



alaska judicial council

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Alaska Judicial Council

Retention Questionnaire

2026 Candidates for Judicial Retention

Full Name: Jack Richard McKenna

Court: Anchorage Superior Court

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

- **Case work:** 98%
- **Administrative work, outreach, continuing education, etc:** 2%

1b. Superior Court Judges:

- **Criminal:** 90%
- **Delinquency:** 7%
- **Domestic Relations:** 0%
- **Child in Need of Aid:** 1%
- **Probate:** 0%
- **General Civil (Including Appeals):** 2%

1c. Number of jury trials/year: 10

1d. Number of non-jury trials/year: 0

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

The statistics I gave above reflect the caseload that I have had for the last three years. I am one of the five judges in Anchorage with a predominantly criminal caseload. My first year on the bench I had an entirely civil caseload composed entirely of general civil, probate, CINA, and domestic relations matters. In that first year I conducted three jury trials. One trial was civil, and the other two were criminal. I also conducted quite a few non-jury trials. Since my switch to a criminal caseload, I have conducted 35 jury trials. I have not conducted any non-jury trials since moving to the criminal bench.

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

I am the chair of the criminal pattern jury instruction committee. In that position I lead committee meetings to update current instructions and draft new instructions, as needed.

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

Since being appointed I have taken the two week general jurisdiction course at the National Judicial College in 2022. I also attended the one-week-long newer judges' conferences organized by the Alaska Court System in 2022, 2023, and 2024. I also attended a one week civil mediation course at the NJC in 2025. Additionally, I've attended the yearly judicial conferences organized by the Alaska Court System.

4. Please describe any public outreach activities.

I participated in an hour-long presentation in 2025 that the court system organized for the press. Two other judges and I explained the basics of how criminal cases are handled to a group of reporters so that they could better inform the public in the stories they covered. I also view court hearings and jury trials as opportunities to do judicial outreach from the bench. I regularly meet with the larger venire panels to thank them for their service and emphasize that the right to a jury trial is provided by the United States and Alaska Constitutions. I also try to explain civics concepts (such as separation of powers) in my rulings so that jurors and members of the public understand the role the courts play in our system of government.

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.

The last four years have been both challenging and incredibly rewarding. Being a superior court judge takes a tremendous amount of effort, time, and deliberation. It requires me to be open to constantly learning new areas of the law and to reexamine my views on all subjects. The challenge of always trying to improve is also part of what makes the position so rewarding. I hope to continue to get better at my job in the years to come.

As a point of particular emphasis, I have tried to focus on making the courtroom more accessible to litigants and members of the public. I do my best to make sure that the parties and litigants feel that they have been heard, treated fairly, and recognized by the court as real people. I have made a conscious effort during hearings to actively engage with defendants, victims, and interested members of the public (as appropriate) to make sure that they truly understand what is happening in the case and why certain steps are being taken. I think that the real parties understanding what happened in a hearing and why is needed for the court's rulings to have true legitimacy.

5a. This question pertains to Superior Court judges only.

State Law requires the Council to conduct an evaluation of judges standing for retention, and to provide information to the public about the judges. Under a provision added in 2013, the information the Council provides to the public "shall include the judge's consideration of victims when imposing sentence on persons convicted of felony offenses where the offenses involve victims" (see AS 22.10.150).

Please submit a short statement about how you consider victims when imposing sentences in felony offenses.

Article I, section 12 of the Alaska Constitution requires that criminal administration include consideration of crime victims' rights. In order to honor those rights, I do my best to ensure that victims are given the opportunity to be heard throughout a criminal case in addition to at sentencing. If the victim chooses to make a statement at the sentencing hearing, then I make sure to pay close attention to their wishes. Then when imposing sentence, I do my best to directly address those wishes and take them into account in fashioning a sentence. To expand on my answer to question 5 above, I believe that we have a duty to explain our rulings to victims so that they understand the law and why a court is making a particular decision. It is only when a victim feels like they have truly been heard and their points addressed that they feel like they have been treated fairly by the judicial branch of government.

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.

I take the responsibility of being a superior court judge incredibly seriously. It is a position that requires us each day to do our best to fairly and accurately apply the law. Beyond that, it is a position that brings daily interaction with the public—often under circumstances that are very stressful for the people in court. I do my best to treat each litigant with courtesy and respect. I care deeply about the rule of law, the separation of powers between our branches of government, and that people have faith in our system of government. If retained, I will do my best to continue to honor the responsibility of this position and to improve in my role as a superior court judge.

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: State of Alaska v. Edmond Seton

(Case No: 3AN-22-07975CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Zoe Stein 310 K Street, Suite 520 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Benjamin Dresner 1016 W 6th Ave. Suite 306 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 2: State of Alaska v. Nick Ephamka

(Case No: 3AN-18-03988CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Elizabeth Heise 310 K Street, Suite 520 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Chong Yim 900 W 5th Ave, Suite 101 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 3: State of Alaska v. Traffie Traffin, Jr.

(Case No: 3AN-24-03050CR)

Total Attorneys: 3

Atty 1: Larissa Hail 310 K Street, Suite 520 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Matthew DiTullio 900 W 5th Ave, Suite 101 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 3: Lars Danner 900 W 5th Ave, Suite 101 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: Randall Kowalke v. David Eastman

(Case No: 3AN-22-07404CI)

Total Attorneys: 5

Atty 1: Goriune Dudukgian 406 G Street, Suite 207 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Joseph Miller PO Box 83440 Fairbanks, Alaska 99708	Atty 3: Lael Harrison 1031 W 4th Ave., Suite 200 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Atty 4: Thomas Flynn 1031 W 4th Ave., Suite 200 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 5: Savannah Fletcher 406 G Street, Suite 207 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	

Case 2: Mark Arena v. Martina Phillip-Arena

(Case No: 3AN-22-04924CI)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Marc Chicklow 731 I Street Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Daniel Allan 800 E Dimond Blvd, Ste 3-620 Anchorage, Alaska 99515
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Case 3: Mark Olsen v. Bobby Gordon & Arctic Refrigeration & Air Conditioning, Inc.

(Case No: 3AN-18-08558CI)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Brian Heady 205 Benson Blvd, Suite 102 Anchorage, Alaska 99503	Atty 2: Clinton Campion 500 L Street, Suite 500 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.

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: State of Alaska v. Dustin Stroud

(Case No: 3AN-20-04225CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Taylor Schmitt 310 K Street, Suite 520 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Diane Thoben 1517 Industrial Way, Unit 1 Palmer, Alaska 99645
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Case 2: State of Alaska v. Winona Fletcher

(Case No: 3AN-86-194CR / 3AN-11-1216CI)

Total Attorneys: 3

Atty 1: Alice Curci 310 K Street, Suite 520 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Marcelle McDannel 900 W 5th Ave., Suite 525 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 3: Angela Garay 1007 W 3rd Ave STE 205 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 3: State of Alaska v. Savon Wiley

(Case No: 3AN-17-02500CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Luba Bartnitskaia 310 K Street, Suite 520 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Elizabeth Friedman 1207 NE Tamarack Ct. Pineville, Oregon 97754
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Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

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

Optional Cases

Case 1: State of Alaska v. Brian McGee

(Case No:)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Travis Atkinson 310 K Street, Suite 520 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Regan Williams PO Box 110615 Anchorage, Alaska 99511	Atty 3: Michael Schaeffer 1007 W 3rd Ave STE 205 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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