

Superior Court Judge

Kelly J. Lawson, Third Judicial District



MAILING ADDRESS: 125 Trading Bay Drive
Suite 100
Kenai AK 99611

AGE: 49

PLACE OF BIRTH: Anchorage

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN ALASKA: 49

ALASKAN COMMUNITIES LIVED IN:
Cantwell (1977-1987), Anchor Point (1987-1995),
Fairbanks (1995-1999, 2003-2006), Nikiski (2007-2019),
Kenai (2019-2022), Anchorage (2002-2003, 2022-2023),
Kenai (2023 to current)

EDUCATION:
Homer High School - 1995
University of Alaska Fairbanks - 1999
University of Montana School of Law - 2002

POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENT POSITIONS:
Law Clerk, Dan Hensley, 2002-2003; Assistant District
Attorney, 2007-2018; Assistant Attorney General, 2018-
2020, Deputy District Attorney, 2020-2022, Office of
Victims' Rights Attorney 2022-2023, Superior Court
Judge 2023-current

SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS MEMBERSHIPS:
Alaska Bar Association, Kenai Peninsula Bar Association

SPECIAL INTERESTS:
Travel, Movies, Reading, Hospice of the Central
Peninsula Volunteer

STATEMENT:
My entire legal career has been dedicated to public service. As a prosecutor, an Assistant Attorney General, an attorney with the Office of Victims' Rights and now as a Superior Court Judge, I have worked hard to help keep our communities healthy and safe.

I am privileged to serve as the State Court Judge for the Henu Community Wellness Court, sitting alongside a Tribal Court Judge from the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. Sitting as the Henu Judge provides the opportunity to work closely with a dedicated team whose mission is to address substance abuse issues and to continue to strive for a healthier community.

I was born and raised in Alaska and will continue to make it my home. In particular, the Kenai Peninsula is where I hope to remain as I have been fortunate to have worked within the legal community here for nearly 20 years.

Serving as a Superior Court Judge has been a great honor and I hope to be able to continue my service to the people of Alaska, and specifically on the Kenai Peninsula as a Judge. I will continue to work hard, being patient, prepared, fair and impartial to all those who appear before me.

*The views expressed in this statement are from the candidate and not endorsed by the Division of Elections.
The text of this statement was provided and paid for by the candidate in accordance with AS 15.58.030 and 6 AAC 25.690.*

Alaska Judicial Council Evaluation

Judge Kelly Lawson, Kenai Superior Court

The Alaska Judicial Council finds Judge Kelly Lawson did NOT meet performance standards and recommends a **“NO”** vote on her retention. In consideration of retention of Judge Lawson, the Alaska Judicial Council voted 6 Do Not Retain.

Judge Kelly Lawson was appointed to the Kenai Superior Court in 2023. Judge Lawson is a trial court judge who handles civil and criminal cases. This is Judge Lawson’s first judicial retention election.

Why does the Alaska Judicial Council recommend a “No” vote on Judge Kelly Lawson?

The Council found that Judge Lawson did not meet performance standards related to judicial temperament and integrity.

Judges must be judicial both in the courtroom and in their conduct off the bench. The Alaska Judicial Council concludes that, while performing acceptably on the bench, Judge Lawson has lacked patience, dignity, and courtesy in her communications with court employees, creating friction between Judge Lawson, court staff, and other judges to a degree that has impeded the efficient administration of justice.

Administrators and staff at the Alaska Court System, an independent constitutional body, have worked with Judge Lawson to improve the situation, but those efforts had been largely unsuccessful at the time of the Council’s evaluation.

The Judicial Council’s conclusion is based on information provided by court employees, records maintained by the Alaska Court System, and an interview with Judge Lawson.

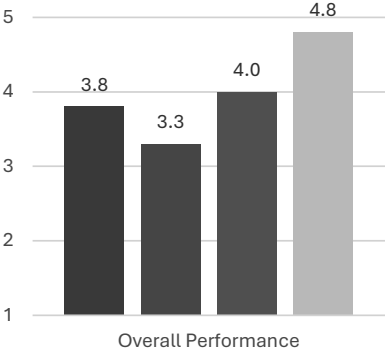
What were other evaluation findings on Judge Lawson?

The Judicial Council surveyed attorneys, court employees, peace officers, and jurors. Survey ratings on Judge Lawson’s overall performance were in the good range (3.97) when averaged across all groups.

The Judicial Council also reviewed Judge Lawson’s financial and conflict of interest disclosure statements, whether her pay was withheld for untimely decisions, how often her decisions were affirmed by higher courts, disqualifications from cases, and public ethics files. The Council found no matters of concern in these areas. She met educational requirements set by the Alaska Supreme Court.

Judge Lawson sits on the Henu Community Wellness Court, a tribal-state therapeutic court. She participated in a 2024 conference to support the re-entry of women being released from prison, and she participated in training for Indian Child Welfare Act cases and therapeutic courts.

Ratings from Justice System Professionals and Jurors for “Overall” Job Performance for Judge Kelly Lawson



■ Attorneys ■ Court Employees ■ Peace Officers ■ Jurors

*Rated on a scale from 5 (excellent) to 1 (poor).
See this judge's full evaluation at www.ajc.state.ak.us*

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