

How Much Justice Can YOU Afford?

Letter to the Editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 11.03.22

As a kid I saw “Miracle on 34th Street.” Kindly Kris Kringle gets fired as Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade Santa because he says he really is St. Nick. At his sanity trial Kris insists it’s true, so his lawyer decides to prove he’s right. The judge, realizing he’ll never get reelected if he says Santa doesn’t exist, rules that Kris really IS Santa! It made me want to become a lawyer. So, I did.

That’s when I learned that trials decided by politics only have happy endings in Hollywood. North Carolina elects judges, who have to raise money and campaign. In 1996, to minimize political influence, Democrats made judges’ races nonpartisan and publicly funded.

But in 2013 Republicans took control of the governorship, house and senate [for the first time since 1870](#). They hurriedly made judicial elections [partisan](#) once again and [eliminated public funding](#), forcing judges to raise money from private donors. Where does that money come from, and what do judges promise to get it?

Democratic candidates raise funds from [individual donations](#) too small to influence decisions. Republican candidates are funded by dark money political action committees (PACs) whose donors [include](#) Koch Industries, Big Tobacco, and Big Pharma. The difference is important and shows up in their ads.

Democrat Sam Ervin’s ad [says](#) cases should be decided “on the law and facts, not on a judge’s partisan politics or ideological beliefs.”

Democrat Lucy Inman’s ad [says](#) “Politics has no place in the courtroom. I’ll follow the law and rule independently.”

Republican judges’ ads [emphasize](#) their ties to Republican politics and conservative political ideology.

Whatever your political leanings, if Koch sues to build in your neighborhood would you want the case decided by a judge Koch’s money helped elect?

Vote for judges Sam Ervin, Lucy Inman, Gale Adams, Darren Jackson, Brad Salmon and Carolyn Thompson. Because justice should depend on merit, not money.

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