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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** High school. It's there's all sorts of different paths they can take even with the the curriculum at Arrowhead and what you can choose. So I know they have to start looking at that in eighth grade.

[00:00:12] **Speaker 2** I am who I am whenever you're okay, both where everything's set and good. All right. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. Can you break down your judicial philosophy for me?

[00:00:24] **Speaker 1** Sure. So I'm a judicial conservative, which means I believe in upholding the law as written and applying that law to the facts of every case, giving deference to our legislative statutes, because that's where policy is made and never, ever legislating from the bench.

[00:00:43] **Speaker 2** How do you define legislating from the bench? Because there's a lot of disagreement over when a court makes a ruling, whether they're rearranging the law to fit a need or an opinion versus this is all we have to go on.

[00:00:56] **Speaker 1** When a judge or justice inserts their own political agenda. Policy views are personal opinions on what the law should be. That's my definition of legislating from the bench. And I say that because it's the role of a judge to apply the law as written to the facts of the cases that come before us, to never prejudge those cases, to be fair and impartial. And in our government, we have a system that's set up a very clear separation of powers. Our legislative figures write, our assemblymen, our senators. They make the law. That's where the policy of the state is set. And then judges interpret that when called upon to do that. And so it's very important that judges act more like umpires. Right. We don't make the law. We just decide the law. And if you think of the analogy to baseball, right, just calling the balls and strikes, not the pitcher, not the catcher, but just calling the balls and strikes. And that's what a judge does and a justice should do is call the legal balls and strikes that come before him or her.

[00:02:07] **Speaker 2** So you said that the politics shouldn't enter into the decision, but obviously this is a political race and there are a lot of political factors weighing in to all the candidates. And when constituents are out there thinking about who they want to vote for, some of them are thinking through a political frame of reference. So how do you balance that when you want people to know that you will be impartial on the bench, but people also want to have a sense of your politics?

[00:02:34] **Speaker 1** It's very important to. Honor that this is a nonpartisan race and that my political views or my policy preferences are not going to impact what I do on the bench. That's very different from the liberal candidates. And I know we give them labels, right, Liberal and conservative. And I think that's just a a simple way to identify for the public what our judicial philosophies are and what our approach to the law is. But you have two candidates who are openly giving us their political agenda, campaigning on a political agenda and forecasting how they would vote on many important issues. They're telling the future litigants. Their mind is made up that they don't care about the facts. They don't care about the law. Vote for me because I'll do X, Y, or Z. That is not the methodology that I will follow and that I have been following for 11 years on the bench. It's really important that every judge and justice stay in their constitutional lane, and that's what I'll do.

[00:03:45] **Speaker 2** What should voters then think of your background, who you were appointed by, who's endorsing you, who's supporting you, where the the outside money that's going to support you comes from where your family members and their connections to other political figures, because obviously those exist. And the liberal candidates in this race are saying, well, we're just being upfront and honest with voters and it's the conservatives who are trying to hide where the real influence may be.

[00:04:11] **Speaker 1** The candidates on the left are telling you about a political agenda when this is not a race for a legislative or gubernatorial position. That's why it's important for me as someone who believes in upholding the rule of law and being fair and impartial, to not talk about my personal preferences. You know, I wear a robe for a reason. One of those reasons is to show the public, show the litigants, and then remind me that I need to be fair and impartial. I cover up those personal preferences so that I make a decision that's based on the law. When you make a decision based on the law, you have predictability, reliability and stability. And when you start making decisions based on political preferences, the rule of law goes out the window and then the litigants aren't able to plan whether you're a business owner, whether you're a family that's going through a divorce, and you need to look at custody and placement decisions if the law doesn't matter because it's a political agenda that's driving decisions. That's not good for anyone.

[00:05:26] **Speaker 2** We are only a couple of weeks away from this primary and we've already seen you personally be attacked from both the right and the left in this race and had your family and connections to your family dragged into some attention to this race. What does that say, that you are being hit from all sides?

[00:05:46] **Speaker 1** When I consider. My background, my experience, my 26 years that I bring to this race, my position as a judge for the last 11 years, the name recognition that I have and the broad appeal based on my experience. I think any time folks consider you to be a front runner, they want to attack you to bring you down as a means of distraction. It's unfortunate that my family and other families have been brought into this for what I think is nothing more than political fodder. My heart weeps for that family, and I pray for them every single day. I understand that when I entered into this race, I would subject myself to scrutiny. That's, of course, what happens when you do that. I do want to set the record straight, though, that there have been some accusations against me that I have somehow interfered with an investigation. I have never been in contact with authorities investigating that tragic death. And I categorically deny the insinuation that my husband or I have been involved. I understand it might come from a place of pain or even misinformation. And I also understand that as a mom, I love my kids so very dearly. That is the number one title that I have. I love being a judge as well. And I'd be honored to be a justice and I'd be the first person to hold my kids accountable if they do anything wrong. But no child, no children of a candidate should be brought into a political and candidate's race for nothing more than scoring political points. That's unfortunate. It's unfair. And I want to stay focused on what the issues are, what I can bring to this race, and just know that my heart again breaks for that family. I can't imagine what they're going through. And I will just continue to pray that they find some peace.

[00:08:01] **Speaker 2** You're not the first candidate to see their political lives. Are things second hand connected to you dragged into a race? Rebecca Bradley went through that, and in a lot of cases it seemed like it may have backfired and people understood the that disconnect between being a political figure, but then also keeping your family life separate. Do you think that does reflect your status as a front runner, that you are being put to this kind of scrutiny of a multimillion dollar campaigns against you?

[00:08:30] **Speaker 1** You know, I'm going to focus on what I bring. And I think sometimes those things are certainly a distraction. It takes away from my experience, my background, my 11 years on the bench, being in key leadership positions, being a chief judge. Being someone who has really dedicated their career to serving others. And I'm going to keep hammering on that message because it's so very important. And it's important that voters also understand the difference in candidates that they have before them. And one like me who will uphold the rule of law and who will not legislate from the bench, and two other candidates who will openly tell you all of their political preferences, or at least on key issues in hopes of getting elected and taking a seven member court and by a vote of 4 to 3, making policy decisions. Politics do not and should not play a part in how cases are decided. The law is what matters, and that's my pledge to the people of Wisconsin.

[00:09:41] **Speaker 2** When did you first start thinking about getting into this race?

[00:09:45] **Speaker 1** I look at my background. 11 years just Justice Rogan, Zach retiring. Given my key leadership positions, it seemed like the right time for me to run for this office.

[00:10:00] **Speaker 2** Obviously, a lot of the state became aware of your name through the most recent high profile case. Did that spur you to to run or were you already thinking before that case came to your bench?

[00:10:14] **Speaker 1** It's my experience and my background and that and the Retirement of Justice Rogan's act that really spurred me into this race. And for me, it was the right time. There's no doubt people had a very unique look into how I run my courtroom, how in the midst of some very challenging circumstances, they saw my commitment to fairness, order and justice. That's what I do day in and day out, whether millions of people are watching me or there's just a few people in the courtroom. And I hope people focus on that commitment to being fair and impartial, even with a defendant and litigants who are extremely difficult at times and disruptive, that I can protect not only that person's rights, but the rights of the victims as well and bring justice to that case.

[00:11:11] **Speaker 2** There are two other circuit court judges running in this race. Do you think they would have been qualified to handle the trial in the same way, or do you think it was some more unique characteristics that you brought that allowed you to handle it that way?

[00:11:23] **Speaker 1** You know, I've been on the bench for 11 years, and in my experience before coming to the bench, I served as a prosecutor for many years. I also served as a defense attorney. I've been on the criminal rotation. This is my second time through. And that unique experience and my outlook on being fair and impartial is really what gave me the ability to handle that situation. Of course, knowing the law and how to address it, and I'm always going to go back to my unwavering commitment to be fair and impartial. That's what drives what I do on the bench every single day.

[00:12:02] **Speaker 2** I want to look back at a few cases that the Supreme Court decided that are still pretty important. Legislature versus Palm was about the governor's ability to put the restrictions during COVID. How do you think that case was handled? How would you have ruled if you had been on the bench at the time?

[00:12:20] **Speaker 1** The majority opinion in that case was written by Justice Rogan Zach, and they focused on that. It was a rule that had universal applicability to the people of Wisconsin and that that procedure was not followed. And that certainly I found myself, you know, looking at their analysis and saying they got it right. Of course, every case is different and I don't want to prejudge cases that might come before the court again or in the future that look at, you know, issues of, you know, authority from a branch of government, whether it's directly or delegation. So my focus will always be on the law. What does the law say in this particular situation? What are the facts of that particular case? Of course, listen to the challenges that are made. Read through all the briefs before I render a decision.

[00:13:19] **Speaker 2** It's very pretty fair to say in that specific circumstance probably won't come again. It'll have different nuance to it if it did come before you on the court, after. In that case, Justice Kelly lost his bid for reelection and the court balance shifted. What do you think of the prominence of Justice Hagedorn since then in his role on the court?

[00:13:41] **Speaker 1** You know, I. Can't speak for him. Right. Or his methodology. What I can do is focus on what I will bring to the court, and that is an unwavering commitment to be fair and impartial, to apply the law to the facts of each case. To bring collegiality to the court as well. To work with all of the justices on the bench as we wrestle with really important issues and do what I think is best for every given case.

[00:14:15] **Speaker 2** It's it's interesting that just as Hagedorn is a conservative, he ran as a conservative. He often rules with the conservatives. And yet it's some of the liberals who want to be associated with him more closely in terms of his prominence as a swing voter, saying that he's independent minded and some of the conservatives in the race that are more cautious about any association with him because some of the conservative base doesn't view him as a conservative enough. Is there a danger in associating yourself too closely with any particular judge on the court just from how the public may view that person?

[00:14:52] **Speaker 1** I can focus on what I would bring to the Supreme Court. That's my background. That's my experience. 11 years on the bench, one of the leading trial court judges, a chief judge, which is one of nine appointments by the Supreme Court currently serving as the chair of that committee or chief of the Chiefs. Focus on my. People who are supporting me think it's very important to have law enforcement support. And, you know, those are people that have vetted me as well. And I'm proud to say I've 48 bipartisan sheriffs. I have the Waukee Police Association. I have dozens and dozens of police chiefs, including the 24 chiefs in Waukesha County, who are supporting me. And again, I'm always going to go back to my unwavering commitment to be fair and impartial and to promise the people of Wisconsin that I will care about every case that comes before me. I will listen to the arguments that are made. I will read through all the briefs. I will study the law closely and apply the law to the facts of the cases that come before me. Every decision, every time, and work with the colleagues that I will have on the bench no matter what side they may fall on, because I think that's important as well.

[00:16:12] **Speaker 2** Later that fall in 2020, we saw a couple of very important cases. We saw Trump versus Evers and Trump versus Biden in an effort to eliminate some of the votes that were cast in Dayton, Milwaukee County. And the court decided 4 to 3 not to hear those cases. Do you think that was the right choice at that time?

[00:16:32] **Speaker 1** You know, election law cases are certainly the types of cases that are going to come before the court with frequency. I think it's very important to people who vote to feel that their vote mattered and that the process is fair and reliable. And there is ample case law from the United States Supreme Court on these issues. There's case law now, of course, as well, from the state of Wisconsin. And so I'm going to look at those cases as they come before the court and apply the law to them and make decisions and do my best to make sure that people understand the decisions that I write. And they're and that there's predictability and reliability going forward with those decisions as well.

[00:17:26] **Speaker 2** Now, the redistricting case is another one that will likely come back. So I'm not asking you to speak as to how you would have ruled, but the philosophy of least change. Can you comment on whether you found that was an appropriate phrase for the court to use when determining what types of maps should be considered?

[00:17:41] **Speaker 1** So the redistricting redistricting case, as you said, was pretty unusual with a very unusual procedural back and forth going to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, then the U.S. Supreme Court, and then back to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. And as you know, that's a political decision that is supposed to be made by our legislators with the governor in selecting these maps based upon the census that happens every ten years. And so following the law in those cases is very important. It's guided by the principle of one person, one vote, the Voting Rights Act and constitutional principles in Wisconsin. And so that's the types of things that are going to govern. When I look at any case that comes on redistricting, it's very important to to look at that. And like I said, it was kind of unusual back and forth. And ultimately the maps here in Wisconsin were approved and we need to keep going forward and we'll see what happens the next time the census takes place.

[00:18:46] **Speaker 2** So what do you think when you hear your opponents say that they would definitely like to review that case and that the maps are rigged?

[00:18:54] **Speaker 1** I think that's crossing the line. That's telling voters how her policy preferences, her political views when she says they were wrong. I think she's actually inviting litigation to come back if she's elected. That's not what a justice should be doing at all. We need to be fair and impartial. The role of the court is to decide the cases that come before us, not dictate policy, not decide or rule on cases with a political agenda or what we want the law to be. That's for the legislature, and I'm going to honor that very clear separation of powers that's in the Constitution.

[00:19:37] **Speaker 2** And abortions and other issues. That's likely going to come back to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. So I want to ask you how you might rule on that. But on the Dobbs decision that is now the law of the land, do you think that was decided fairly? And is that the appropriate method from which to review any law, or is it now Wisconsin law that needs to be looked at on its own outside of Dobbs.

[00:20:00] **Speaker 1** As a Supreme Court case from the US Supreme Court? It obviously is the law of the land, and I'm duty bound to follow that and what that case did. Is put the decision of regulating abortion in the hands of the state legislature. That's where that decision should be made. And, of course, there is a challenge right now. It's not a constitutional challenge. It's the question that's before the court will really be what is the status of the law in Wisconsin? I won't comment any further. Right. Because that's likely to make its way up to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. But again, as a sitting judge and as a hopeful to be on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, I have to give honor to the decisions of the US Supreme Court.

[00:20:56] **Speaker 2** Is there a danger in voters approaching this election, looking through only the prism of one or two hot button political issues and saying, well, I'm going to vote for the candidate that most closely follows my views there, as opposed to more broadly looking at what do I want in a Supreme Court justice?

[00:21:13] **Speaker 1** I think the danger is that there's candidates who are openly campaigning on a political agenda on a couple of very important and controversial topics. And that voter should be looking at how are the justices going to decide the cases that come before the court, not just on a couple of topics, but on all topics. That's where being fair and impartial. As judges, we take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, to uphold the Constitution of the state of Wisconsin, and to faithfully discharge the duties of our office to be fair and impartial. That's what justices and judges should do that honors the role of the courts and honors the role of the legislature. And it honors the voice of the people as well, because the people speak through our legislators. And that's where policy is made. And I will never insert my policy preferences into the decisions that I make. And I think that's what voters will be looking at so that they know whatever the issue is that comes before the court, they can trust the decisions that are made.

[00:22:28] **Speaker 2** And finally, this is getting a lot of attention, both in Wisconsin and nationally. How much will that affect the race that people are starting to understand the importance of this particular race to the Wisconsin Supreme Court?

[00:22:42] **Speaker 1** It's a position on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. It's incredibly important to the people of the state of Wisconsin. I can certainly see that as I go around the state campaigning. And there are a lot of eyes looking at this race as well. I think for the wrong reasons. I think there's a push from the left to push this political agenda so that not only Wisconsin can be transformed and not in a good way, not through the legislative process, but through a vote of 4 to 3 on the Wisconsin Supreme Court so that other political agendas can be met as well. That's wrong. It has no place in the courts. And I do believe that the people of the state of Wisconsin see that and want a court that's fair and impartial instead of one that's driven by a political agenda.

[00:23:34] **Speaker 2** All right. Anything else that you'd like to add?

[00:23:36] **Speaker 1** Just thank you for being here today and for the interview. I appreciate it.

[00:23:41] **Speaker 2** All right. Thank you so much for your time. I do appreciate you giving us some time here this morning.

[00:23:44] **Speaker 1** Absolutely. Thank you. All right. Nice to meet you.

[00:23:47] **Speaker 2** Before I cut one more thing, we want to get the clap. Oh, you're probably use. Have you had the clap? All right. You want to do it?

[00:23:55] **Speaker 1** Ready? Let me know when I can do.

[00:23:56] **Speaker 2** All right. All right. And whenever you're ready. Perfect. All right, great. All right. You're still tethered to the.

[00:24:02] **Speaker 1** Still tethered. Don't go for such a little one.

[00:24:05] **Speaker 2** Yes. All right. All right. We will get packed up and out of your way. Thank you again. I appreciate it.

[00:24:11] **Speaker 1** All the names that we want to put and.

[00:24:13] **Speaker 2** Oh, I know. Thank you.

[00:24:16] **Speaker 1** I appreciate it. Catherine, when it's.

[00:24:18] **Speaker 2** Airing 730 Friday night and here and now, it's already booked into the show, and then it'll be out on our website probably that morning. Oh, thank you so much for.