

# Art Danner sworn in as judge today

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SANTA CRUZ — Santa Cruz

County District Attorney Art Danner planned to enter a locked court room this afternoon to take the oath of office and assume his duties as a Superior Court Judge.

He set up the private ceremony so he would be on the job before Gov. Pete Wilson leaves office Monday. Otherwise, newly elected Gov. Gray Davis — who

See DANNER, page 4

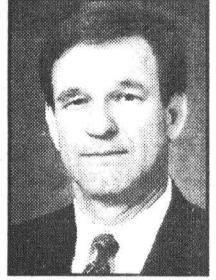
## DANNER

From page 1

will be installed Monday — would have the power to cancel the appointment.

His friend and mentor, state appellate court judge Chris Cottle (a former Santa Cruz County District Attorney and Santa Cruz County Superior Court judge), was to swear Danner in during the closed ceremony in front of his family and a close friend, outgoing Santa Cruz County Supervisor Ray Belgard, who will leave office next week.

Danner said he did not have time to issue invitations to people, including the press, which is why he wanted a quick ceremony with a few close friends and relatives.



Danner

He said he plans to have a public ceremony in mid-January when he will take the oath of office for a second time in front of the rest of the county's judges, the press and a large group of invited guests.

Danner got the appointment to the Santa Cruz County bench even though a committee of the local bar association had given him a bad rating. Danner is also being criticized for firing his long-time chief deputy, Jon Hopkins, who has just finished working on a murder case in Lake County.

Danner says he took the action to pave the way for Chief Deputy District Attorney Kate Canlis to assume his position.

Although a Democrat, Danner got the appointment over Republican applicants, including Assistant District Attorney Paul Maragonda and private attorneys John Gallagher, Thornton Kontz and Cheryl Ontiveros.

Eleven percent of Governor Wilson's appointments have been Democrats during his eight years in office.

The outgoing district attorney has long been interested in a judgeship. He applied several years ago, but an extremely low rating from the bar forced him to pull back his application. Since that time, he has been working closely with the governor's office on several projects, and his work caught the attention of Wilson, who has ignored bad ratings from the bar in the past when making judicial appointments.