

# The Fourth District Citizens' Judicial Evaluation Committee

Pikes Peak Community College  
5675 S. Academy Boulevard, Colorado Springs, CO 80906-5498

Press Release: For Immediate Release

## INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Judicial Institute is a non-profit organization created to promote communication between citizens, lawyers, and judges; foster understanding of the workings of the courts; and provide a forum for public discussion of major issues concerning the judiciary. In cooperation with Pikes Peak Community College, CJI has sponsored this citizens' committee for evaluation of judges who are up for retention election in November 1988. Our findings and conclusions are enclosed.

This Citizens' Committee was established for the Fourth Judicial District in March, 1988 for the purpose of gathering information about the performance of judges up for retention election and report its findings to the public prior to the election. Our committee targeted for surveys groups of people who have had direct experience in front of the judges, including attorneys, deputy district attorneys and deputy public defenders (for specific information on criminal cases), law enforcement officers, former jurors, and Department of Social Services and Probation Department officers. The survey results from the attorneys was obtained from the El Paso County Bar Association's own poll of its members which was released to the public in July.

The surveys consisted of detailed questions covering areas of judicial management skills (punctuality, accessibility, control of courtroom, etc.), comportment (courtesy, dignity of proceedings, attentiveness, impartiality, etc.), and basic knowledge of rules of evidence and substantive law. Survey groups were also asked to state whether the judges should be retained in office.

The members of this committee were chosen by their response to inquiries sent by CJI and Pikes Peak Community College to the various service and other established organizations in the community. After several meetings, this committee became one comprised of seven people representing different walks of life. The organizations represented are the Pilots International, American GI Forum, Colorado Springs Civitan, League of Women Voters and the El Paso County Bar Association. The committee has met on the average twice per month since March for the purpose of preparing survey forms, identifying the target groups of these surveys, distributing the surveys to the members of these groups, and gathering and collating the responses. After the responses were collated, the committee personally interviewed each judge up for retention election.

The work of the committee members has been completely voluntary and funded exclusively through private donations from the groups represented on the committee. No taxpayer money has been used for this project.

This committee was not seeking perfection in the judges, however, we feel that the position of a judge should demand a relatively high standard of excellence as observed by different segments of society with direct experience in front of the judge.

This observation should be made over a period of time and covering a broad category of cases. Judges are human and err, and it is his or her total record which must be assessed in forming one's opinion prior to entering the voting booth.

As a result of this evaluation process, this committee has become strongly aware of the effect on judges' performances of the ever-increasing caseload without a corresponding increase in judicial resources with which to meet it.

Signed:

*M. P. ...* Chairman

*Beryl A. Mitchell*  
*Delphine Farrington*  
*Kit LeMillman*  
*Stuart Reighton*  
*Alena M. Mock*  
*Patricia E. Sh.*

DISTRICT COURT JUDGES

Judge Donald E. Cambell

Judge Campbell is Chief District Court Judge. He was highly rated in matters of moving his docket and control of the courtroom, but criticized for a lack of courtesy shown to litigants, attorneys, and witnesses, and a quickness to anger. During our interview with Judge Campbell, he acknowledged the problem of temperament and showed a willingness to correct it. He received adequate ratings concerning knowledge of the law, however, lower marks on ability to handle complex cases.

Survey respondents commented that during trials he frequently reads and signs documents not related to the case, that this shows a disinterest in the evidence and is distracting. Perhaps this is caused by an overload of cases coupled with his administrative duties as Chief Judge.

On balance, he is clearly qualified, experienced, and willing to work toward improvement where needed, and is recommended for retention.

Judge John F. Gallagher

With 22 years on the District Court Bench, Judge Gallagher is the most experienced of the current Judges. He is extremely well-respected by the legal community, and has a reputation for intelligence, compassion, and a feel for the human factors in a case. There was some concern expressed regarding punctuality as well as lenience in sentencing, however, these were far outweighed by the many high marks in areas of judicial competence and demeanor. Recommended for retention.

Judge Steven T. Pelican

Judge Pelican has been a District Court Judge for almost three years. Survey responses show that he is conscientious, hard working, and courteous to those appearing before him. His ratings were high in matters of knowledge of the law and objectivity toward litigants and their attorneys. Some concern was expressed about decisiveness, however, those so commenting also agreed this is already improving. With more experience he is expected to become an outstanding Judge, and is recommended for retention.

Judge Matt M. Railey

Judge Railey received excellent ratings from virtually every group surveyed. He is considered knowledgeable in the law, courteous to those appearing before him, and very efficient in his management of judicial proceedings. He is perceived as fair minded by attorneys on both sides of the case, such as deputy district attorneys and deputy public defenders, as well as law enforcement. The only significant concern expressed by the respondents was that Judge Railey be alert to the stress of the job and take better care of his health. Recommended for retention.

COUNTY COURT JUDGES

Judge Rebecca S. Bromley

Judge Bromley is Presiding County Court Judge. She received high marks for compassion and courtesy, but was deemed by many respondents to need improvement in her knowledge in rules of evidence and substantive law, particularly criminal law. At her interview, Judge Bromley showed a clear dedication to her work and improvement in the efficiency of county courts, but was rather defensive and unwilling to accept the criticism voiced by survey respondents. She is experienced in the judiciary and, despite her rejection of criticism, has shown continued improvement and is recommended for retention.

Judge Jerry Nelson

Judge Nelson is considered by respondents to be a hard working Judge with a good knowledge of the rules of procedure as well as substantive law. He received very high ratings for his maintenance of control in the courtroom, but substantial criticism for his temperament and lack of objectivity toward litigants and attorneys. He was deemed not courteous to those who appear before him by a sizable number. Many also stated Judge Nelson has shown great improvement in recent years. He has 10 years' experience on the bench, has improved greatly, and is recommended for retention.

Press Release from  
11th Judicial District  
Judicial Evaluation Committee

11-1

The Colorado Judicial Institute is a non-profit organization created to promote communication between citizens, lawyers and judges; foster understanding of the workings of the court; and provide a forum for public discussion of major issues concerning the judiciary. This year, the institute sponsored a citizens' committee for evaluation of judges in the 11th Judicial District. The committee gathered information through surveys of attorneys, courtroom personnel, social services workers, law enforcement officers, Game and Fish officers and Probation Department personnel; interviews with the judges, and personal observation in the courtroom. The committee members have deliberated extensively and after careful consideration of all information gathered, make the following recommendations:

Judge Paul J. Keohane

Judge Keohane is quite competent and knowledgeable in the law.

The information gathered through the evaluation process indicates that he is consistent in sentencing decisions and has enhanced his position on the bench by drawing upon a wide range of experiences. He is decisive in his rulings and runs an efficient courtroom. The committee has concerns about his tendency to be discourteous with those appearing in front of him. He is perceived as being weak in judicial temperament and compassion. The committee was unable to reach a consensus and therefore, the committee has "no opinion" to make to the public on Judge Keohane's retention.

Judge William G. Fox

During his first two years in the County Court of Fremont County, Judge Fox has demonstrated an attitude of patience and courtesy together with genuine concern for those appearing in his court. He is ambitious, innovative and hardworking. His decisions are legally sound and he makes an effort to see that persons in the legal system understand his reasoning. Judge Fox has greatly improved the efficiency of the county court without sacrificing individual rights. Based on all information obtained by the committee, we recommend retention of Judge William G. Fox.

Judge Whitney B. Sullivan

Judge Sullivan is well-respected in the community of Custer County as well as other communities and has a true devotion to his position as county court judge. He is well educated and knowledgeable in the law and spends many volunteer hours educating others in the area of the law. He is personable, serene and compassionate. Judge Sullivan is a part-time county court judge and is a non-lawyer, but has established himself as a very fine judge. The committee recommends retention of Judge Whitney B. Sullivan.



# Judge evaluators give no opinion on keeping Keohane

By JOHN LEMONS  
Record Staff Writer

CANON CITY — A citizens' committee for evaluating judges up for retention election in the 11th Judicial District has recommended retention of two county judges, but gave no opinion for 11th District Court Judge Paul Keohane.

"Judge Keohane is quite competent and knowledgeable in the law," states the news release from the committee. "The information gathered through the evaluation process indicates that he is consistent in sentencing decisions and has enhanced his position on the bench by drawing upon a wide range of experiences.

"He is decisive in his rulings and runs an efficient courtroom. The committee has concerns about his tendency to be discourteous with those appearing in front of him

"He is perceived as being weak in judicial temperament and compassion. The committee was unable to reach a consensus and therefore, the committee has 'no opinion' to make to the public on Judge Keohane's retention."

Keohane declined to comment on the committee's statements because he hasn't had time to study them.

"I haven't digested it yet," Keohane said.

The committee was composed of six members chosen from the community and sponsored by the Colorado Judicial Institute, which is a non-profit organization created to promote communication between citizens, lawyers and judges, according to Emily Tracy, a member and spokesperson for the committee.

The committee based its evaluations on surveys of at-

torneys, courtroom personnel, social services workers, law enforcement officers, wildlife enforcers and probation department personnel.

They also held interviews with the judges and made personal observations in the courtrooms.

The committee recommended retention of Fremont County Judge Bill Fox and Custer County Judge Whitney Sullivan.

"During his first two years in the County Court of Fremont County, Judge Fox has demonstrated an attitude of patience and courtesy together with genuine concern for those appearing in his court," the news release states. "He is ambitious, innovative and hard working.

"His decisions are legally sound and he makes an effort to see that persons in the legal system understand his reasoning. Judge Fox has greatly improved the efficiency of the county court without sacrificing individual rights.

"Judge Sullivan is well-respected in the community of Custer County as well as other communities and has a true devotion to his position as county court judge. He is well educated and knowledgeable in the law and spends many volunteer hours educating others in the area of the law. He is personable, serene and compassionate. Judge Sullivan is a part-time county court judge and is a non-lawyer, but has established himself as a very fine judge."

Keohane will be on the Nov. 8 ballot in Fremont, Custer, Chaffee and Park counties which comprise the 11th Judicial District for which he is the chief judge.

# Residents

By JOHN LEMONS  
Record Staff Writer

CANON CITY — The most attend a budget hearing this year Monday night against cuts in the and some proposed higher taxes city services.

"I feel real good about the came to express themselves about said Errol Snider, city administrator never before seen anyone who property taxes to go up."

A resolution for a lean 1989 during the Canon City Councilwoman Heidi Willard said against the budget because of funds of the outside agencies.

"If the budget had the money be one thing," she said. "If emergency, we don't have the money.

City officials have cut the emergency and overtime pay for 1989. Deputy will have to make decisions on overtime to fix broken water line services or wait until the next day.

Willard said she isn't against agencies. The city museum, Home and Meal-on-Wheels are accepted but the Main Street USA project County Economic Development (FCEDC), and Canon City Chamber

# Poll shows

DENVER (AP) — Amendment 6, which would limit property tax increases and require voter approval of future tax increases, was favored by 66 percent of those surveyed in a poll on four state ballot initiatives as well as the presidential race.

The poll, conducted by Circ Associates for KUSA-TV, was a random telephone sampling of 500 registered Colorado voters and was conducted after last Thursday's presidential debate. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.3 percent.

It showed George Bush ahead in the presidential race and gave the edge to backers of an amendment to make English the state's official language.

A proposal to repeal a ban on state funding of abortions for poor women appeared to have more opposition than support, while a proposal to change procedures for the Legislature to limit the power

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CONTACT: James D. Williamson  
Sterling 522-1910

For Immediate Release

REPORT FROM THE 13th JUDICIAL DISTRICT EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The 13th Judicial District Evaluation Committee has completed 5 months of work on judicial questionnaires and interviews about the work of District Judge Steven Shinn, Sedgewick County Judge Max Carlson, Kit Carson County Judge J. Curt Penney, and Yuma County Judge Kent Fennie. Questionnaires for each judge were sent to law enforcement personnel, Social Services personnel (including corrections officers and probation officers), courtroom personnel, members of the bar association, and jurors. The questionnaires covered areas ranging from judicial management skills, and behavior in the conduct of court proceedings, to perceptions of personal problems which could interfere with official duties. Answers were framed as unacceptable, acceptable, good, excellent, and can't rate (unknown to answerer). There was a yes or no question on retention in office.

District Judge Steven Shinn is the only judge on the ballot for retention on a district-wide basis in this election. Of the 84 returned questionnaires, all were in favor of retention in office. Answers on Judge Shinn's management skills and court conduct were all good to excellent with many favorable comments. A question of after hours availability was partially answered when it was stated that Judge Shinn is on an 8-party telephone line.

The 9 returned questionnaires on Sedgewick County Judge Max Carlson all favored retention in office. Answers to the questions ranged from acceptable to excellent without comments.

Kit Carson County Judge J. Curt Penney had 24 answers in favor of retention in office, 1 not in favor of retention, and 1 who declined to answer. Question answers ranged from defecient to excellent, with the preponderance in the acceptable and good range. Judge Penney declined to meet with the committee for an interview.

There were 26 returned questionnaires on Yuma County Judge Kent Fennie with 11 answering no on retention in office and 15 yes. Question answers ranged from defecient to a few excellent. There were many negative comments ranging from "completely incompetant" and "not consistant" to allegations of favoritism and racial and sexual biases and allegations that his personal life and reputation "at times make a mockery out of this court."

The 13th Judicial District Evaluation Committee members represent the seven counties of Morgan, Logan, Yuma, Washington, Sedgwick, Phillips and Kit Carson which make up the 13th Judicial District. Evaluation information on the judges was obtained from the questionnaires cited above, citizen input and committee interviews conducted with the cooperating judges. The quotes herein reflect the opinions and views of those responding to the questionnaires and not the views of the members of the 13th Judicial District Evaluation Committee.

The 1988 General Assembly enacted legislation "establishing commissions for the purpose of evaluating judicial performance." This legislation (H.B. 1079), which goes into effect in 1990, provides for a statewide judicial evaluaion commission and evaluation commissions in each Colorado judicial district. The commissions will provide the public and the judiciary with "fair, responsible and constructive information" about the judicial performance of judges up for retention election.

# Results of Adams County Citizens Evaluation Committee for Retention of Judges

# JUDICIAL POLL

On February 17, 1988, members of the Adams County Citizens Evaluation Committee for Retention of Judges began a process designed to present to the voters of Adams County on November 8, 1988, a comprehensive evaluation of the judges in the Seventeenth Judicial District to be considered for retention on the ballot. The Committee is a nonprofit and nonpartisan group operating with the assistance of the Colorado Judicial Institute. The Committee has completed its work and presents the following recommendations and information for your consideration:

## RECOMMENDED FOR RETENTION

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Honorable Ovid R. Beldock

Honorable Donald W. Marshall

## RECOMMENDED FOR RETENTION

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*Judge Beldock said that everyone has a right to his day in court and a right to be heard. The Committee felt he emphasized the importance of making sure that people who appeared before him understood all aspects of the judicial process. He is enthusiastic about his job.*

*Judge Marshall felt that educating students and the public about the legal system is a high priority. The Committee felt that his commitment to the judiciary and his intensity of purpose were admirable.*

*Judge Roan is most disturbed by the increase in crime caused by drugs and alcohol. The Committee feels his administrative and judicial skills are a strength in the 17th Judicial District.*

*Judge Vigil is actively committed to educating young people about how the law affects their lives. The Committee feels he possesses a firm but sensitive strength in dealing with people.*

Honorable Philip F. Roan

Honorable John J. Vigil

TAPE 4 . . . .

## THE RETENTION PROCESS

Although judges who sit on Colorado's county, district and appellate benches are initially appointed by the Governor, the question of whether a judge should retain his position is placed on the ballot periodically. The electorate casts votes for or against the retention of a judge. There are four judges in the Seventeenth Judicial District (Adams County) who are on this year's ballot: Ovid R. Beldock; Donald W. Marshall, Jr.; Philip F. Roan; and John J. Vigil.

The Committee's recommendations are based upon information provided by a variety of sources. The Committee sent questionnaires to attorneys, police officers and courthouse workers, who replied anonymously. The questionnaires were designed to inquire about different aspects of a judge's performance, ranging from his judicial management skills, to his legal ability, to his fairness, to his demeanor. The survey included questions about: a judge's promptness; his legal reasoning and the equity of his rulings; his capacity to make hard, conscientious and just decisions even though they may be controversial; his courtesy to litigants, witnesses, jurors, lawyers and court personnel; his control of his courtroom; and any biases that he may display. The questionnaires provided a range of answers for each question, from excellent to poor, as well as a space for more general comments. In addition, the Committee interviewed each judge personally. The individual responses were tallied and summarized. The ratings were on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being superior and 4 being substandard. An average score is 2.5.

### The Honorable Ovid R. Beldock

Judge Beldock passed the bar in 1971. He was a deputy district attorney in Denver and was then in private practice for about seven years. He became a juvenile commissioner in Adams County in 1980. In 1981 he was appointed to be a county court judge.

Judge Beldock primarily handles county court civil cases in which the claims usually do not go beyond \$5,000.00. He also has presided over traffic and misdemeanor proceedings, including drunken driving cases, and preliminary hearings in felony cases.

The attorneys (1.7 on a scale of 1 to 4), the courthouse workers (1.8), and the members of the Committee (1.7) who interviewed Judge Beldock all rated him substantially above average. The police officers (2.3) ranked him as being somewhat above average. Some respondents to the survey disagreed with his legal rulings and wrote that he could be abrupt. Others stated that he was friendly, professional and fair. Based upon this information, the Committee recommends that Judge Beldock SHOULD BE RETAINED.

### The Honorable Donald W. Marshall, Jr.

Before he was appointed to the district court bench in 1986, Judge Marshall was in private practice for 13 years. He specialized in oil and gas law cases from 1981 to 1986. During the last ten years of that period he also served as the presiding judge of Thornton's Municipal Court. He worked in the manufacturing and financial management area of the aerospace industry for 12 years before he began his law practice. In his two years in the district court, Judge Marshall has mostly presided over domestic relations and civil cases. He is licensed to practice law before Colorado state courts, the United States District Court in Colorado and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

All of the surveyed groups rated Judge Marshall to be substantially above average: the police officers (1.8 on a scale of 1 to 4); the attorneys (1.7); the courthouse workers (1.5); and the members of the Committee (1.4) who interviewed him. Although some of the people who responded to the questionnaires thought that he was sometimes impatient, he was praised for his integrity, fairness and industriousness. Based upon this information, the Committee recommends that Judge Marshall SHOULD BE RETAINED.

### The Honorable Philip F. Roan

Judge Roan is the Seventeenth Judicial District's Chief Judge. He was appointed to the district court in 1980. He served as a deputy district attorney and an assistant public defender. He was also in private practice for fifteen years.

Judge Roan has presided over felony, misdemeanor and traffic criminal cases, juvenile proceedings, large civil disputes, divorces, probate cases, child custody matters, mental health inquiries and appeals from county court cases. He also has administrative responsibilities including assigning of duties to the other eleven judges and three commissioners in the Seventeenth Judicial District.

The police officers rated Judge Roan to be somewhat above average (2.2 on a scale of 1 to 4). The attorneys (1.8), the courthouse workers (1.7) and the members of the Committee (1.5) who interviewed Judge Roan felt that he was substantially above average. While some respondents felt that Judge Roan was occasionally gruff, others wrote that he was a good judge who was firm but fair. He appears to be well-respected in the legal community as decisive, responsible and effective. He was popular among the courthouse workers. Based upon this information, the Committee recommends that Judge Roan SHOULD BE RETAINED.

### The Honorable John J. Vigil

Judge Vigil is a county court judge who was appointed to that position in August 1985. He worked as a supervising attorney for Land Rights Counsel, Inc., and as a trial attorney for the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice. He was a deputy state public defender for four years and, in the year before he took the bench, he was an assistant county attorney for Adams County.

Judge Vigil presently presides over traffic and misdemeanor criminal cases, including drunken driving cases. He also conducts preliminary hearings in felony cases.

The police officers rated Judge Vigil to be somewhat above average (2.0 on a scale of 1 to 4). The courthouse workers (1.5), the attorneys (1.8) and the Committee members (1.6) who interviewed Judge Vigil all felt that he was substantially above average. The written comments reflect that Judge Vigil is viewed as polite, attentive and fair. A few respondents questioned his rulings on the law in criminal cases. Based upon this information, the Committee recommends that Judge Vigil SHOULD BE RETAINED.

Members of the Committee: Ed Harshbarger, *Chairman*; Mary Padilla, *Vice-Chairman*; Betty Graves, *Secretary*; Odell Barry, Steve Bernard, Samantha Dixon, Fidel Galicia, Lori Hanigan, Annie Pasquale, Elaine Valente. Resource Assistance: Dr. Frank Sullivan and Ellen Mueser of Front Range Community College.

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT EVALUATION COMMITTEE

JUDGE: Joyce S. Steinhardt

RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN

The unanimous decision of the Committee is that Judge Steinhardt be recommended for retention as Chief Judge in the 18th Judicial District.

Those who responded to the Committee's questionnaire had observed the manner in which Judge Steinhardt carried out her judicial duties. They expressed confidence in her ability as an administrator of the court. In particular, she was praised for her expertise in handling cases of family disputes, juvenile offenses, and divorce litigation.

On a scale of 0 - 5, Judge Steinhardt received a rating of 4+ which indicated that she has above-average skills in the court room. Percentage ratings are as follows:

Professional Ability	76%
Integrity and Fairness	65%
Judicial Temperament	78%
Industriousness	68%
Decisiveness and Procedural	
Fairness	78%
Social Awareness	69%

Judge Steinhardt appeared relaxed and knowledgeable in the informal interview with the Committee. She expressed a high regard for the integrity of the judicial system and her assignment in its administration.

The Committee's recommendation is based on the responses to the questionnaire, the informal interview, and reference to rating by the Arapahoe Bar Association.

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT EVALUATION COMMITTEE

JUDGE: James F. Macrum, Jr.

RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN

The unanimous decision of the Committee is that Judge Macrum be recommended for retention as County Judge in the 18th Judicial District.

The Committee felt that Judge Macrum's somewhat uneasy manner at the beginning of the informal interview might be accounted for by the fact that he has less judicial experience than other judges up for retention. The same lack of experience may account for lower ratings on handling documents efficiently and adherence to procedural rules in complex legal situations. Responses to the questionnaire noted that Judge Macrum is professional, calm, courteous, and considerate to all parties in his court.

The Committee's recommendation is based on the responses to the questionnaire, the informal interview, and reference to rating by the Arapahoe County Bar Association.

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT EVALUATION COMMITTEE

JUDGE: Alan R. Beckman

RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN

The unanimous decision of the Committee is that Judge Beckman be recommended for retention as County Judge in the 18th Judicial District.

In reviewing evaluations of Judge Beckman's conduct of his courtroom duties, the Committee found his highest scores to be in the area of professional ability, decisiveness, and procedural fairness. There was criticism of occasional lack of courtesy and consideration to attorneys, jurors, witnesses, and others. There was a question as to whether Judge Beckman might be influenced by personalities or reputations of attorneys who appear in his court. However, the Committee did not find these negative responses strong enough to recommend against retention.

The Committee's recommendation is based on the responses to the questionnaire, the informal interview, and reference to rating by the Arapahoe County Bar Association.

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT EVALUATION COMMITTEE

JUDGE: Richard M. Jauch

RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN

The unanimous decision of the Committee is that Judge Jauch be recommended for retention as County Judge in the 18th Judicial District.

Judge Jauch received an average rating of 4.22 of a possible 5 on the questionnaire. Translated into percentages, the ratings on the sections are as follows:

Professional ability	84.6%
Integrity and fairness	82.4%
Judicial temperament	86.8%
Industriousness	87.8%
Decisiveness and procedural fairness	83.6%
Social awareness	81.6%

Some respondents expressed concern about certain behavior of Judge Jauch might be considered inappropriate for the courtroom. Judge Jauch addressed this issue in the interview with the Committee, saying that he tries to make the courtroom experience less formidable to those who appear there. This judge was regarded by respondents as smart, compassionate, and sensible.

The Committee's recommendation is based on the responses to the questionnaire, the informal interview, and reference to rating by the Arapahoe County Bar Association.



Eighteenth Judicial District  
Judges Review Panel

18-4

Judge Reviewed: Arapahoe County Court Judge Ralph C. Taylor

Panel Recommendation: Do Not Retain

The panel, in a unanimous vote, regrets that it cannot recommend that Judge Taylor be retained as a County Court Judge in Arapahoe County. The reasons for this recommendation are as follows:

1. Judge Taylor's performance was evaluated four years ago by a predecessor of the current panel in preparation for a retention election. That panel found that it could not make a recommendation either in favor of or against retaining Judge Taylor in office. Of all the judges reviewed in preparation for this election and the last two elections, Judge Taylor has been the only judge who has not received a positive recommendation from the panels involved. The current panel feels that Judge Taylor has had ample time to improve his performance since his last review and that this failure to improve is conspicuous and unacceptable.

2. In our opinion poll of Judge Taylor's performance and in the opinion poll conducted by the Arapahoe County Bar Association, Judge Taylor received far and away a greater number of votes against retention than any other judge. The results of the Arapahoe County Bar Association poll showed 82 responses with 57 in favor of retention and 25 opposed to retention. The panel opinion poll showed 39 responses with 21 votes in favor retention and 18 votes against retention. The remarkably large number of votes against retention cast in these polls is a clear indicator of a serious problem with this judge's performance and cannot be ignored.

3. The panel conducted a personal interview with Judge Taylor after reviewing his biography and the results of the opinion poll. Judge Taylor's principal concern appeared to be maintaining control in his courtroom. He indicated that one of his main goals is to retire after his next term in office. During the interview, the judge appeared to be both dispirited and intimidated. He displayed little, if any, enthusiasm for safeguarding the rights of the parties appearing before him or the improvement of the legal system.

Taken as a whole, the information which the panel received regarding Judge Taylor's performance was most disturbing. Since the voters in the 18th Judicial District have a choice of whether to retain in office a judge whose performance can at best be described as mediocre or to vote against his retention and open the position for appointment by the Governor of a person who could improve the judicial system rather than simply perpetuate it, the panel recommends against retention of Judge Taylor.

Denver Post  
10/26/88

# Arapahoe judge's removal proposed

By George Lane

Denver Post Staff Writer

An Arapahoe County group that rates judges recommended Monday that one County Court judge be removed from the bench by voters next month.

County Judge Ralph Taylor, recommended for rejection by the citizens task force of the Colorado Judicial Institute, has received a great deal of negative publicity in recent years over his feuds with prosecutors and the district attorney's office.

The results of a judges poll by the Jefferson County Bar Association also were released Monday, but that group declined to make recommendations.

## Figures given

However, all Jefferson County judges were recommended for retention by 60 percent or more of the 110 or so lawyers polled. They are District Judges Henry Nieto, Gasper Perricone, Michael Villano and Christopher Munch, and County Judges Robert Morris, Francis Jackson, Linda Palmieri and James Demlow.

Recommended for retention in the 18th Judicial District — which includes Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert and Lincoln counties — are District Judge Joyce Steinhardt, the chief judge of the district, and County Judges Alan Beckman, Richard Jauch and James McCrum.

The Arapahoe County citizens' group voted unanimously to recommend that Taylor be ousted.

"Four years ago, the panel was unable to recommend FOR retention, but did not recommend AGAINST," the group wrote in the Taylor recommendation. "No changes in performance are evident, and the failure to improve is unacceptable."

In November 1986, he was criticized for reducing a man's bond from \$20,000 to \$5,000, making it possible for the man's release from jail. The man, accused of beating his estranged wife, had been arrested after being found under his wife's bed with a loaded rifle.

## Another release

A month later, Taylor again came under fire when he allowed another man to be released from jail on a personal recognizance bond. That suspect had been arrested for throwing his girlfriend down a flight of stairs.

The judge also was threatened with a contempt of court citation by a District Court judge in 1987, and was criticized this year when he adjourned court in the middle of the day because the courtroom was too hot for him.