

## Public asked to judge judges

A Tucson hearing draws a single speaker, who focuses on one judge who handled a case involving her son.

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A judge's job is to pass judgment on others, but who judges the judges?

A panel from the Arizona Commission on [Judicial Review](#) recently met in Tucson to assess how Arizona's judges are doing in the public's eye.

Only Tucsonan Lorraine Bourgoin showed up to pass a little judgment of her own.

Bourgoin was the only person to go before six of the 30 members of the commission last week.

She used the opportunity to express dissatisfaction with Pima County Superior Court Judge Clark W. Munger, who presided over a probate matter involving her son.

"I wasn't very pleased," she said. "He wasn't very honorable or just up there. At other times, I was in his courtroom and observed his conduct, and I don't feel it was dignified or fair."

Because Bourgoin is involved in a case that is before Munger, the judge said he could not comment on her remarks.

Jurors, litigants, lawyers and witnesses who appeared last year before judges facing re-election were asked to fill out a survey judging the judges.

The hearing at the downtown Radisson City Center hotel was meant to let anyone wanting to deliver the message in person.

"This is not quite what I expected," Bourgoin told the panel.

Political pollster Margaret C. Kenski, commission chairwoman, reassured Bourgoin that the session was intended to be a "friendly give and take."

Then Bourgoin shared her opinion of Munger with the panel, which also included Richard Cosgrove, head of the University of Arizona's history department; lawyer Carl A. Piccarreta; Tom Bowen, a retired U.S. Air Force colonel; Pima County Superior Court Judge Ted B. Borek and David L. Hetrick, professor emeritus of nuclear engineering at UA.

Piccarreta asked Bourgoin to explain how Munger's demeanor offended her.

"It was something about his mannerisms and he would talk down to people, as if everybody in there is a criminal, and these are probate cases," Bourgoin said.

Afterward, Bourgoin said the panel appeared to take her complaint seriously.

"I think that they're going to take what I said into consideration," she said.

Judy Pfau, program manager for the Arizona Supreme Court's Administrative Office, said such hearings can bring out people with issues to discuss.

"Some people will show up on behalf of some kind of cause, like the women's movement or children's issues, and not because of a specific judge," Pfau said. "But the commission is happy to hear from them and make it part of the record."

Kenski said the commission will study comments either mailed or delivered at the hearing and another in Phoenix on Wednesday.

On July 14, the commission will decide if judges seeking re-election this fall meet [judicial performance](#) standards.

The commission will make its finding available to the public in time for the November election.

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