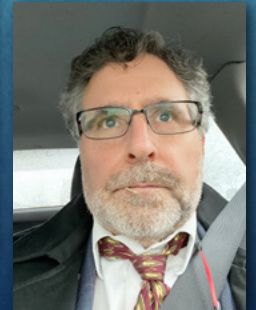




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PIERCE COUNTY LAWYER



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FEATURES

10

Meet Our New President
By Salvador Mungia

13

**114th Annual
Lincoln Day Banquet**
By David Snell

14

George Kelley
By Amber Austin

16

**Profile:
Judge Joseph Evans**
By Elizabeth Vincent

17

**Profile:
Judge André Peñalver**
By Carlos Sosa

20

Ethics Corner
By Megan Card

22

Meet the New TPCBA Board

27

**Lawyers Helping
Hungry Children**
By Arlene Joe

28

**Washington's New
Landlord-Tenant Statute**
By John Weaver

30

**Civil Protection
Orders Unite: RCW 7.105**
By Commissioner Terri Farmer

DEPARTMENTS

5

Inside this Issue

6

President's Page
By Sarah Richardson

8

Briefly
By Kit Kasner

34

**Young Lawyers Report:
Casino Night**
By Patrick Brown

37

**WSBA Board of
Governor's Report**
By Brett Purtzer

38

**Tacomaprobono
Community Lawyers**
By Laurie Davenport

42

Classifieds



**ON THE COVER:
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JUDGE JOSEPH EVANS

PIERCE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

DEPARTMENT 16 *By Elizabeth Vincent*

One of Judge Joseph Evans' former colleagues at the Department of Assigned Counsel, Melissa Gomez, described his qualifications for the bench this way, "Everything that has gotten him to this point makes him an ideal judge for Pierce County: his upbringing here in the Tacoma area, his work at DAC, his intellect and his curiosity." Another DAC colleague whom he supervised at Pierce County Juvenile Court talked about his fierce advocacy on behalf of his clients, but also his personable nature and concern for fellow employees. Attendees at his Swearing-In ceremony as a Superior Court Judge for Department 16 on November 2, 2021 got a glimpse of the intellect and insight that he will bring to his new position.

Judge Evans opened his speech by articulating his core beliefs in the importance of education/knowledge, public service and his faith. He summed up his role as a judge with a mission statement, which is to fight for equality and to reform inequities in the system, and then discussed how his beliefs will inform this goal. First, he acknowledged that no one is infallible, and emphasized the importance of persevering in spite of that fallibility. He then explained that public service is about understanding one's gifts and using them to effectuate change in the community; that it's all about making a difference. Lastly, he touched on his faith and the significance of having a "coda," or set of rules that guide you, particularly when facing difficulties. He closed by asking his audience to help him ensure that justice prevails in his courtroom by allowing him to correct himself and to "stay teachable."

Joseph Evans is a Northwest native who was born in the Greenlake/Greenwood area of Seattle. He moved to Tacoma

in his early teens and attended Christian Faith School in Federal Way, and then enrolled in the Running Start Program at Tacoma Community College. Judge Evans earned his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and History from the University of Washington - Tacoma at the impressive age of 18. His first job after college was working as a Community Service Officer for DSHS, where he screened applicants seeking daycare subsidies. In 2002 he began law school at Seattle University, and after graduation he worked for a personal injury firm in Olympia. Six months later he opened his own practice, but soon after accepted a DAC attorney position in their Tacoma office. He started in the Misdemeanor Division with supervisor Denise Whitley before a lengthy tenure defending felony cases. Prior to his appointment to the bench by Governor Jay Inslee, he supervised the criminal caseload for DAC's Juvenile Division at Remann Hall.

At his swearing-in ceremony, Judge Evans noted the crucial role of mentorship in our community, and the particular impact on his career of three Pierce County judges: retired Superior Court Judges Frank Cuthbertson and Jack Nevin, and retired District Court Judge Maggie Ross. When talking to him about these role models, he elaborated on their strengths. He discussed Judge Cuthbertson's calm demeanor and ability to relate to defendants and find their humanity while applying the law with sound reasoning. He cited Judge Cuthbertson's innovative approach to sentencing that fit the specifics of



*"It's not about you. It's about the community you represent: the citizens of Pierce County."
- Judge Evans*

the case. Judge Evans described Judge Nevin's courtroom as a classroom of sorts, where he provided tutorials on Criminal Procedure, Evidence Rules and presentation of motions. From him, he said, he learned legal discipline and the importance of explaining the reasoning behind your rulings. He admired Judge Ross's ability to maintain control of her courtroom and keep her docket moving, as well as her logical, well-grounded rulings.

As Judge Evans explained in his swearing-in speech, "It's not about you. It's about the community you represent: the citizens of Pierce County." And he has worked tirelessly on their behalf, both as an attorney and a volunteer. While he supervised juvenile criminal cases for DAC, Judge Evans was appointed by Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier to his Criminal Justice Reform Committee. In that capacity he worked with Assistant to the Executive Dan Graham to review police arrest rate data, as well as instances of physical conflict. This assignment was part of Pierce County Council's assessment of the impact of current

policies and procedures on diverse communities of our county. Judge Evans' volunteer work includes serving as Pierce County Minority Bar Association's President for three years, giving presentations for the Youth and the Law Institute, and mentoring a young man through the Big Brothers program.

Anyone well-acquainted with Judge Evans knows that he dotes on his dog, Miley, a mixed dalmation/pit bull/shepard (I send heartfelt condolences on behalf of the Bar for the recent passing of his other puppy, a shih tzu named Mister). Many of us know he's got an extensive Jordan collection. They also bet he was crushed when the L.A. Rams edged out his San Francisco 49ers for the NFC Championship this year. They hear him bemoan the Super Sonics' departure from Seattle, but note he manages to rally for the L.A. Lakers. And they know that he loves his momma. Our best to one of our most recent Superior Court appointees, Judge Joseph Evans.



Elizabeth Vincent is a deputy prosecuting attorney and currently assigned to the Family Support Division. She is a newly elected Board of Trustees member and serves on the Pierce County Lawyer Magazine Committee.



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