

Governor taps local woman for judgeship

Aptos attorney takes seat on Superior Court

By JENNIFER SQUIRES
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

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The governor selected an Aptos lawyer for a judgeship in Santa Cruz County Superior Court on Tuesday.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger picked Denine J. Guy, a San Lorenzo Valley High School graduate and a prosecutor in the Monterey County District Attorney's Office, to fill one of two vacancies on the bench.



GUY

'Your job is do justice and that's what I'm looking forward to doing'

Guy, 42, fills the position created by the November death of Judge Kathleen Akao.

"At this time I felt Santa Cruz County needed my public

service," said Guy, who has 18 years of experience in criminal and civil law.

It was that experience that convinced Schwarzenegger to select her, a spokesman for the governor said. The opening drew several applicants.

"She's experienced in court. It's nice to have someone who's a courtroom trial attorney," said Bob Lee, Santa Cruz County district attorney.

Guy is the second judge to join the county bench this year. Civil attorney Paul Burdick, also of Aptos, was appointed in February to the position created by the Jan. 28 death of Art Danner.

Presiding Judge Heather Morse said Tuesday she was "delighted" with the governor's choice.

"I believe that Judge Akao would have been pleased by this appointment," she added.

Guy, a Republican, said that her politics will not affect her work because a judgeship is bipartisan.

"Your job is do justice and that's what I'm looking forward to doing," she said.

Judge

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She will start as soon as possible, said Roy Blaine, the court's assistant executive officer.

Guy, who joins 10 other Superior Court judges, said she had not heard where she will be assigned, but Blaine said new judges traditionally work in one of the county's two misdemeanor courts. Those courts handle minor crimes including some vandalism, alcohol and drug charges.

Burdick oversees the Department 1 misdemeanor court and Morse heads the Department 2 court for lesser violations. Guy will likely take Morse's position, freeing the presiding judge for other roles, Blaine said.

"It's actually going to start a whole chain of shifts," said Blaine.

The next change expected is a third appointment to replace departing Judge Tom Kelly. Kelly officially retired in March, but is staying on until a replacement is found.

Both Danner and Akao were up for re-election this year; and Morse said in March she believed Danner's spot was filled first because the filing period for his seat was open when he died. The governor may also have been holding Akao's spot open to appoint either a woman and a minority, she said.

Morse was the only woman on the bench before Guy's appointment Tuesday.

Like Burdick, Guy will face election in 2008. She said she hopes to stay on the bench until retirement.

"I just want to go where I'm need-

ed," she said. "This move was to serve Santa Cruz County."

Guy will earn \$149,160 a year.

Guy grew up in Boulder Creek, earned a bachelor of science degree from Western Illinois University, then moved back to Santa Cruz County while she earned a her law degree at the Monterey College of Law.

She has worked in the Monterey County District Attorney's Office since 1994 and, before that, spent seven years as an associate and a law clerk for the law firm Yonts and Fulton.

Guy lives in Aptos with her husband, Berkley Brannon, who's also a prosecutor in Monterey County, and their 8-year-old son Berkley.

Contact Jennifer Squires at
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Denine J. Guy

AGE: 42.

HOME: Aptos.

OCCUPATION: Monterey County prosecutor, consumer and environmental protection division.

EDUCATION: San Lorenzo Valley High School, Western Illinois University, Monterey College of Law.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Legal organizations, volunteer work, Pajaro Valley Quilters Association.

INTERESTS: Traveling with family, snow skiing, day hikes, camping, quilting.