



Life In Brief

Current Title: Mayor

Work History:

- Mayor of Seattle, 2017-Present
- Partner, Quinn Emanuel, 2015-2017
- United States Attorney for the Western District of Washington, 2009-2014
- Principal, Law Offices of Jenny A. Durkan 1997-2009
- Partner, Schroeter, Goldmark & Bender, 1991-1994; 1996-1997
- Counsel and Executive Vice President, D. Garvey Corporation, 1995-1996
- Executive Counsel, Governor Mike Lowry, 1994-1995
- Associate, Williams & Connolly, 1987-1991

Quick Summary

First openly gay U.S. attorney who leverages mayoral post and legal background to advocate for police accountability and civil rights protections

- Washington native born into a well-connected political family; paid her way through law school with a union job
- Seattle's first female mayor since the 1920s and the city's second consecutive openly LGBTQ+ elected mayor
- Diverse legal experience as a public defender, criminal defense attorney, and corporate lawyer
- Appointed by Barack Obama to U.S. Attorney, where she investigated excessive use of force by Seattle police, cracked down on organized crime, and became an expert in cybercrimes

- Former member of the Seattle Police Accountability Review Board who helped set up the King County Drug Court; as Mayor, focuses on improving police standards and pushes for alternatives to incarceration
- Civil rights activist who created divisions in the U.S. Attorney and Mayor's offices to focus on ensuring protections for minorities
- Network of high-powered allies in state government and in the legal profession
- Since gaining office, has shown her commitment to addressing housing instability

Approach and Motivations

Guided by a deep belief in seeking justice; brings legal perspective but recognizes the limitations of the law

- Knew she wanted to be a lawyer since age five; has long fought for the disadvantaged
- Says she has seen where the law can fail, pointing to rulings on LGBTQ+ rights; advocates for systemic changes to ensure that others will not have to go through the same suffering
- Believes that it isn't possible to solve problems solely through prosecution, citing the ineffectiveness of the War on Drugs; emphasizes alternatives such as diversion programs

Policy Position and Areas of Focus

Draws on minority identity and legal background to push for civil rights and police accountability; has been active in battling city's housing crisis

Civil Rights: *Fights for equality in employment, housing, and legal representation*



- Created unit within the U.S. Attorney’s office to focus on housing and job discrimination; as Mayor, established Office of the Employee Ombud to investigate issues related to workplace harassment and discrimination
- Outspoken on LGBTQ+ rights; proponent of the Equality Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual identity
- Vocal opponent of the Trump Administration’s immigration policy; announced funding for legal services for immigrants and refugees at risk of deportation in Seattle-King county

Criminal Justice Reform: *Committed to improving the quality of the police force and pursuing alternatives to incarceration*

- As U.S. Attorney, spearheaded police reform efforts in the Seattle Police Department (SPD) after a Department of Justice investigation found a pattern of excessive use of force
- As Mayor, crafted budget plan to increase investments in alternatives to arrest and incarcerations, including diversion programs
- Helped implement legalization of marijuana as U.S. Attorney; filed motion as Mayor to vacate marijuana possession convictions

Housing Affordability: *Promotes investment in low- and moderate- income developments*

- Formed Affordable Middle-Income Housing Advisory Council to attract capital investment to create homes that are middle class-affordable
- Directed city officials to encourage developers who receive City funding to use the Community Preference Policy, which gives housing priority to current residents and reduces displacement
- Focuses on increasing shelter spaces throughout the city; increased number of police officers who are responsible for connecting encampment residents with housing services

Core Communities

Well-connected to state politicians and high-powered attorneys; engages with civil rights groups

State Politicians: *Ties to former governors and mayors; family connection to state government*

- Worked as legal counsel to former Gov. Mike Lowry and represented former Gov. Chris Gregoire during 2005 recount law suit, one of Durkan’s most prominent cases; enjoys friendly relationship with current Gov. Jay Inslee
- Served as an adviser to former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, who endorsed her during her run and was named to Durkan’s transition team
- Father Martin Durkan was a member of the Washington State Senate; name recognition was instrumental in her campaign’s success

Prosecutors: *Cultivates network of lawyers from U.S. Attorney’s office and alma mater; partners with allies in legal field on national issues*

- Wide network of former U.S. Attorneys, including Preet Bharara
- Joined bipartisan group of former U.S. Attorneys to oppose Trump immigration policy; volunteered with local attorneys at Seattle-Tacoma Airport to prevent the deportation of people who arrived lawfully the day President Trump’s Travel Ban went into effect
- Frequently speaks at Washington Leadership Institute, a partnership between the UW School of Law and the Washington Bar Association

Civil Rights Groups: *Involves organizations in policy process; active in LGBTQ+ community*

- As U.S. Attorney, reformed the SPD with input from groups including E Centro, One America, Mothers for Police Accountability, and Northwest Immigrant Rights Project



Jenny Durkan

Mayor Of Seattle



- Named longtime friend, former law partner, and Director of the Center for Justice & Equality at the ACLU, Jeff Robinson, to Co-Chair of the SPD's Search Committee
- Participant in Seattle Pride; launched annual Mayor's Pride Award Reception, honoring LGBTQ+ groups including Somos Seattle

- Alliance for Gun Responsibility Victory Fund (Seattle, WA), \$500
- Laborers Local 440 PAC (Seattle, WA), \$500

Political Donations

- Has donated \$200,000 to Democratic campaigns between 1990 and 2019, including Washington candidates Jay Inslee, Patty Murray, and Maria Cantwell, and PACs including Emily's List

Relevant Financial Information

Broke the record for most donors and most money raised in the history of Seattle mayoral campaigns, raising over \$1 million; top donors are Seattle-based professionals, companies, and interest-groups

Biggest Individual Donors (2017)

- Colleen Bernier, U.S. Attorney's Office (Seattle, WA), \$600
- Midge McCauley, Founder of Downtown Works LLC (Seattle, WA), \$550
- Norma Miller, Retired (Seattle, WA), \$525
- Linda Gorton, Retired (Seattle, WA), \$500
- Jeffrey Lewis, Psychologist (Seattle, WA), \$500

Biggest Corporate Donors (2017)

- Alaska Airlines (Seattle, WA), \$500
- Pier 1 LLC (Seattle, WA), \$500
- Expedia Inc (Springfield, MO), \$500
- Eli Lilly and Company (Seattle, WA)
- Goodman Real Estate Inc. (Seattle, WA), \$500

Biggest Interest-Group Donors (2017)

- Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund (Washington, DC), \$500
- Rental Housing Association (Seattle, WA), \$500
- Washington Education Association PAC (Federal Way, WA), \$500

Publications, Media and Speaking

Discusses national issues of immigration, equality, and cybercrime in national newspapers and at civil rights conferences; appears in local media and at community forums to discuss Seattle's infrastructure and crime

Publications: *Authors op-eds in local and national newspapers on immigration and infrastructure*

- Favorite Subjects: Trump Administration immigration policy, housing, transportation
- Preferred Outlets: National outlets including the Washington Post and Politico, and state outlets including the Seattle Times

Media: *Speaks in state cable news on affordable housing and criminal justice*

- Favorite Subjects: Housing crisis, police reform, crime
- Preferred Outlets: Local cable news channels including King 5, KCTS9, and Seattle Channel
- Social Media Habits: Active on Twitter and Facebook

Speaking: *Meets with community organizations and equality interest-groups to discuss public safety and youth empowerment*

- Favorite Subjects: Crime, discrimination, youth leadership



- Preferred Audience: Community groups including Somali Family Safety Task Force and Seattle Alliance 4 Education, and civil rights stakeholders including Women Moving Millions and GLSEN Washington

Congressional Testimony: *Statements before Congress on cybercrime*

- In her capacity as U.S. Attorney, testified before Congress on cyber issues and federal capabilities to meet cyber-based national security and terrorism threats

Professional Affiliations

- Center for Women and Democracy
- Seattle Police Foundation

Family and Personal Background

Grew up in a large, politically active family in rural Washington; since childhood, has been determined and hardworking

Born in Issaquah, Washington; family ties to state politics

- The fourth of seven children in an Irish Catholic family
- Father Martin Durkan was a member of the Washington State Senate and was chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee; he was known for taking on causes like housing for migrant workers even though it wasn't politically popular
- Mother Lorraine was the executive editor of *The Ballard News*
- Brother Tim is a photographer and sister Kathleen is an NBC News correspondent

Described as possessing a fighting spirit

- As a child, came up with plan to deter burglars in her neighborhood by planting rock-stuffed mud pies outside her home, thinking the thieves would take a bite of the pie, break their teeth, and flee
- After college, worked as a baggage handler for a tiny airline in Alaska, where she boasts that she was the only woman and learned how to fix the forklift
- While U.S. Attorney, she was preparing to cross-examine an important witness when she received word that her father had died; she continued with the cross-examination

Criticisms and Controversies

No notable controversies