

Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

New Judge Ariadne Symons gets a standing ovation from fellow judges gathered for her swearing in Friday at the Santa Cruz courthouse.

Your honor will suffice

After 25 years as a prosecutor, Symons sworn in as judge

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Just once more, Ariadne Symons stood before the judges who presided over scores of her cases during her 12 years with the District Attorney's Office.

This time Symons wasn't in a courtroom and there was no trial. This time she stood to take an oath and join their ranks. Symons was sworn in Friday as a Santa Cruz County Superior Court judge.

"You're no longer Ari," retired Justice Harry F. Brauer told Symons. "You're now Judge Symons."

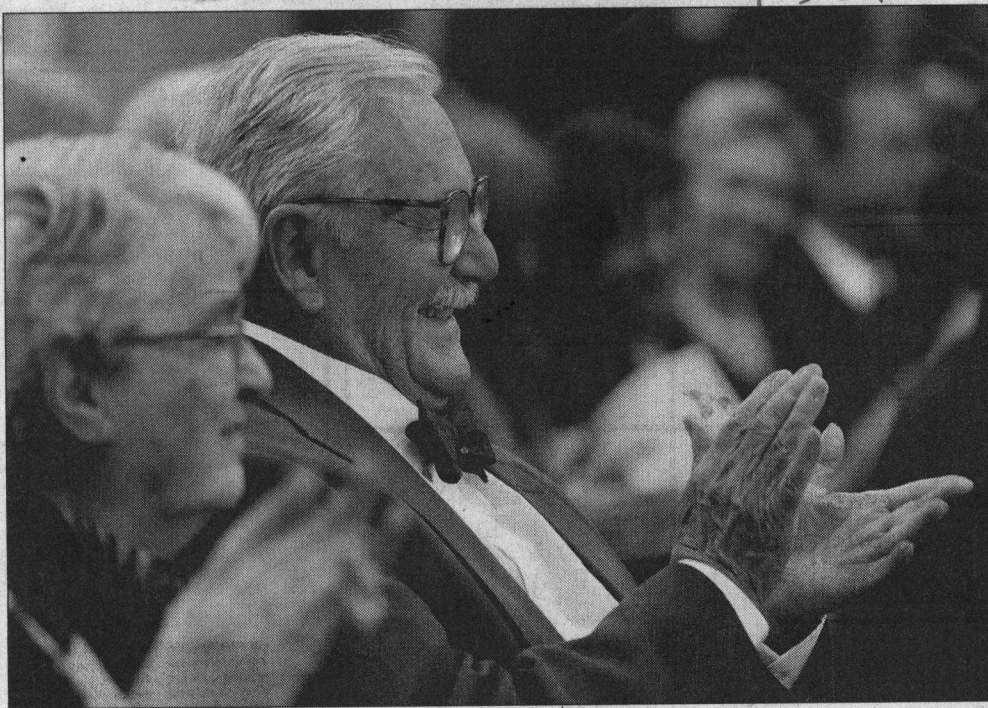
The crowd spilled out of the Board of Supervisors chambers. Seated up front were Symons' mother, Dorothy Symons, and green kilt-wearing father, John Symons, both 85, who came up from their home in Southern California.

Symons won her seat with about 60 percent of the county-wide vote in June.

"I believe in justice," Symons told her audience, "and 24,024 voters believed in me."

A Canadian by birth, Symons gave up her citizenship there to become a naturalized U.S. citizen and pursue her passion for justice.

She spoke before her peers and friends Friday with the kind of presence, preparation and wit that helped her win all 33 of the



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John Symons applauds his daughter, Ariadne, during her remarks after her swearing in as judge Friday. Dorothy Symons, Ariadne's mother, is at left.

homicide cases she handled during 25 years as a prosecutor, including time as a federal prosecutor. Symons tried more than 200 cases in front of juries. She lost just twice.

"I have no doubt that Ari feels capable of doing great things in her career," said Justice Richard J. McAdams, who serves on the 6th District Court of Appeals. "And I for one share that confidence."

During her time with the

District Attorney's Office, Symons started the Cold Case Unit and was the top violent crimes prosecutor. She takes the seat of Judge Samuel Stevens, who retires after 20 years on the bench. Symons will begin in a misdemeanor courtroom.

Symons said she knows she's no longer an advocate for one side. Her job will be to listen to both sides and make sure justice is done.

"I've had a long career as a prosecutor but I am truly aware that I am the new kid on the block when it comes to being a judge," she said.

District Attorney Bob Lee has not said who will replace Symons as head of trial operations. Lee has lost four felony prosecutors since the end of the summer.

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