



Welcome. I would like to thank the Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Court of Appeals, any District Court Judges and members of the Commission on Judicial Selection for attending today.

Before I announce the new judges in the First and Tenth Judicial Districts, I want to take a moment to talk about endorsement of judicial candidates by political parties and special interest groups.

With these announcements today, I will have named 14 district court Judges.

Each appointee came from a list of candidates recommended to me by the Commission on Judicial Selection. I have personally interviewed every finalist and can tell you that none of the choices I made were as a result of partisan considerations. I chose the people I did using the same criteria the commission uses when they send candidates to me.

The Commission on Judicial Selection is a non-partisan group of lawyers and non-lawyers who evaluate judicial applicants and make recommendations to me. Their recommendations are based on the candidates' experience practicing law, which includes trying cases before a judge and jury, their educational background, involvement in legal associations and community organizations, and the candidates' work ethic and judicial demeanor -- can the person be fair and impartial when ruling on cases and are the rulings based on existing statutes and case law?

That is the problem with political parties and special interest groups like the MCCL endorsing judicial candidates. Our government was created to have a partisan legislative branch and a non-partisan judicial branch. The Republican and Reform parties' endorsement of judicial candidates may cause those people to rule based on partisan factors, not the law. The fairness and impartiality of our courts will be questioned by society and it will lead to a distrust of the judicial branch of government.

Advocates of political party endorsements say that this will provide voters with information on the candidates. However, these endorsements provide no relevant information for citizens to use when they vote. You can contact your local bar association or talk with lawyers who appear before the judge. There is a biography of sitting judges in the library and you can call the League of Women Voters. I do encourage the media to do a better job of covering judicial elections and publishing information on candidates.

Our courts in Minnesota are among the most respected in the country. This is due in part to the fact that judges are non-partisan and do not run under a political party label. This frees judges from political pressures and allows them to rule based on the facts of the case.

Now, on to the announcements. To keep the press conference moving along, I will not go into detail on each of the appointees' backgrounds. The news release has all that information.



Today I am announcing two judges to the First Judicial District. One judge will be chambered in the city of Red Wing in Goodhue County and the other judge will be chambered in the city of Shakopee in Scott County. These two positions are part of 13 new judgeships created by the 1999 legislature, which I signed into law last year. 47 people applied for these two vacancies.

The Commission on Judicial Selection interviewed 15 applicants on April 20. The commission recommended seven finalists to me for these vacancies. The finalists were Thomas Bibus, Kevin Eide, Michael Fahey, Charles Lee, Michael Molenda, James Redman and Mary Theisen.

To the Goodhue County position, I am appointing Thomas Bibus. Tom has a unique combination of having been a police officer, a prosecutor, a private practice civil lawyer and a public defender. This background will be a great asset to the Goodhue County bench. In addition, Tom is a calm and patient person, and he works well with other people.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Thomas Bibus.

To the Scott County position, I am appointing Mary Theisen. Throughout her career, Mary has stayed close to the community. This gives her a sensitivity for the people that will appear before her. I know she will continue to be a part of the community after becoming a judge, both on and off the bench.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Mary Theisen.

I am also announcing two judges to the Tenth Judicial District. One vacancy occurred with the retirement of the Honorable Gabriel Giancola in Anoka County. The other position is another of the 13 new judgeships. The Supreme Court chambered this judgeship for Pine County. 30 people applied for these vacancies. The Commission on Judicial Selection interviewed 13 applicants on May 11. The Commission recommended five finalists to me for these vacancies. The finalists were John Carlson, Gregory Galler, Nancy Logering, James Reuter and Robert Varco.

All 12 finalists for these four positions are well-qualified and I encourage the candidates who were not appointed today to apply again for future openings in their district.

One of the people I am appointing today knows this from personal experience. Nancy Logering applied for a Sherburne County vacancy last year. Although I appointed Alan Pendleton at that time, I am pleased to be able to appoint Nancy to the Anoka County judgeship this time. In addition to her extensive trial experience in the courtroom, Nancy has been to many crime scenes, trained with firefighters, rode along with police on calls and responded to prison uprisings. Her knowledge of the criminal process and the causes of crime will be valuable as a district court judge.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Nancy Logering.



To the Pine County position, I am appointing James Reuter. Jim is known as one of the hardest-working people in the area. In addition to supervising a staff of 11 assistant county attorneys and providing legal advice to the county board, Jim also personally tries the felony cases in Chisago County, which include several homicide, sexual assault, drug and arson cases. I am confident he will take this work ethic with him to the bench.

Ladies and Gentlemen: James Reuter.

Thank you all again for coming today. I especially appreciate those of you who came from the First and Tenth Judicial Districts to attend these announcements.