

IAN WHEELLES

Letter of Interest
Federal District Court of Alaska

January 29, 2025

Dear Sen. Murkowski:

This letter is to express my interest in appointment to the Federal District Court. Attached please find my résumé. If there is additional information or materials you would like to review, please let me know. I have also submitted my application to Senator Sullivan through the process he has announced.

In brief, I am a lifelong Alaskan. I was born in Anchorage and have lived here for 42 years, absent only for one year of college in Chicago and three years of law school in Idaho. This is my home. The people I serve at work are my neighbors, and it would be an honor to serve our great state on the federal bench. For the past 2 ½ years I have served on the superior court in Anchorage. Prior to that I was in private practice for 14 years, nearly all of which were spent managing my own law office. I maintained a general practice, from small business and civil litigation to estate planning, criminal defense, personal injury, and all areas of family law. On the bench, I currently have a primarily civil docket, but I also co-preside over a criminal substance abuse probation court, as well as serving as backup for the weekly criminal competency calendar.

I thoroughly enjoy the work of a judge. It is challenging, humbling, and consistently rewarding. It was not a career aspiration of mine to seek the bench. In truth, in law school I thought I wanted to run for governor someday. But my heart is always focused first on helping others, and ensuring access to justice for those who might feel it out of reach. Early on I found my calling serving everyday working people who needed attorneys but their means were modest. Eventually, I gravitated more to the middle of the courtroom, desiring less to argue one side, and more to land on the right outcome—whether it was where my client was standing or not. As a judge I have that freedom. I can focus on ensuring that the law is upheld, that all parties are treated fairly, and that rights are protected.

In criminal litigation, the judge must ensure that rules are followed, defendants are treated as presumed innocent until proven guilty, victims are kept apprised and given a voice, the public is

protected, and resolution must be timely. In Alaska presently, and Anchorage particularly, the saying “justice delayed is justice denied” is truly impacting all sides in criminal cases. As judges, we must be vigilant to address the causes of delay, hold attorneys and parties accountable, and facilitate speedy, but fair, justice.

In civil litigation, delay is just as damaging. In fact, often the lack of a speedy trial “right” akin to that of the Sixth Amendment, allows for delay in civil cases that significantly harms one or both parties. In my current civil caseload, I am very mindful of this and would be that much more so in federal court.

There are many issues facing Alaskans today, both as individuals and collectively, that require action by the courts to resolve, protect, and further our interests. I believe my experience serving Alaskans as an attorney for 14 years and as a superior court judge for 2+ years now have given me the perspective and understanding necessary to serve well on the federal bench. Like many other lifelong Alaskans, I am an incredibly hard worker, energized by daunting challenges, and unfazed by the storms that wash over me. I am blessed to serve on the state bench today, with the support of my family, neighbors, and colleagues. I would be honored to serve our state and country on the federal bench if I am called to that important work.

Thank you for considering me and for taking the time. I know you are busy and I do not take the opportunity for granted.



Very truly yours,
Ian Wheelles

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Work History

- SEPTEMBER 2022 TO PRESENT *ANCHORAGE SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE*
- Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct (2024-present)
 - Child Support Rules Committee (2015-present) – current chair
 - PACE probation court for substance abuse (2023 to present)
- OCTOBER 2009 TO AUGUST 2022 *LAW OFFICE OF IAN WHEELLES*
- Owner; managed five associate attorneys
- JANUARY 2008 TO DECEMBER 2009 *LAW OFFICE OF DAN ALLAN & ASSOCIATES*
- Associate attorney, Of Counsel
- MAY 2006 TO AUGUST 2006 *ANCHORAGE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE*
- Summer intern; managed vice caseload; bail hearings, sentencing, and one jury trial
- JULY 2002 TO 2010 *SPENARD BUILDERS SUPPLY*
- Shipping dept; truck driver, forklift operator, and snow plow crew
- SEPTEMBER 2002 TO APRIL 2003 *UAA*
- Athlete Tutor
- JUNE 1999 TO JULY 2002 *BILL'S DISTRIBUTING, INC*
- Merchandiser

Education

- JURIS DOCTOR, MAY 2007 *UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO COLLEGE OF LAW*
- Dean's List
 - Idaho National Moot Court Competition Team 2006
 - McNichols Moot Court Competition 2005
 - Volunteer IRS tax trip team leader to Rural Alaskan villages Spring Break 2007
 - UI Residence Hall Assn. President (2006-07); Whitman Hall President (2004-06)
- BACHELOR OF ARTS, POLITICAL SCIENCE, MAY 2004 *UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE*
- Dean's List; Pi Sigma Alpha honor society
 - UA Scholar
 - Student Showcase presenting finalist, April 2003
- AUGUST 2001 TO MAY 2002 *ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY*
- Camras/NEXT Scholar (full tuition award)
 - Scarlet Hawks Varsity Baseball (scholarship)

Activities and Service

- ANCHORAGE YOUTH COURT
- Youth member; former board member; class instructor; guest speaker
- AK NETWORK ON DV AND SEXUAL ASSAULT
- Pro Bono attorney
- ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES CORP.
- Pro Bono attorney
- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY LEGAL CLINIC
- Attorney/judge volunteer
- ALASKA BAR ASSOCIATION
- Bar exam proctor (2009-22)
- UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE
- Founded/funded scholarship (2009-present)
- ROYAL FAMILY KIDS CAMP
- Foster kids summer camp counselor
- CHANGEPOINT CHURCH
- Elder board member (2017-2022)
 - Young marrieds group leader (2011-13)
- PULLMAN CHURCH OF CHRIST
- College class teacher, group leader (2005-07)
- TURNAGAIN CHURCH OF CHRIST
- High School class teacher, group leader (2002-04)
- COOPER LANDING RIFLE & SPORTSMAN'S CLUB
- Member
- ALASKA ADULT BASEBALL LEAGUE
- Former board member (and player)
- ANCHORAGE LIBRARY FOUNDATION
- Former board member
- TURNAGAIN ELEMENTARY LIBRARY
- Guys Read volunteer