



**Superior Court of California, County of Alameda
René C. Davidson Courthouse
1225 Fallon Street
Oakland, California 94612**

July 24, 2009

For Immediate Release

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
ANNOUNCES NEW JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP**

Oakland: The Alameda County Superior Court announces its biennial change in judicial leadership taking effect January 1, 2010.

Judge Jon R. Rolefson becomes Presiding Judge and Judge C. Don Clay is the new Assistant Presiding Judge. Both will serve two-year terms.

The California Rules of Court, which govern the State's judicial system, requires a presiding judge for courts that have two or more judges. Presiding judges have the critical responsibility of providing leadership and direction for all aspects of the court. Selected by their peers, presiding judges must demonstrate management and administrative ability, experience and familiarity with a variety of trial court assignments (criminal and civil), the ability to motivate and educate other judicial officers and court personnel, and the ability to assign judges based on their strengths and the public's needs. Presiding judges may serve on or cause to be created various committees, work groups and other problem solving tools to meet the court's needs.

Presiding Judge-elect Rolefson replaces Judge Yolanda N. Northridge, whose term as presiding judge concludes on December 31, 2009. He will lead the court's 85 judicial officers and oversee the operations of 14 court facilities and an annual budget of \$115 million. He serves as a member on a number of court committees including the Executive Committee, Criminal Committee, Bench Bar Committee, Traffic Committee, and the Criminal Oversight Committee.

Governor Pete Wilson appointed Judge Rolefson as a Municipal Court Judge on November 22, 1996 to the Oakland-Piedmont-Emeryville Judicial District. He was elevated to the Superior Court in 1998 through the unification of Municipal and Superior Courts. Judge Rolefson received his bachelor of arts in economics from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1970. He received his *juris doctorate* from University of California, Hastings School of Law in San Francisco in 1973 and served as deputy District Attorney in Alameda County until 1980. He worked in a private law practice in Oakland and Pleasanton from 1980 until his appointment as a Municipal Court judge in 1996.

Judge Rolefson is currently the Supervising Judge at the Hayward Hall of Justice and the Assistant Presiding Judge for the Superior Court of California, Alameda County. Demonstrating leadership in the court, Judge Rolefson has served as Executive Criminal Judge and presided over a Criminal Trial department and ancillary calendars including Felony Law & Motion and Unlawful Detainers.

Governor Gray Davis appointed Judge Clay to the Superior Court bench on October 3, 2003. Judge Clay currently presides over a criminal trial calendar at the René C. Davidson Courthouse in Oakland. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a *juris doctorate* degree from the University of California, Hastings School of Law. Judge Clay practiced both criminal and civil law in Alameda County from 1981 to 2002 where he handled a broad range of criminal cases from minor misdemeanors to serious felonies and white-collar crime. His civil litigation practice included business disputes, entertainment litigation, and personal injury cases on behalf of both plaintiffs and defendants. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Clay worked in the office of the United States Attorney for the Northern District of California from 2002 to 2003. As the number two person in the office, he oversaw all of the criminal and civil work of the office and served as the Acting United States Attorney in the absence of the United States Attorney. Judge Clay has most recently served as a felony criminal trial judge with an ancillary assignment presiding over the Elder Abuse calendar on Fridays. He has served as an Executive Judge and currently is chair of the Court Security Committee as well as a member of the Executive and Criminal Committees.

For further information, please contact James Brighton, Bureau Chief of the Planning, Research, Court Services, and Public Information Bureau, at (510) 891-6212.