



Press Release

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Anchorage, Alaska, July 1, 2021 - Chief Justice Daniel E. Winfree of Fairbanks was sworn in as Chief Justice this morning by Justice Dario Borghesan. Justice Borghesan clerked for the Chief Justice early in his career. Chief Justice Winfree is the first Alaskan-born Chief Justice, and the second Fairbanks Chief Justice.

Under Alaska's Constitution, the Chief Justice is selected from among the justices by majority vote. The Chief Justice serves a three-year term as the administrative head of the judicial branch of government, presides over Supreme Court arguments and conferences, appoints presiding judges for all judicial districts, and serves as the chair of the Alaska Judicial Council.

Chief Justice Winfree joined the Alaska Supreme Court in January 2008. Born in the Alaska Territory in Fairbanks in 1953, he is the grandson of turn-of-the-century Yukon and Alaska gold rushers. From 1975 to 1978 he was a truck driver and warehouseman in pipeline construction camps and at Prudhoe Bay, working on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Justice Winfree earned a B.S. in Finance from the University of Oregon in 1977 and in 1981 earned M.B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of California Berkeley. Admitted to the Alaska Bar in 1982, he spent twenty-five years in private practice in Anchorage, Valdez, and Fairbanks, working with large firms, small firms, and as a sole practitioner on matters across the state. He served nine years on the Alaska Bar Association Board of Governors and was its President from 1994-1995. He also served a term on the Bar Association's Ethics Committee and several terms on its Fee Arbitration Committee. The Bar Association presented him its Distinguished Service Award in 2007. After his final term on the Board of Governors, he joined the Board of Trustees of the Alaska Bar Foundation and served as its president for two years. He now chairs the Supreme Court's Code of Judicial Conduct Rules Committee and Appellate Rules Committee. Justice Winfree is married to another Fairbanks-born, third-generation Alaskan, Cathleen Ringstad Winfree. They have two children.

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