



alaska judicial council

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Alaska Judicial Council

Retention Questionnaire

2026 Candidates for Judicial Retention

Full Name: John Christopher Darnall

Court: Anchorage District Court

1a. Please estimate your workload during your present term:

- **Case work:** 90%
- **Administrative work, outreach, continuing education, etc:** 10%

1b. District Court Judges:

- **Criminal:** 60%
- **Minor Offense:** 0%
- **Small Claims:** 25%
- **Civil Protective Orders:** 0%
- **General Civil:** 15%

1c. Number of jury trials/year: 7

1d. Number of non-jury trials/year: 1

1e. Any additional information you would like to provide about your workload?

In Anchorage DVPO and Minor Offense cases are handled by the magistrates.

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

I have spoken several times to the Court Rules Committee with regard to the preservation of CSAM exhibits. I am a member on the Anchorage Court System's Exhibits subcommittee that is presently working to address standards for court exhibits. I have attended the court systems AI committee meetings. I am actively working with court staff to address issues that I see with the present electronic systems in place.

3. Please describe any judicial or legal education you have undertaken or provided during your current term in office.

I attended the General Jurisdiction course at the National Judicial College in Reno. I also attended the Court System's annual training in both 2024 and 2025. I have attended the New Judges Conference .

4. Please describe any public outreach activities.

I have spoken on several occasions with students who came to the courthouse as part of a class activity. I routinely meet with jurors in the assembly room to introduce myself and talk about the jury process (and to answer any questions that I can answer). I am considering starting a District Court moot court.

5. 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.

I believe my performance has been satisfactory. I sincerely enjoy the work and take every case seriously, no matter what issues are being presented. I keep my "under advisement" list to under one page and do my best not to go past 3 months for a decision. My computer background has proven invaluable when it has come to dealing with AI, the changing court system (electronic files and file flow), novel warrant applications, and the changing practice of LAW. And I feel like the litigants who leave my courtroom are "heard" even when ruled against.

6. 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?

No

b) been involved in a non-judicial capacity in any legal proceeding whether as a party or otherwise?

No

c) engaged in the practice of law (other than as a judge)?

No

d) held office in any political party?

No

e) held any other local, state or federal office?

No

f) had any complaints, charges or grievances filed against you with the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct, the Alaska Bar Association, or with the Alaska Court System that resulted in public proceedings or sanctions?

No

8. Please provide any other information which you believe would assist the Council in conducting its evaluations and in preparing its recommendations for the 2020 retention elections.

It has been an honor to serve on the District Court and it would be an honor to continuing in my present position.
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Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9a. 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. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Jury Trial Cases

Case 1: Municipality of Anchorage v. Richard Best

(Case No: 3AN-22-07597CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Matthew Michalski 632 W 6 th Ave Ste 210 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Lisa Rosano 431 W. 7 th Ave Ste 101 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 2: Municipality of Anchorage v. Mariah Bell-Cragg

(Case No: 3AN-24-05335CR)

Total Attorneys: 3

Atty 1: Jason Thomas 632 West 6 th Ave Ste 210 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Megan Sirvent 900 W. 5 th Ave Ste 200 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 3: Ryan Bravo 900 W. 5 th Ave Ste 200 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 3: Municipality of Anchorage v. Kolby Decker

(Case No: 3AN-24-05335CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Michael Branson 813 W. 3 rd Ave Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Hannah Andersen 632 W. 6 th Ave. Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 3: Dennis Wheeler 632 W. 6 th Ave. Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9b. 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. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Non-Jury Trial Cases

Case 1: Tecumseh Fredenberg v. Satieva Reid

(Case No: 3AN-24-09812CI)

Total Attorneys: 0

Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9c. 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. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Cases that Did Not Go to Trial

Case 1: MOA v. Shana S. Phommaly

(Case No: 3AN-24-07017CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Helen Poitra-Chalmers 632 W. 6th Ave. Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: John Roberson 911 W. 8th Avenue Ste 101 PMB 80 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 2: Matanuska Valley Credit Union v. Jessica Garren

(Case No: 3AN-24-06105CI)

Total Attorneys: 1

Atty 1: Jed Van Loan 205 East Benson Blvd Ste 220 Anchorage, Alaska 99503
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Case 3: Spring Creek Dowling v. Marueen Dilley

(Case No: 3AN-25-04023CI)

Total Attorneys: 1

Atty 1: Matthew Widmer 510 L. Street Ste 700 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
