



## **CITY OF SPOKANE MUNICIPAL COURT POSITION 3**

**Gloria Ochoa-Bruck**

[www.gloriaforjudge.com](http://www.gloriaforjudge.com)

**Please list any professional licenses or other relevant professional experience.**

Judge Gloria Ochoa-Bruck was elected Spokane Municipal Court Judge Position 3 to her first term in 2021. She served as Tribal Court Judge for the Kalispel Tribe and the Spokane Tribe. Gloria served as a Benton County Deputy Prosecutor and practiced state and federal criminal defense. She holds a JD, MBA and MA in Criminal Justice and Criminology.

**Before we dive in, tell us a little about yourself and what you love about downtown Spokane.**

I moved to Spokane in 2009 from the Tri-Cities. I am the proud Mom of 4 children ages 30, 23, 22, and 14. In the past 16 years I have had the privilege and the opportunity to serve in various roles in the Spokane community. One of the things I enjoy doing is participating in races in the Spokane area. I ran my 17th consecutive Bloomsday Run this year. One of the things I love about downtown Spokane is Riverfront Park often described as the City's front porch. I love the fact that I can attend a Broadway Show, go to a concert at the arena, have dinner at a wide range of locally owned restaurants, go to a movie at the AMC Theatre, or shop downtown. I have a lot of fond memories of time spent with family and friends downtown.

**How often do you visit downtown Spokane?**

I spend quite a bit of time downtown and routinely meet friends after work for appetizers or meet folks for coffee meetings at the various locally owned coffee shops downtown. In addition, I do my best to stay involved in the community and attend multiple events throughout the year supporting local non-profits that held downtown.

**What's your favorite restaurant or small business in downtown Spokane—or somewhere you spend a lot of time?**

I strive to take a daily 2-3 mile walk over the lunch hour and I spend a lot of time on the Centennial Trail walking from Kendall Yards through Riverfront Park and back to the courthouse. There is nothing more energizing than walking through the park on a beautiful day and hearing the sound of the Falls. I routinely meet friends after work for appetizers or meet folks for coffee meetings at the various locally owned coffee shops.

**What is the role of the municipal court judge?**

As a Spokane Municipal Court Judge, we are assigned Misdemeanor and Gross Misdemeanor cases that are alleged to have occurred in the City of Spokane. The maximum penalty is 364 in jail and a \$5,000 fine. It is the judge's responsibility to preside fairly and impartially over every case that comes before the court and to fairly and impartially apply the rule of law. Once an individual pleads guilty or is convicted at trial, it is the judge's responsibility to fairly exercise their judicial discretion when imposing a sentence and set appropriate conditions of probation. If there are alleged violations of

the conditions of the imposed sentence, it is the judge's responsibility to address the alleged probation violations and take appropriate action when the probation violation are founded.

**What are the most pressing issues related to the municipal court?**

A pressing issue for Spokane Municipal Court is resourcing our Criminal Justice Services Department with the staffing needed to have the capacity to work with individuals on supervision and probation. Municipal Court has a system in place in which the Court can order an individual to undergo a Risk Needs Assessment for individuals who have high rates of recidivism, i.e. rate of reoffending, and place them on enhanced supervision with an assigned Criminal Justice Counselor. The number of people that would benefit from enhanced probation is limited by the number of individuals that can be placed on a caseload. We are constantly having to monitor how many individuals can be referred for a Risk Needs Assessment even when we see the benefit to the individual and the community.

**What principles will you use to guide your decisions on the bench?**

My judicial philosophy is rooted in community-centered justice that balances restorative justice and rehabilitation and community and public safety, with compassionate accountability. I stand firm in my belief that justice should be accessible, fair, and equitable for all individuals, regardless of background or circumstance. I believe that the role of a judge is to ensure justice is fair, compassionate, and rooted in accountability. Accountability should not be understood only as punishment, but as an opportunity for individuals to take responsibility, heal, and grow. Justice that embraces both responsibility and rehabilitation creates the possibility of meaningful change. Accountability is the core foundation of recovery. At the same time, the safety and dignity of victims and the broader community must remain at the center of judicial decision-making. Victims deserve to be heard, communities deserve to feel secure, and individuals deserve the chance to rebuild their lives in a way that strengthens, rather than harms, those around them. For me, judging is about more than resolving cases. It is about fostering trust, healing, and hope. It is about decisions that not only address harm that has already occurred but also contribute to a safer, healthier community in the future. It is about acknowledging that every individual that comes before the court is worthy of our care and investment.

**How would you approach having to make a judgement that you don't agree with yet is correct in the eyes of the law?**

The Judicial Canons mandate that a judge shall comply with the law and that although each judge may come to the bench with a unique background and personal philosophy, a judge must interpret and apply the law without regard to whether the judge approves or disapproves of the law in question. Not doing so would be in violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

**What criteria would you use for deciding to impose sentences, including diversion or therapeutic options? How should cases with repeat offenders be handled?**

I want to affirm my strong and long-standing support for Therapeutic Courts and Diversion Programs grounded in best practices, policies, and procedures that prioritize rehabilitation and restoration. However, these programs are most effective when focused on reducing recidivism and providing individuals the opportunity for lasting change. Therapeutic Courts are intended for high risk and high need individuals that generally have been previously criminal justice involved and are assessed to have a substance use disorder and/or mental health diagnosis, among other barriers. Drug Courts for example, have a long-proven track record of giving individuals an opportunity to have what would

be a lengthy prison or jail sentence suspended in lieu of participating in the Drug Court program which requires individuals to engage in treatment and services, participate in the offered supports, and are held accountable to stay committed to their recovery journey. The recidivism, or rate of re-offending, for individuals that successfully graduate from Drug Courts that adhere to best practices has held consistently low over the years and proven to break the cycle for people who struggled in the past. Accountability is the core foundation of recovery. In regard to cases that are part of the Court's regular dockets, I adhere to my judicial philosophy of balancing restorative justice and rehabilitation, compassionate accountability grounded in the recovery process, and community and victim safety. I believe in defendant centered justice that considers the individual as a whole, versus offense centered justice, that focuses on the particular offense. Each person that comes before the Court is a unique individual and each case has its own set of facts. A judge should not prejudge or predetermine any case before listening fully and impartially to all parties and applying the law fairly and equitably.

**Final Question: Is there any additional information you would like to share about your candidacy that you were unable to provide in the above responses?**

Justice should rise above politics. Keeping our communities safe, helping people heal, and reuniting families are values we all share.