

PRESS RELEASE

December 31, 2015

ALASKA COURT SYSTEM  
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303 K Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

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264-0547

PRESIDING JUDGES APPOINTED FOR 2016

Chief Justice Craig Stowers of the Alaska Supreme Court announces the appointment of four presiding judges: Superior Court Judge Trevor N. Stephens for the First Judicial District; Superior Court Judge Paul A. Roetman for the Second Judicial District; Superior Court Judge William F. Morse for the Third Judicial District; and Superior Court Judge Michael A. MacDonald for the Fourth Judicial District.

The chief justice of the Alaska Supreme Court appoints a presiding judge for each of the four judicial districts. The appointments are for a one year term and cover a calendar year period, and incumbents are eligible for reappointment.

In addition to regular judicial duties, the presiding judge of each judicial district has the administrative responsibility to supervise the assignment of cases and administrative actions of judges and court personnel, to keep current the business of courts, to review and recommend budgets, and to review the operation of the trial courts in the district to assure adherence to statewide court objectives and policies.

Judge Stephens was appointed to the superior court in Ketchikan in 2000. Prior to his appointment Judge Stephens worked in private practice, as an Assistant Public Defender, and as an Assistant District Attorney and District Attorney. He received both his undergraduate and law degree from Willamette University College of Law. He serves on the court system's Family

Rules Committee, the Statewide Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee, the Child In Need of Aid Court Improvement Project Committee, the Jury Improvement Committee and the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission. He is also a member of the Three Judge Sentencing Panel. He was born and raised in Ketchikan.

Judge Roetman was appointed to the superior court in Kotzebue in 2010. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Alaska Anchorage in 1993 and he received his law degree from Regent University School of Law in 1999. He has lived in Alaska over 40 years and was raised in the coastal community of Valdez. Prior to law school he worked as a commercial fisherman, executive director of a regional economic development nonprofit, and as a Teamster. After law school, he worked for a civil law firm, the Alaska Legislature, and as a prosecutor for the State of Alaska. During his time on the bench he has served as Chair of the Post-Conviction DNA subcommittee responsible for drafting a new criminal rule to allow defendant's access to post conviction DNA analysis of evidence. He is also a member of the Criminal Rules Committee, and the Statewide Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Judge Morse was appointed to the superior court in Anchorage in 2002. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and his law degree from Lewis and Clark. He worked as an assistant public defender, assistant attorney general, and associate general counsel for the IBEW Local 1547. For seven years he presided over a therapeutic court, a collaborative program to monitor and assist probationers with alcohol and substance addictions. He presides over the Probationer Accountability with Certain Enforcement (PACE) court, a multi-agency program designed to provide a rapid response to probationers with alcohol or other substance abuse problems. He has been a member of the Appellate Rules Committee for fifteen years. He is the chair of the Governance Committee of the Lynx project, the court system's implementation of electronic filing and the transition to an electronic (paperless) record.

Judge MacDonald received his undergraduate degree from Harvard College in 1978 and his law degree from University of New Mexico in 1988. He was in private practice in Fairbanks from 1988 until his appointment to the Superior Court in 2007. Judge MacDonald is a member of the Family Law Rules Committee, Magistrates Training Committee, New Judge Training

Committee, Jury Improvement Committee, and Electronic Courts Committee. The Fourth Judicial District, with a population of about 133,000, is administered from Fairbanks, and extends from the Canadian border on the east to the Bering Sea on the west, and includes Fairbanks, Tok, Delta Junction, Galena, Healy, Nenana and Fort Yukon in the east and Bethel, Chevak, Hooper Bay, Aniak, St. Mary's and Emmonak in the west.