



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

October 12, 2011

Fairbanks District Court Applicants

Seven attorneys are applying for a judgeship on the Fairbanks District Court. The vacancy was created by the retirement of Judge Raymond M. Funk. The Alaska Judicial Council evaluates applicants and nominates the most qualified applicants to the governor who makes the appointment.

In nominating applicants to send to the governor for the final appointment, the Judicial Council considers many sources of information. It reviews an applicant's experience, and solicits character references and professional references from all present or prior employers, and attorneys and judges who have recent experience with the applicant. It investigates criminal or disciplinary charges against the applicant, the applicant's credit history, and court cases in which the applicant has been involved. The Council considers an applicant's involvement in community and professional activities, and reviews a writing sample by the applicant. Finally, members solicit public comments about applicants on the Council website, in newspaper advertising, and at a public hearing in the location of the vacancy, and then interview each applicant.

The Council surveys Alaskan attorneys about the professional competence, integrity, fairness, judicial temperament, suitability of the applicant's experience for this vacancy, and overall rating for this position for each applicant. Applicants are rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest rating and a rating of 3 being "acceptable." Demographic information from survey respondents allows Council members to identify how different groups of attorneys rate judicial applicants. Bar survey ratings are summarized below. More detailed copies of the survey are posted on the Council's website at www.ajc.state.ak.us.

In addition to ratings, the Council solicits comments from attorneys in its bar survey. Attorneys have the option of signing their comments. Council members do not consider unsigned comments unless they are corroborated, substantiated, or acknowledged by an applicant.

The Judicial Council does not use bar survey ratings to rank judicial applicants. The bar survey is one of many tools used by Council members when considering which applicants are the most qualified. Sometimes applicants with the highest bar survey ratings are not nominated by the Council.

Fairbanks District Court						
Applicant	Professional Competence	Integrity	Fairness	Judicial Temperament	Suitability of Experience	Overall Rating for this Position
Matthew Christian	3.9	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.8
Gene L. Gustafson	3.8	3.9	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.6
Bethany Spalding Harbison	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
Robert S. Noreen	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.1
Alicemary L. Rasley	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.7	3.6
Ben Seekins	4.0	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.1
Cassandra Tilly	3.2	3.8	3.5	3.1	2.5	2.8

The Judicial Council will interview applicants and conduct a public hearing in Fairbanks in December 2011. Following the interviews, the Council will nominate two or more persons to the governor, who then will have 45 days to make the appointment.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ANY OF THE APPLICANTS IS INVITED. PLEASE SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO THE ALASKA JUDICIAL COUNCIL, 1029 WEST THIRD AVENUE, SUITE 201, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-1969, OR TO THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE AT WWW.AJC.STATE.AK.US.

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