

Two Thurston County judges to retire in 2017

Judges Chris Wickham and Gary Tabor don't plan to run for re-election

Tabor supports deputy prosecutor John Skinder to fill his seat

Skinder will be on the November 2016 ballot



Judge Chris Wickham laughs while presiding over Adoption Day in November, 2014. Steve Bloom File, 2014 Staff photographer



Judge Gary Tabor presides over Thurston County Superior Court. Steve Bloom File, 2014 The Olympian

By Amelia Dickson

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Two Thurston County judges aren't planning to seek re-election when their terms expire in a year, and a deputy prosecutor has announced he will run for one of the positions.

Superior Court Judge Chris Wickham announced that he plans to retire when his term ends Jan. 6, 2017. He was first appointed as a court commissioner in 1991, and was elected to the bench in 2004.

Wickham is currently assigned to the county's Family and Juvenile Court, where he hears divorce, custody, domestic violence, juvenile and child welfare cases. He is a member of the Board of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and is a faculty member at the Washington State Judicial College.

Superior Court Judge Gary Tabor also plans to retire once his term ends next January.

Senior Deputy Prosecutor John Skinder plans to run for the seat, with Tabor's endorsement. Tabor hasn't publicly announced his retirement, but he has written a letter of support for Skinder's candidacy.

"I believe that our bench needs judges with varying qualifications and experience. (Skinder's) experience in, and understanding of, the criminal justice system is a qualification that will, I believe, allow (him) to step right in and take my position with minimal disruption," Tabor wrote.

Skinder has worked for the Thurston County Prosecutor's Office since 2000, and during that time he has led the office's special victims trial team, the domestic violence prosecution team and the juvenile prosecution unit. He also has served as the lead attorney in the appellate unit.

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