

Perspectives on the Bench and Bar of Thurston County Since Statehood

A Program in Recognition of Washington's 125th Anniversary of Statehood

November 14, 2014

Temple of Justice



Speakers: Retired Chief Justice Gerry Alexander and Retired Superior Court Judge Carol Fuller

Moderated by Christopher Lanese, Board Member of Thurston County Bar Association and
Government Lawyers Bar Association

Co-sponsored by The Washington State Supreme Court, Government Lawyers Bar Association,
Thurston County Bar Association, and Washington Women Lawyers – Capitol Chapter

About the Speakers

Chief Justice Gerry Alexander – Justice Alexander earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Washington in 1964 after having served as a lieutenant in the United States Army Infantry. Justice Alexander practiced law for nine years in private practice in Olympia until he was appointed to the Superior Court for Thurston and Mason Counties. In 1985, Justice Alexander became a judge on the Court of Appeals, Division Two, where he served until his election to the Washington Supreme Court in 1994. Before his retirement from the Court in 2011, Justice Alexander served as Chief Justice for nine years, the longest tenure of any Chief Justice in Washington history. Justice Alexander currently practices law as Of Counsel to Bean Gentry Wheeler & Peternell PLLC, and is active in the community, including serving on the board of TVW and co-founding the Washington Courts Historical Society.

Judge Carol Fuller – Judge Fuller earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Washington in 1954. After living in France and Germany, where her husband worked for the U.S. Department of Defense, and then returning to Olympia, Judge Fuller began her legal practice in 1969 with Legal Services in Tacoma. Two years later, Judge Fuller joined her husband, Herb Fuller, in private practice to found Fuller & Fuller, an Olympia law firm that continues to serve clients to this day. In 1979, Judge Fuller became a Superior Court Judge for Thurston and Mason Counties, the first woman elected to such a position outside of King County. After serving with distinction on the bench and retiring as a judge in 1993, Judge Fuller returned to private practice at the firm she helped found. Judge Fuller is now retired from the practice of law.

Program Planning Committee

Justice Charles Wiggins

Sylvia Campbell, Judicial Assistant to Justice Charles Wiggins

Christopher Lanese, Board Member of Thurston County Bar Association and Government Lawyers Bar Association

Alicia Young, Board President of Washington Women Lawyers – Capitol Chapter

Information Regarding Former Thurston County Superior Court Judges

Courtesy of Thurston County Superior Court Judge Gary Tabor



Hon. Mason Irwin
1889-1891

Judge Irwin lived in Lewis County, but
Thurston County was removed from the
Thurston, Mason, Chehalis, Lewis Judicial
District in 1891
Continued serving in Lewis, Pacific,
Wahkiakum Judicial District until 1892



Hon. Joseph V. Robinson
1891-1892

Appointed by Governor Elisha Perry in March
1891
Resigned before standing for election



Hon. M.J. Gordon
1892-1895

Appointed at age 34 and ran successfully in
1892
Elected to Supreme Court in 1894, where he
served until June 1, 1900

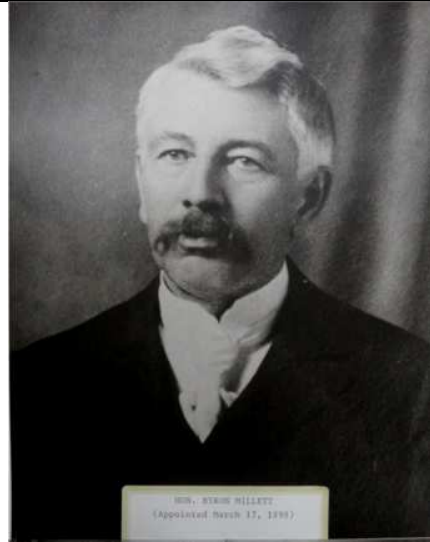


Hon. Thomas M. Reed, Jr.
1895-1897

Appointed in 1895 to fill position vacated by
Judge Gordon
Did not run for election in 1896



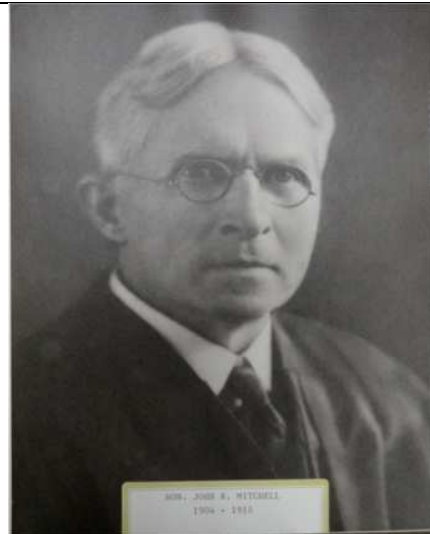
Hon. Charles N. Ayer
1897-1898
Former Mayor of Olympia and Thurston
County Prosecutor
Elected in 1896 at age 34
Died two years after elected



Hon. Byron Millett
1898-1898
Appointed March 17, 1898
Served only until next election
Sixth judge within first 9 years of statehood



Hon. Oliver V. Linn
1898-1908
Served until his death
Ran unsuccessfully for Washington Supreme
Court in 1908
Legislature created the Thurston-Mason
Judicial District in 1903



Hon. John R. Mitchell
1908-1918
Elected in Fall 1908 to seat vacated by Judge
Linn
Appointed to Washington Supreme Court to
succeed Overton G. Ellis in 1918, where he
served until 1937



Hon. Charles Ethelbert Claypool
1913-1915

Appointed when second judicial position
created for Thurston-Mason Judicial District
Resigned as Olympia City Attorney to take
appointment
Did not get nominated for ballot in 1914
primary



Hon. D.F. Wright
1915-1948

Elected at age 35 in close election in 1914
against Charles D. King. The winner was not
announced for several days. King was from
Olympia and Wright was from Shelton. The
Mason County vote was decisive, and
continued to be so in future elections.



Hon. John Wilson
1918-1950

A Republican appointed by a Democrat
(Governor Ernest Lister)
The long, concurrent terms of Judges Wright
and Wilson had a profound effect on legal
issues locally and statewide



Hon. Charles T. Wright
1948-1971

Appointed to succeed his father, D.F. Wright
Elected to Washington Supreme Court in 1970,
where he served until 1980



Hon. Raymond Clifford
1950-1964

Appointed to succeed Judge Wilson in 1950
Died suddenly in 1964 at age 75 just three
months before he planned to retire



Hon. Hewitt A. Henry
1964-1984

Appointed by Governor Albert Rosselini to
succeed Judge Clifford



Hon. Frank E. Baker
1968-1984

Appointed by Governor Dan Evans to fill
newly created third judicial position for
Thurston-Mason Judicial District
Judge Baker's father was a court reporter for
Department 1 for 51 years; his brother was a
court reporter for Department 2 for 18 years



Hon. Robert J. Doran
1971-1993

Appointed by Governor Dan Evans to succeed
Judge Wright; selected out of nine applicants
First Assistant Attorney General appointed to a
Superior Court in Washington State



Hon. Gerry L. Alexander
1973-1985

Appointed by Governor Dan Evans to newly
created fourth judicial position for Thurston-
Mason Judicial District

One of six judicial positions created across
state in 1973

See biography at beginning of this document
for more information

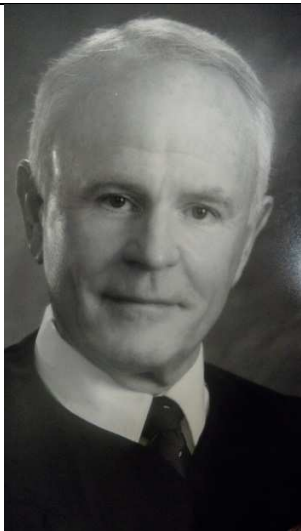


Hon. Carol A. Fuller
1979-1993

Appointed by Governor Dixy Lee Ray to
newly created fifth judicial position in
Thurston-Mason Judicial District

First woman to serve as judge in Thurston-
Mason Judicial District

See biography at beginning of this document
for more information



Hon. Daniel J. Berschauer
1984-2004

Elected to succeed Judge Henry in 1984
Former King County Deputy Prosecuting
Attorney

Served as Thurston County District Court
Commissioner and Judge from 1976-1984



Hon. Paula Casey
1984-2012

Elected to succeed Judge Baker
Previously served as Thurston County Superior
Court Commissioner

In 1984 election, three of the five judicial
positions were open seats



Hon. Richard Strophy
1985-2009

Elected to succeed Judge Alexander
Former Thurston County Deputy Prosecuting
Attorney
Served as Thurston County District Court
Judge from 1982-1984



Hon. Thomas McPhee
1990-2012

Appointed to newly created sixth judicial
position
Long-time local attorney



Hon. Richard D. Hicks
1993-2010

Elected to succeed Judge Doran
Previously served as Thurston County Superior
Court Commissioner
The Thurston-Mason Judicial District
separated into separate Superior Courts in 1997



Hon. Christine A. Pomeroy
1993-2012

Elected to succeed Judge Fuller
Previously served as Thurston County Deputy
Prosecuting Attorney and Olympia Municipal
Court Judge



Hon. Lisa L. Sutton

2010-2014

Appointed by Governor Christine Gregoire to
succeed Judge Hicks

Long-time Assistant Attorney General
Elected to Court of Appeals, Division Two in
2014 without opposition; appointed by
Governor Jay Inslee to begin term in October
2014

Current Thurston County Superior Court Judges

Hon. Gary R. Tabor (Elected 1996)

Hon. H. Christopher Wickham (Elected 2004)

Hon. Anne Hirsch (Elected 2006)

Hon. Carol Murphy (Elected 2008)

Hon. James Dixon (Appointed 2012)

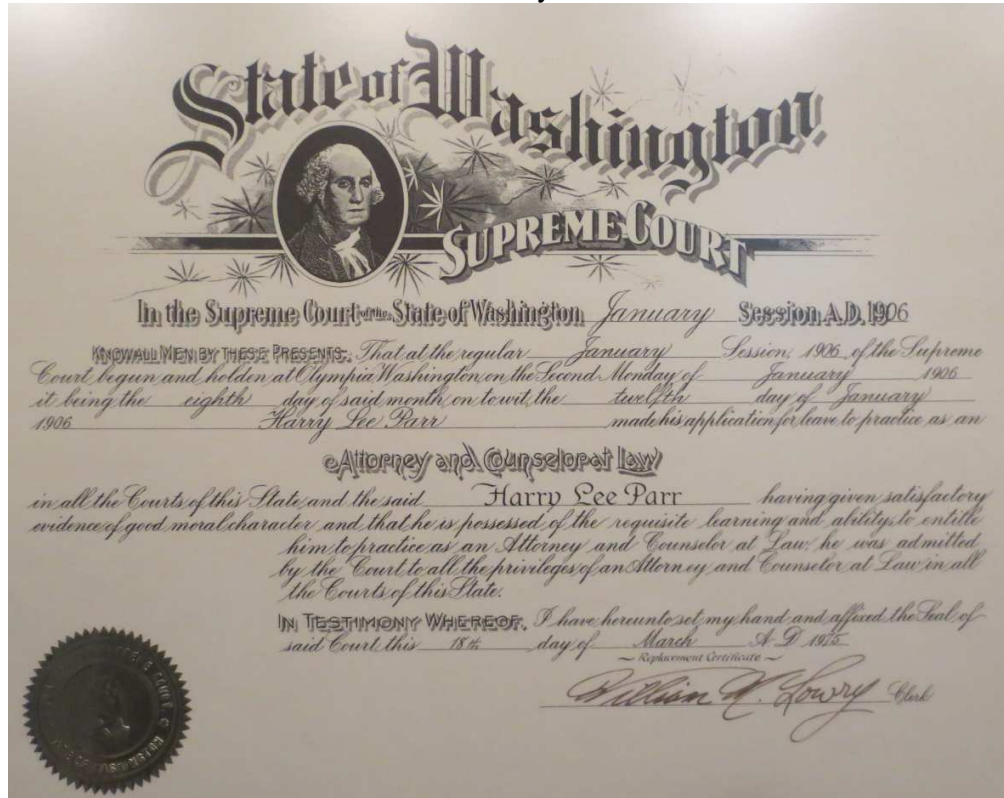
Hon. Christine Schaller (Elected 2012)

Hon. Erik D. Price (Elected 2012)

Hon. Mary Sue Wilson (Appointed 2014)

Admission Certificate & Photo of Olympia Attorney Harry L. Parr (Early 1900s)

Courtesy of John Parr, member of family continuously practicing law in Thurston County for over 100 years



Article from The Olympia News Discussing History Of Thurston County Courthouses

Courtesy of Mike Lynch, member of family continuously practicing law in Thurston County for over 100 years

Golden Jubilee Edition

THE OLYMPIA NEWS

1889 - 1939

THURSTON COUNTY—One of First Organized in Washington

Although Thurston county was not the first municipality created in the northern Oregon country, before it became the Washington Territory, nevertheless it was the first county to be established on Puget Sound, being taken from Lewis county, the first known county in the area. But to Thurston county belongs the historical distinction of being the first territorial seat of government, with Olympia selected by the first governor, Isaac I. Stevens as the capital.

Thurston county was formed in 1852, and at the time the name of Simmons was favored for its name, but the inopportune death of delegate in congress Samuel R. Thurston, returning from Washington, D. C., prompted the legislature to honor the latter and so it was named Thurston.

In June, 1852, the residents held their first county election, naming A. A. Denny, later prominently identified with the growth and development of Seattle, S. S. Ford and David Shelton, the first county commissioners. Mr. Shelton later founded the city of Shelton. A. J. Simmons was elected sheriff; A. M. Poe, clerk; D. R. Bigelow, treasurer, and R. S. Badley, assessor. Mr. Shelton was designated judge of the county commissioners' court.

Thurston county has had four court houses since its inception. The first was a frame structure.

The second was the west wing of the present old capitol building, this being erected by the county, but sold in 1903 to the state for use as a capitol. The third was a substantial two-story Tenino sandstone building on the corner of Fourth and Washington streets, which was sold and later razed when the county, in 1930, built the splendid administrative building on Capitol Way, between Twelfth and Thirteenth streets, facing the state capitol group, at a cost of \$350,000.

Thurston county's officialdom today comprises the following personnel:

Superior Court Judges, also serving Mason county, John M. Wilson and D. F. Wright.

County Commissioners, Ray Cruikshank, second district, chairman; Frank N. Palmer, third district, and John Maguire, first district.

County Clerk, Ellis C. Ayer. Auditor, Bush Baker. Treasurer, Ruby Swan Young. Assessor, R. W. Salter.

Prosecuting Attorney and Coroner, Smith Troy.

Sheriff, L. C. Huntamer. Superintendent of Schools, W. E. McGuire.

County Engineer, Clarence B. Shain.

Justice of Peace, S. P. Lehman.

Constable, M. H. Burnett.

Health Officer, S. P. Lehman.

County Agricultural Agent, C. A. Smith.

Fire Warden, Ohas. Roundtree.

Justice of the Peace, Van R. Hinkle.

Commissioners Have Big Job

The direct handling of Thurston county affairs running into millions of dollars each year is no small matter, and this is just what faces the county commissioners, of which Ray Cruikshank, Yelm, is the chairman, assisted by Commissioners Frank Palmer of Rochester and John Maguire of Olympia.

When one considers that these men must supervise the expenditure of a vast sum as well as



L. F. Huntamer
Sheriff



Ray Cruikshank
Co. Commissioner



Smith Troy
Prosecuting Atty.

looking after the roads and bridges of the county, it is realized that their work is one of considerable import. So many matters command the daily attention of the chairman of the board of commissioners that it is necessary for Mr. Cruikshank to spend practically all his time in the office, while to Mr. Palmer and Mr. Maguire fall the duty of looking after roads and bridges in the outlying districts of the cities.

All three men are tillers of the soil and as such fully realize the

proper representation in the handling of the big problem faced by the board of commissioners.

Sheriff Shows Efficiency

In the minds of some people there appears to be an idea that it doesn't take much of an official to carry on a county department, but in the case of sheriff it must be a man of more than ordinary bravery, tact, and one with some knowledge of law. Thurston county has such a man in L. C. Huntamer, a resident of the county for many years, and one that probably has as wide an

acquaintance as any. Since taking over the duties of the chief peace official of the county Sheriff Huntamer has easily proven that he has a careful check of all affairs, as well as having been able to select a corps of efficient and equally careful deputies and assistants. His term so far has been filled with more than the ordinary number of investigations of a very serious nature, all of which have resulted in bringing before the bar of justice a number of men and at least one woman, resulting, with the aid of the prosecuting attorney, in convictions and sentences ranging from paying the supreme penalty to that of imprisonment in the state penitentiary from 25 years to life.

Conscientious and Alert Official

In Smith Troy, one of the youngest prosecutors ever to be elected to office in Thurston county, if not in all Washington, the public has been convinced that it has an official who is conscientious and alert.

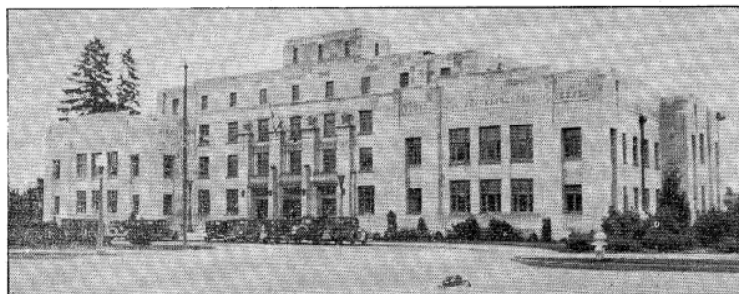
Mr. Troy is a son of the late Preston M. Troy, who, in earlier days was himself a county prosecutor of this municipality.

Smith Troy was for four years deputy prosecutor under his brother, Harold P. Troy. It was while in this capacity that he directed the prosecution in the famous Jacobson murder case, bringing about the conviction of two men and a woman, the men paying the supreme penalty while the woman is serving life imprisonment.

Two kidnaping cases of considerable import have fallen to the lot of Prosecutor Troy, one that of a taxicab driver being kidnaped by a sailor, with a conviction and life sentence resulting. Following this came the Dorothy Bardon murder case, with a conviction and long term prison sentence for the woman.

But the most noted case was the Berry kidnaping affair, in which a prominent Olympia doctor and three companions kid-

Thurston County Court House



road problems of the various localities, and although they cannot, because of the lack of funds, entirely meet the requests and demands of the farmers, still they make as good a "try" at it as any other county in the state. It is no easy matter for the commissioners to hear delegations from time to time seeking road improvements, and have to politely inform the petitioners that there is just so much money that can be devoted to this or that particular project, and the commissioners can go no further.

Since the present commissioners' regime took office the road situation in the county has improved considerably, and with the increased and more modern road-making equipment purchased a few months ago, greater advancement is sure to be made and at a particular saving to the county over the use of the old style machinery and considerable manpower work.

The selection, by the voters, of these men, Mr. Cruikshank from the Yelm district; Mr. Palmer from the Rochester section, and Mr. Maguire from Olympia, gives the several sections of the county

acquaintance as any. Since taking over the duties of the chief peace official of the county Sheriff Huntamer has easily proven that he has a careful check of all affairs, as well as having been able to select a corps of efficient and equally careful deputies and assistants. His term so far has been filled with more than the ordinary number of investigations of a very serious nature, all of which have resulted in bringing before the bar of justice a number of men and at least one woman, resulting, with the aid of the prosecuting attorney, in convictions and sentences ranging from paying the supreme penalty to that of imprisonment in the state penitentiary from 25 years to life.

Sheriff Huntamer has shown more than ordinary carefulness in the handling of all matters, criminal and civil, so that neither his department nor the county might become entangled in any heavy financial burden, and the conduct of his office has been with a view to economy as well as efficiency.

The taxpayers can well feel satisfied with the administration of Sheriff Huntamer.

naped and tortured an auto dealer. It was probably the hardest fought case in the annals of the county. Convictions with life imprisonment resulted, and despite every effort to secure a new trial, the men are now in state prison.

And a third kidnaping case is to be tried this term by the prosecutor.

But prosecution of criminal actions is not all that the prosecuting attorney faces in county affairs. Mr. Troy has also been quite active in looking after the county's civil matters resulting in making substantial financial savings to Thurston county.

Because of his success in his present capacity friends of Mr. Troy are urging his selection as democratic nominee for attorney general of Washington in 1940, believing he is particularly qualified to adequately look after the state's interests in this position.

Able and Trustworthy

Because of her association with county affairs over a period of years, in various official capacities, it is doubtful if there is any one more conversant with these affairs or more able or trust-