

# Felton lawyer to turn judge

SDMh 10-10-03  
HE WILL RELINQUISH  
POST AS SUPERVISOR

*Courts* By David L. Beck

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At 4:30 this afternoon, Felton lawyer Jeff Almquist will be sworn in as a judge on the Santa Cruz County Superior Court and cease to be a county supervisor.

"It's really great," he said Thursday, "something I've wanted to do for a long time."

Almquist will replace Judge Richard McAdams, who was appointed to the 6th District Court of Appeal last month as Gov. Gray Davis began to fill longstanding vacancies during the recall campaign that ended with his ouster.

Davis' appointments this week included a pair of seats

Jeff Almquist will replace Judge Richard McAdams, who was appointed to the 6th District Court of Appeal last month by Gov. Gray Davis.

on the Santa Clara County Superior Court left vacant by retirements.

Thursday, he named Philip Pennypacker, 56, a San Jose defense attorney, and Vincent Chiarello, 46, a Mill Valley civil litigator, to the seats left vacant by the retirements of Judge Robert Foley and Judge Marliese Kim.

Judges aren't the only ones in Davis' sights. If he moves quickly, Davis also could name Almquist's successor on the board of supervisors before leaving the governor's office.

Almquist, 55, was nearing the end of his second four-year term as a supervisor. He had applied for a seat on the bench, but until McAdams' elevation there was no vacancy. So in August, Almquist announced his intention to seek a third term next year.

Now a new incumbent will get to defend the 5th District seat, which covers Scotts Valley and the San Lorenzo Valley.

Declining to toss out the names of any potential suitors for an appointment by Davis, Almquist said an effort would be made "to try to get some consensus" from among the "variety of good candidates."

Among the known hopefuls are Don Dietrich, 45, a former sheriff's deputy who is now a field representative for the Operating Engineers Local 3, which represents Santa Cruz County deputies; Mark Stone, a Scotts Valley lawyer; and Larry Prather, a member of the Boulder Creek Water Board.

"There's been a lot of names floating around," said Dietrich, who sees it "boiling down maybe to four or five people."

Barbara Sprenger, a San Lorenzo Unified School District board member, was rumored to be interested but said Thursday she is not — at least not now. "I would be very interested in doing the job someday," she said, "but this isn't the right time, with everything going on in the school district here."

"Everything going on" in-

School.

With Almquist moving to the bench, Scotts Valley Mayor Randy Johnson, a Republican, is the only announced candidate for the 5th District supervisor's seat.

Almquist said he got the word from the governor Tuesday morning during a board of supervisors meeting but was told to keep mum about it. "I fooled 'em all," he said. "It was great."

His private swearing-in today will be followed next Friday by a public ceremony. "I start work Tuesday," he said.

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