

Hagedorn, Neubauer trade blows on temperament, blog posts, ideology

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MILWAUKEE — Meeting for their final debate ahead of the April 2 election, Supreme Court candidate Brian Hagedorn accused rival Lisa Neubauer of making up lies about him.

Neubauer fired back she was only using her opponent's own words to show he would be a partisan on the bench.

And they both questioned if the other has the temperament to replace Shirley Abrahamson as the state's next justice.

As they traded blows, Neubauer said Hagedorn would bring a partisan agenda to the court. To back up her contention, she pointed to Hagedorn's past blog posts that have included suggesting a U.S. Supreme Court decision throwing out an anti-sodomy law opened the door to legalizing bestiality. She also said Hagedorn helped found a school that bans gay students and staff while receiving money to speak to an organization that was labeled a hate group.

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Hagedorn fired back Neubauer was lying, saying she can't point to any cases while he's been a judge to suggest he would be a partisan on the court.

"It's really unbecoming, Judge Neubauer, that you want to sacrifice your integrity to win a seat on the state Supreme Court," Hagedorn said, adding "name calling is unbecoming of a judge."

Neubauer shot back she was pointing to information that came directly from Hagedorn's blog, saying they are facts.

“This is not about faith. This is not about us,” Neubauer said, noting she and her family have belonged to a church for 20 years. “This is about the public and the public’s confidence that the people that they’re electing to their Supreme Court are going to come without a predetermined outcome, without ideology, without bias.”

The debate at Marquette University Law School was hosted by longtime broadcaster Mike Gousha, who posed a series of questions and follow ups as they sat around a table. It was the second and final debate, though they also met in a forum before the Milwaukee Bar Association a week ago.

Like he did in their first debate at the State Bar of Wisconsin in Madison, Hagedorn knocked Abrahamson several times. He said the longtime liberal justice brought partisanship to the court. Hagedorn, a former chief legal counsel for Gov. Scott Walker, also said Abrahamson had made up her mind to rule against him when he appeared before her as a lawyer because the justice didn’t like his client’s politics. He noted Neubauer has donated to Abrahamson.

Neubauer accused Hagedorn of vilifying Abrahamson, the first woman to serve on the state Supreme Court. She also said Hagedorn “demeaned” former Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court who was appointed by President Reagan , by writing on his blog her decisions were “laughable.”

“Is this the kind of temperament, is this the kind of demeaning behavior that we need on our Supreme Court?” Neubauer said. “The people don’t want that. We’ve had enough of that.”

Hagedorn responded Abrahamson was a “pioneer,” but he took issue with her judicial philosophy.

“The real question here is judicial philosophy, and it’s appropriate and OK for us to talk about that and have real discussions about that,” he said.

Neubauer said she has declined to criticize Hagedorn’s decisions to maintain collegiality on the appeals court on which they both serve.

Hagedorn replied, “The best way to foster collegiality on the court is not to lie and smear about your colleague, as you have done repeatedly in this campaign.”

During a discussion about ads from outside groups in the race, Hagedorn decried

personal attacks.

“There is an effort to destroy people personally who put themselves out there and Judge Neubauer is an active participant in that,” Hagedorn said. “And she is actually helping to make our judiciary less healthy by engaging in the ad hominem personal attacks that she is.”

Neubauer denied she is engaging in personal attacks, again pointing to Hagedorn’s blog posts.

“I do not see this as an attack,” Neubauer said. “I see it as information that the voters need to look at in terms of really deciding on temperament, deciding on impartiality.”

Watch the [debate](#).