

# alaska judicial council

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Alaska Judicial Council Trial Judge Questionnaire RECEIVED

NOV 2 3 2011

ALASKA JUDICIAL COUNCIL

#### 2012 Candidates for Judicial Retention

October 2011

Alex Swiderski

Name

Anchorage District Court

1. Please estimate your workload during your present term.

- a) <u>60</u>% civil cases
  - <u>30</u>% criminal cases
    - 10 % court administrative work 100 % Total
- b) 4 # of jury trials/year
  - <u>30</u> # of non-jury trials/year
  - 2 # of administrative appeals/year

2. Please describe your participation on court/bar committees or other administrative activities during your current term of office.

I am on the Criminal Rules Committee and the Judicial Conference Planning Committee, which plans the two judicial education conferences each year. I am also a magistrate training judge, an Anchorage Wellness Court (drug and alcohol therapeutic court) judge, a back up judge for the Anchorage Community Resources Project (mental health therapeutic court), and a back up judge for PACE. I have been on a District Court calendaring committee, although I am not currently active on it because I am sitting full-time as a pro tem Superior Court Judge with a civil caseload. 3. Please assess, in one or two paragraphs, your judicial performance during your present term. Appropriate areas of comment could include: satisfaction with your judicial role, specific contributions to the judiciary or the field of law, increases in legal knowledge and judicial skills, or other measures of judicial abilities that you believe to be important.

With work and experience I believe that I have continued to improve as a judicial officer. I have increased my understanding of the law in the various areas in which I work, but more importantly work to be fair and compassionate to the litigants that appear before me.

I believe strongly in the importance of ongoing judicial education for myself and for other judicial officers. I am a member of the judicial conference planning committee, which plans the two annual judicial education conferences for Alaska judges. In that capacity I started and usually lead district break out sessions at the conferences to address issues specific to district court judges. These have been popular and successful. I am also a magistrate training judge. Some of the sessions developed for the district court breakouts have been used at the annual magistrate training conference. I have also instituted and usually lead bimonthly statewide teleconferences of all district court judges. I solicit agenda items from the judges in advance, and we discuss these items during the teleconferences. All magistrates are also invited to listen in and many do. Judicial education helps me to be a better judge by forcing me to think about and plan training programs.

For the past four months I have been working as a pro tem superior court judge hearing civil cases. The appointment will continue until the new superior court civil positions are filled. This has been a good change for me and a new challenge. The domestic work in particular, an area in which I never practiced, has been a challenge in becoming familiar with the law and resolving the difficult emotional issues in child custody cases. The more complex matters heard by superior court judges have also been challenging and rewarding.

My judicial position remains very satisfying. I am gratified to be able to do this work.

- 4. During your most recent term as a judge, have you:
  - a) had a tax lien filed or other collection procedure instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities? □ Yes ☑ No
  - b) been involved in a non-judicial capacity in any legal proceeding whether as a party or otherwise? □ Yes ☑ No
  - c) engaged in the practice of law (other than as a judge)?  $\Box$  Yes  $\checkmark$  No
  - d) held office in any political party?  $\Box$  Yes  $\checkmark$  No
  - e) held any other local, state or federal office?  $\Box$  Yes  $\checkmark$  No
- 5. If your answer to any of the questions above is "yes," please give full details, including dates, facts, case numbers and outcomes.

6. Please provide any other information which you believe would assist the Council in conducting its evaluations and in preparing its recommendations for the 2012 retention elections.

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#### For questions 7 through 10 please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

7. Please list your three most recent jury trials including case names and numbers. Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these trials. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

	Case Nun	nber 1									
Case Name:	State of Alaska	Case Number:	3AN-10-14584CR								
v.	Joel Klein										
Attorneys Involved:											
Name:	Jenna Gruenstein	Name:	Carl Cook								
Address:	310 K St., Suite 520	Address:	517 W. Northern Lts. Blvd.								
City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99503								
Name:		Name:									
Address:											
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:									
	Case Nun	nber 2									
Case Name:	Municipality of Anchorage (	Case Number:	3AN-09-11617CR								
•	Deborah Allen	-									
Attorneys Involved:											
Mama	•		Ronald West								
	Herbert Viergutz 632 W. 6th Av., Suite 210	-	3220 Racquet Circle								
	Anchorage, AK 99501	-	Anchorage, AK 99507								
,,,		-									
Name:	Paul Malin	Name:									
Address:	632 Christensen Dr.										
City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501										
	Case Nun	iber 3									
Case Name:	Municipality of Anchorage	Case Number:	3AN-09-12675CR								
<i>v</i> .	Jeremy Fike										
	Attorneys In	volved:									
Name:	Cindy Dubell	Name:	Jonathan Torres								
Address:	632 W. 6th Av. Suite 210	Address:	900 W. 5th Av., Suite 200								
City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501								
Name:		Name:									
Address:		Address:									
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:	·····								

8. Please list your three most recent non-jury trials including case names and numbers. Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these trials. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

	Case Nu	mber 1									
Case Name:	Joseph Dolan	Case Number:	3AN-08-11131CI								
ν.	Make It Happen Automotive	_									
Attorneys Involved:											
Name:	Robert J. Sato	Name:	James M. Gorski								
Address:	500 L St., Suite 501	Address:	3900 C St., Suite 1001								
-		City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99503								
-											
Name:	Bernd C. Guetschow	Name:									
Address:	425 G St., Suite 650	Address:									
City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:									
	Case Nu	mber 2									
Case Name:	Donna Strait	Case Number:	3AN-09-08843CI								
- v.	Clifford T. Schwandt										
Attorneys Involved:											
Name:		Name:	Cheryl Lynn Graves								
-	7120 Old Seward Hy, Ste 203		807 G St., Suite 250								
-	Anchorage, AK 99508		Anchorage, AK 99501								
-		_ ~									
Name:		Name:									
Address:		Address:									
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:									
	Case Nu	mbor 3									
Casa Nama	Pamela Goodwin		3AN-10-06647CI								
-			SAN-10-08647C1								
v. -	Robert Richmond	-									
Attorneys Involved:											
Name:	H. Frank Cahill	- Name: 	David Edgren								
Address: - City: State Zip:	880 N. St., Suite 203	Address:	750 E. Fireweed, Ste. 201								
uy, siale, zip: -	Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99503								
Name:		Name:									
Address:	······································	- Address:									
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:									

9. Please list your three most recent cases, including case names and numbers, which did not go to trial, but on which you did significant work (such as settlement conference, hearings, motion work, etc.). Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these cases. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

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	Case Ni	umber 1	
Case Name:	Kelcey Steinriede	Case Number:	3AN-05-05583CI
v.	Gregory Baranow		
	Attorneys	Involved:	
Name:	Kathryn M. Coleman	Name:	David W. Baranow
Address:	880 H St., Suite 200A	Address:	2020 Abbott Rd., Suite 4
City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99507
Name:		Name:	
Address:		Address:	
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:	
	Case Nu	umber 2	
Case Name:	State of Alaska		3AN-10-05534CR
v.	Fritz Nevak		
-	Attorneys	 Involved:	
Name:	Jenna Gruenstein	Name:	Catherine B. Boruff
- Address:	310 K St., Suite 520		900 W. 5th Av., Suite 200
- City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501
Name: - Address:			
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:	
	Coose N	umber 2	
		umber 3	
Case Name:	Alaska Back Care Center	Case Number: _	3AN-09-06610CI
<i>v</i>	Tina Wilson, et al		
	Attorneys	Involved:	
Name:	Robert Stone	Name:	Laura L. Farley
Address:	1049 W. 5th Av., Suite 102	Address:	807 G St., Suite 250
City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501
Name:		Name:	
Address:			
- City, State, Zip:	······································		

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10. Optional: If you deem it helpful to the Council, please list up to three other cases during your past term in which you believe your work was particularly noteworthy. Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these cases. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

	Case Nu	ımber 1									
Case Name:	A. L. Cozzetti	Case Number:	3AN-08-12107CI								
v.	Ray Madrid										
Attorneys Involved:											
Name:	Goriune Dudukgian	Name:									
- Address:	310 K Street, Suite 200										
City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:									
_											
Name:		Name:									
Address:		Address:									
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:									
	Case Nu										
Case Name:	Malaspina Glacier Investmen	_Case Number:	3AN-10-11510CI								
<i>v</i> .	Charles Lane	_									
Attorneys Involved:											
Name:	Brian Shute	Name:	Lawrence Z. Moser								
Address:	200 W. 34th Av., Suite 381	Address:	1503 W. 31st, Suite 201								
City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99503	City, State, Zip:	Anchorage, AK 99503								
Name: _		Name:									
Address:		Address:									
City, State, Zip: _		City, State, Zip:									
	Case Nu	mber 3									
Case Name:		Case Number:									
	Attorneys .	- Involved:									
Name:	-	Name:									
Address:		Address:									
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:									
-											
Name:		Name:									
Address:		Address:									
City, State, Zip:		City, State, Zip:									

## Alaska Judicial Council Recommendation Judge Alex M. Swiderski, District Court, Anchorage

#### Judicial Council Recommendation 2012

The Alaska Judicial Council is a non-partisan citizens' commission established by the Alaska constitution. Alaskan law requires the Council to evaluate judges' performance and authorizes the Council to recommend to voters whether judges should be retained in office. The Judicial Council reviews judges' integrity, diligence, legal ability, fairness, demeanor, ability to manage their caseloads, and overall performance of their judicial responsibilities in and out of the courtroom. The Judicial Council finds Judge Swiderski to be **Qualified** and recommends unanimously that the public vote "**YES**" to retain him as a district court judge.

#### Judicial Council Evaluation

The Judicial Council surveyed thousands of Alaskans including peace and probation officers, court employees, attorneys, jurors, social workers and guardians ad litem about the judges on the ballot. Respondents were asked to rate judicial performance and to submit comments. The Council also reviewed the ratings and observations of the Alaska Judicial Observers, independent community-based volunteers. The Council reviewed the judge's peremptory challenge, recusals, and appellate affirmance and reversal rates; any civil or criminal litigation involving the judge; APOC and court system conflict-of-interest statements; any disciplinary files involving the judge's pay was withheld for an untimely decision. The Council reviewed other court records and investigated judicial conduct in specific cases. The Council interviewed some judges, attorneys, and court staff, and held a statewide public hearing to obtain comments about judges.

	Attorney Survey	Peace Officer Survey	Juror Survey	Court Employee Survey	Social Workers Guardians ad Litem
Legal Ability	3.9				
Impartiality	4.0	4.3	4.9	4.3	4.3
Integrity	4.2	4.5		4.3	4.3
Temperament	3.9	4.4	4.9	4.1	4.3
Diligence	4.1	4.3		4.3	4.3
Overall	3.9	4.2	4.9	4.3	4.3



- $\frac{Rating Sca}{5.0 = Excellent}$
- 4.0 = Good
- 3.0 = Acceptable
- 2.0 = Deficient
- 1.0 = Poor

#### Summary of Survey Information

Survey respondents rated Judge Swiderski on the categories summarized in the table above, using 5 as the highest rating possible. The attorney rating for Judge Swiderski on overall performance was 3.9. Peace and probation officers gave Judge Swiderski a rating of 4.2. Jurors rated him 4.9 overall, court employees gave him 4.3, and social workers and guardians ad litem rated him at 4.3. The Alaska Judicial Observers rated him 3.44.

### Recommendation: Vote "YES" to retain Judge Alex M. Swiderski

	Leş Abi	lity	Impart Fair	ness	Integ		Judi Temper	ament	Dilig		Ove Evalu	ation
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Basis for Evaluation		_				_		_				
No Response		8		9		8		7		22		11
Direct Professional	3.9	142	4.0	144	4.2	144	3.9	145	4.1	134	3.9	141
Experience in last 5 yrs	3.9	135	3.9	137	4.2	137	3.8	138	4.1	128	3.8	134
Experience not in last 5 yrs	4.0	5	4.6	5	4.6	5	4.6	5	4.8	4	4.4	5
Professional Reputation	4.1	21	4.1	19	4.3	20	4.1	21	4.2	20	4.1	21
Other Personal Contacts	4.5	16	4.5	15	4.9	15	4.8	14	4.5	11	4.4	14
Type of Practice												
No Response		5		3		3		2		13		5
Private, Solo	3.9	41	3.9	41	4.2	40	3.8	41	4.0	38	3.8	41
Private, 2-5 Attorneys	3.7	31	3.9	32	4.1	32	3.8	32	3.9	28	3.8	32
Private, 6+ Attorneys	4.2	9	4.2	9	4.4	9	4.0	9	4.3	9	4.2	9
Private, Corporate Employee	4.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	1
Judge or Judicial Officer	4.4	28	4.6	28	4.7	28	4.4	28	4.5	28	4.5	28
Government	3.6	24	3.8	25	4.0	26	3.6	26	4.0	23	3.6	23
Public Service Agency/Org	2.0	1	1.0	1	1.0	1	2.0	1		0	1.0	1
Other	4.0	4	4.0	4	4.0	4	3.8	4	4.0	4	3.8	4
Years of Practice in Alaska												
No Response		5		3		3		2		12		5
5 Years or fewer	3.9	14	3.9	14	4.2	15	3.5	15	4.1	14	3.8	12
6 to 10 years	3.0	9	3.0	9	3.3	9	2.9	9	3.8	8	2.9	9
11 to 15 years	4.0	8	4.1	8	4.5	8	4.0	8	4.1	7	3.9	8
16 to 20 years	3.1	17	3.0	18	3.6	18	3.1	18	3.3	17	3.1	18
21 years or more	4.1	88	4.2	89	4.3	88	4.2	89	4.2	83	4.2	89
Gender												
No Response		5		3		3		2		13		5
Male	4.0	100	4.1	102	4.3	101	4.0	101	4.2	93	4.0	100
Female	3.7	38	3.7	38	4.0	39	3.5	40	3.9	37	3.7	38
Cases Handled												
No Response		5		3		3		2		13		5
Prosecution	3.6	11	3.5	11	3.6	11	3.1	10	3.7	10	3.3	9
Mainly Criminal	3.6	16	3.5	16	4.0	16	3.4	17	3.9	15	3.5	16
Mixed Criminal & Civil	4.1	49	4.1	50	4.2	50	3.9	50	4.1	47	4.0	50
Mainly Civil	3.8	60	4.0	61	4.3	61	4.1	62	4.1	56	3.9	61
Other	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2
Location of Practice	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	-
No Response		5		3		3		2		12		5
First District	3.0	3	3.3	3	3.0	3	3.3	2	3.0	3	3.0	3
Second District	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	3.0	1	5.0 5.0	3 1	3.0 4.0	1
Third District	3.9	130	4.0	132	4.2	132	3.0	133	3.0 4.1	123	4.0 3.9	130
Fourth District	5.9 5.0	150	4.0 5.0	152	4.2 5.0	152	5.9 5.0	155	4.1 5.0	125	5.9 5.0	150
Outside of Alaska	5.0 4.0	5 1	5.0 4.0	5 1	5.0 5.0	5 1	5.0 5.0	3 1	5.0 4.0	5 1	5.0 5.0	5 1

#### Judge Alex M. Swiderski: Detailed Information Responses Alaska Bar Association Members

Note: Ratings for only those respondents who reported direct professional experience with the judge.

#### Judge Alex M. Swiderski Peace and Probation Officers

	Imparti Fairn		Integ	grity	Judic Tempera		Dilig	ence	Over Evalua	
	Mean	Ν	Mean	Ň	Mean	Ν	Mean	Ν	Mean	Ν
Basis for Evaluation										
No Response		4		2		4		3		3
Direct Professional	4.3	16	4.5	18	4.4	16	4.3	17	4.2	17
Experience in last 5 yrs	4.3	16	4.5	17	4.3	15	4.3	17	4.2	17
Experience not in last 5 yrs		0		0		0		0		0
Professional Reputation	4.0	1	4.0	1	3.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1
Other Personal Contacts		0		0		0		0		0
Type of Work										
No Response		3		1		3		2		2
State Law Enforcement Officer	4.0	10	4.4	10	4.1	9	4.1	10	3.9	9
Municipal/Borough Law Enforcement Officer	4.5	4	4.5	6	4.6	5	4.4	5	4.3	6
Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO)		0		0		0		0		0
Probation/Parole Officer	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2
Other		0		0		0		0		0
Length of Experience										
No Response		3		1		3		2		2
5 Years or fewer	3.5	2	5.0	2	4.5	2	4.0	2	3.5	2
6 to 10 years	4.5	6	4.4	7	4.3	6	4.3	7	4.3	8
11 to 15 years	4.2	5	4.4	5	4.3	4	4.4	5	4.3	4
16 to 20 years	4.0	2	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.0	2	4.0	2
21 years or more	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1
Gender										
No Response		3		1		3		2		2
Male	4.5	10	4.6	11	4.5	11	4.2	10	4.2	10
Female	3.8	6	4.4	7	4.2	5	4.4	7	4.1	7
Location of Work										
No Response		3		1		3		2		2
First District		0		0		0		0		0
Second District		0		0		0		0		0
Third District	4.3	16	4.5	18	4.4	16	4.3	17	4.2	17
Fourth District		0		0		0		0		0
Community Population										
No Response		3		1		3		2		2
Under 2,000		0		0		0		0		0
Between 2,000 and 35,000	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2	5.0	2
Over 35,000	4.1	14	4.4	16	4.3	14	4.2	15	4.1	15

Note: Ratings for only those respondents who reported direct professional experience with the judge.

#### Judge Alex M. Swiderski Social Workers and Guardians ad Litem

	Impartia					Judicial			Over	
	Fairne		Integr	-	Tempera		Dilige		Evalua	
Basis for Evaluation	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	Ν	Mean	N	Mean	N
		0		0		0		0		0
No Response	4.2		4.2		4.2	0	4.2		4.2	0
Direct Professional	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3
Experience in last 5 yrs	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3
Experience not in last 5 yrs		0		0		0		0		0
Professional Reputation	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1
Other Personal Contacts		0		0		0		0		0
Type of Work										
No Response		0		0		0		0		0
Social Worker		0		0		0		0		0
Guardian ad Litem	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3
Length of Experience										
No Response		0		0		0		0		0
5 Years or fewer	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1
6 to 10 years	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1
11 to 15 years	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1
16 to 20 years		0		0		0		0		0
21 years or more		0		0		0		0		0
Gender										
No Response		0		0		0		0		0
Male	4.0	2	4.0	2	4.0	2	4.0	2	4.0	2
Female	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1
Location of Work										
No Response		0		0		0		0		0
First District		0		0		0		0		0
Second District		0		0		0		0		0
Third District	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3
Fourth District		0		0		0		0		0
Community Population		-		-				-		•
No Response		0		0		0		0		0
Under 2,000		0		0		0		0		0
Between 2,000 and 35,000		0		0		0		0		0
Over 35,000	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3	4.3	3

Note: Ratings for only those respondents who reported direct professional experience with the judge.

	Distribution of Court Employee Ratings* 2012 Retention Evaluation Alex M. Swiderski											
	Number of Responses											
Survey Category	Total	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Deficient	Poor	Mean					
Impartiality/Fairness	38	20	12	4	0	2	4.3					
Integrity	38	21	12	3	0	2	4.3					
Judicial Temperament	38	17	13	5	1	2	4.1					
Diligence	37	22	9	3	1	2	4.3					
Overall Evaluation	38	21	10	5	0	2	4.3					

\* Ratings are based on direct professional experience.

Juror Survey Results 2012 Retention Evaluation Alex M. Swiderski										
Survey Category	Mean	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Deficient	Poor	Total Responses			
Impartiality/Fairness	4.9	39	5	0	0	0	44			
Respectful/Courteous	4.9	41	3	0	0	0	44			
Attentive during Proceedings	4.9	39	5	0	0	0	44			
Control over Proceedings	4.9	40	4	0	0	0	44			
Intelligence/ Skill as a Judge	4.9	40	4	0	0	0	44			
Overall Evaluation	4.9	40	4	0	0	0	44			

## **Current and Prior Retention Scores**

#### Alex M. Swiderski

Appointed	Name of Court
4/11/2005	Anchorage District Ct

#### **Retention Attorney Bar Scores**

 Year	Legal Ability	Impartiality	Integrity	Temperament	Dilligence	Special Skills	<b>Overall Performance</b>
 2008	3.9	4	4.2	3.9	4		3.9
2012	3.9	4	4.2	3.9	4.1		3.9

#### Peace and Probation Officer Survey Scores

 Year	Impartiality	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Special Skills	<b>Overall Performance</b>
2008	4.1	4.3	4.1	4		4
2012	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.3		4.2