity to play with the kids before life challenges got in the way of their simple happiness. I will never forget the lesson I was gifted when we took a busload of kids (ages 5-12) to the Seattle Center. As we rounded a corner on Interstate 5, the kids saw the Seattle skyline. Nearly every kid on that bus had never seen downtown Seattle, let alone experienced the Seattle Center.**

**I thought and had hoped that I had built some trust with local youth over my nearly three-year assignment. In 2006, my story of this assignment came full circle. I was in uniform and doing some banking while on my lunch**

break. As I approached a tall, female teller she said “Officer Mitzi, is that you?” After my transaction, that bank teller took her break and told me that she had graduated from the local high school, entered the U. S. Army, and returned to Seattle to work and go to a local college. The young woman was a seven year old who was on the bus to the Seattle Center. I believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect, and have the opportunity to rise.

Because of this assignment, I am engaged in Equity and Social Justice causes while at work and in my private life. As Sheriff, I intend to support the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and implement its vision and goals in the Sheriff’s Office. There is currently no discussion of the Plan nor communication of implementation from the top leaders of the Sheriff’s Office.

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

I learned how to be a good team member and team leader from many years of team sports (1963-2009). My family was very active and my parents ensured we were involved in school and extra-curricular activities throughout our life. My earliest memory of participating in an organized sport was at the age of four when I played wiffle ball with my brother and dad in our front yard. My last organized sport activity was at the age of fifty (Field Hockey Tournament in Fiji). I was fortunate to play basketball for the University of Washington and Western Washington University. I travelled the United States playing women’s major league softball (four National tournaments over thirty years). These are just three of eight team sports I participated in while going to school or college and/or working, and during my professional life. I also coached and refereed during this time.

These athletic adventures taught me how to be a member of a team, to be a team leader, and to build a team. Along the way I learned many associated skills; time management, injury recovery (mind/body/spirit), remaining calm in the face of adversity, leadership techniques and team strategies. All of this helped me to become a healthy person, proficient at evaluating, planning, and executing under pressure, an accomplished deputy, and respected leader (I was the first female Commander of our SWAT team) in the Sheriff’s Office.

In my personal life, I have had the honor of helping raise my step-daughter with my partner and wife of 16 years. From her last year of high school, into college, and for a short time after college she lived with us. Having and maintaining a stable relationship with our daughter is our priority for her health and welfare. Since our daughter is a person of color, I worry every day about her safety, discriminatory behavior toward her and others, and institutional racism.

To this day we have had many conversations about law enforcements role in communities of color, fear of retaliation and use of force against people of color, inequity of incarceration rates and sentences, and the Black Lives Matter movement. I am a member of the LGBTQ community and volunteer for the Seattle Men’s and Seattle Women’s Chorus’. I am on the Board of Directors of the non-profit, Companis. Each of these volunteer efforts connects me with communities that face discrimination and unfair treatment (sometimes injury and death) each day. I am proud to serve and as Sheriff I would listen, engage, and collaborate with underrepresented communities and ensure that we work toward fairness and opportunity for all. While I have worked throughout my career to be fair, impartial, kind, and aware of bias, staying current with the help of my daughter and others makes me a better community member and leader. As Sheriff, my executive team, and command leadership will be responsible for communicating clearly with communities, for continually assessing and improving our performance, and to ensure consistent messaging, while conducting meaningful outreach.

In my public profession and service, I have commanded major incidents and represented the Sheriff’s Office in the King County Office of Emergency Management Coordination Center (ECC) during natural disasters (severe

wind storm, flooding event, and Nisqually Earthquake) to include declared national emergencies. My extensive operational background and command of critical incidents show that I am an experienced leader. I have held family members after notifying them of a loved one's severe injury or death. These experiences and many more, have prepared me to make the tough decisions that a Sheriff must make. These decisions can be made fairly, with compassion, respect and dignity. I hold people accountable in a manner that is fair and predictable. As Sheriff I would stand for what is right and just with input from others and without ego or the need to be correct. I would not allow discrimination in our hiring practices or any policy or procedure. My experience, progressive leadership, and 19 years of command service in every division and precinct of the King County Sheriff's Office prepares me for the Office of Sheriff.

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

The King County Sheriff is the chief executive officer and conservator of the peace of the county. The Sheriff oversees all areas of planning, leading, organizing and controlling the activities and assignments of the over 1100 employees serving the 13<sup>th</sup> largest county in the country.

The Sheriff is part of the county's senior leadership team. The Sheriff works with the Executive's Office and other executive officials to prepare budgets, plans, contracts, procurements, etc. They work together on strategic issues of public safety along with the Prosecuting Attorney. The Sheriff works with the judiciary in similar fashion. Finally, the Sheriff works with the King County Council to learn from their views and expertise on a wide range of issues, and also benefits from the wealth and diversity of expertise within the agency.

The Sheriff has a special and significant relationship to the twelve cities, Muckleshoot Tribe, two transit agencies and airport that the Sheriff's Office provides services to through Interlocal or other agreement. The Sheriff should form effective working relationships and collaborative partnerships with other local, state and federal agencies. They must ensure the agency is prepared to provide mutual aid in accordance with local, county, regional and state plans and agreements.

The most important duties of Sheriff are (1) to ensure the integrity of the Office and the organization, (2) to ensure the agency's effective and efficient achievement of its mission, goals and objectives in a manner supported by the communities we serve, and (3) that the Sheriff's Office does so in a collaborative, engaging manner with the residents, communities, cities, agencies and other entities we can partner with.

Why these are the most important duties for the Sheriff are obvious. The Sheriff must be viewed as trustworthy both in and outside the agency for the Sheriff's Office to be respected and trusted partners in addressing crime, the fear of crime, traffic safety, protecting at-risk individuals (suffering from mental illness and/or addiction, suicidal, etc.), youth violence and other pressing public safety issues. The Sheriff must be proactive, competent and a good steward of taxpayer dollars. They need to appoint the best leaders possible today while developing the next generation of leaders for tomorrow. The need to be collaborative, both inside and outside the agency. The most important duties of the next Sheriff is not to only develop the best team possible but to model what it means to be the best team player with others.