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McDonald began his career as a teacher with the Detroit Public Schools, then attended law school while working as an account executive for General Tire. He graduated from the Detroit College of Law in 1970 and began practicing as an assistant prosecutor for Oakland County.

For the past 19 years, he has worked in private practice and served as an Oakland County Commissioner from 1974 to 1988.

McDonald said he's handled every kind of case from murder to contractual law and employment discrimination cases and has worked at all levels from district court to federal court.

In a community vein, McDonald chaired the city of Farmington Hills Year 2000 study, a major study and report on the future of the city. He is a board member of the Farmington Area Advisory Council and serves on the Ethics Committee for the Farmington Hills City Council.

In addition to his background,

'I wouldn't be leading the bandwagon to build a new courtroom.'

John McDonald
judicial candidate, 47th District Court

McDonald said he considers himself someone who can effectively listen.

"It's the ability to sit in a courtroom and listen to screaming attorneys and angry clients, keep your cool and be able to rule on the case with considering personalities," he said. "I have the ability to listen to other people's position without arguing."

On the issue of expanding the courthouse, something turned down by voters, McDonald is a realist. "We have to deal with reality — the money's not there," he said. "There are two judges and that's what we have to live with."

McDonald said he would be willing to consider evening sessions,

and possibly some creative reviews of the current building space if the state approves adding a third judge. "Why expand if you don't have to?" he said. "It's utilization of the building — there's so many creative things you can do. I wouldn't be leading the bandwagon to build a new courtroom."

Meanwhile, McDonald believes a judge should aim for shorter case resolution by making better use of time and technology to operate the courts.

McDonald is an advocate of creative sentencing including, for example, forcing a young person who has damaged a lawn to repair that one and 20 others. "I represent a lot of kids," he said. "Most are pretty good, and they might do something stupid. But I don't think they should go into court and pay a fine and walk away."

He said he could change the public perception of "Judge as God."

"Sometimes judges act that way, and they deserve the criticism," he said. "Practicing law's hard. It's very difficult and that's why you don't need a judge making it any harder."

McDonald and his wife, Sharon, have lived in Farmington Hills for more than 26 years. They have three children.



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