

^{Courts} Santa Cruz municipal judge says he'll go to Watsonville

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By JAMIE MARKS ✓

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WATSONVILLE — Judge Richard Kessell will take over Watsonville Municipal Court A as soon as a replacement for him can be found in Santa Cruz.

In explaining why he decided to take the seat vacated by the election of Judge John Marlo to Superior Court, Kessell, said, "I've lived there since 1959. It's my home, and the best community in the world.

"As soon as the new judge is sworn in, I'll be going to Watsonville," said Kessell, adding he has no idea when the governor will make the appointment.

Many attorneys are seeking the Municipal Court judgeship created by Marlo's departure, but so far the governor hasn't indicated when he will fill the seat. Whoever gets the nod will take over Municipal Court D in the main county courthouse.

The 55-year-old Kessell has been a Municipal Court judge for nearly 14 years. Since the Watsonville bench opened up in January, Kessell has filled in for four weeks, with the remainder being taken by visiting judges.

Asked if he thought the Watsonville judge should have experience because of the heavy caseload here, Kessell replied, "Anybody starting out on the bench should be around other judges to ask advice. It's pretty isolated in Watsonville, and when you have a question you've got to make a phone call and hope someone's around, whereas here all you have to do is walk down the hall 15 feet."

The judge added he will be on vacation from April 14 until May 4 and didn't expect to assume the bench until after then.

Presiding Judge Richard McAdams said he checked with the other Municipal Court judge, court adminis-



Judge Richard Kessell

trator and commissioner, and they gave the go-ahead to Kessell.

"We expect the Watsonville bench to have a closer working relationship with the Santa Cruz courts," said McAdams. "Judge Kessell will spend two to four months a year on the felony calendar in Santa Cruz and one day a week hearing civil cases up here."