

California Courts News Transcript

Title: Chief Justice Confirmation Hearing

Date: August 26, 2010

The California Supreme Court was the scene of an historic event on this day. The public was invited to witness the confirmation hearing for the governor's nominee to be the next chief justice of California. The crowd spilled over into an annex.

Hon. Ronald M. George, Chief Justice of California *"Good morning ladies and gentlemen, this is the public meeting on judicial appointments."*

Governor Schwarzenegger's nominee is Tani Cantil-Sakauye, currently serving on the Third District Court of Appeal in Sacramento. The presiding justice of that court told the three commissioners that Sakauye is an independent thinker.

Hon. Arthur Scotland, 3rd Appellate District, Sacramento *"Tani is always respectful, always reasonable, but she's always always decisive."*

Justice Vance Raye has been Sakauye's colleague in Sacramento for the last five years.

Hon. Vance Raye, 3rd Appellate District, Sacramento *"I have come to appreciate even more the brilliance of her mind, the solidity of her judgment anchored as it is in common sense and a firm understanding of how the world works and how people operate and with an everlasting commitment to the rule of law."*

Los Angeles Judge Terry Friedman said that she's eminently qualified to lead the branch, in large part because of her leadership role on the Judicial Council.

Hon. Terry Friedman, Los Angeles Superior Court (ret.) *"Tani possesses the intelligence, the experience and the personal skills to maintain and deepen our existing positive relationships with the governor and the legislature."*

Former Acting Lieutenant Governor Mona Pasquil spoke highly about the Justice's efforts outside of the courtroom in her community.

Mona Pasquil, Former Acting Lieutenant Governor *"Her personal qualities are what make her the right choice for chief justice."*

Attorney Michael Arkelian pointed out that she's even tempered and respectful to all; and she has excellent organizational and managerial abilities.

Michael Arkelian *"I have always found her to be efficient and extremely well organized both as an attorney and as a judge."*

The presiding judge from the Sacramento Superior Court said his colleagues are unanimously in favor of the nomination.

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Hon. Steve White, Sacramento Superior Court Presiding Judge *“Without any reservation and with the greatest enthusiasm the Sacramento Superior Court strongly supports Justice Cantil-Sakauye.”*

Representatives from the Philippine-American community added their endorsement with several speakers. Finally, the report from the JNE Commission. They evaluate the qualifications of judicial candidates.

Alice Salvo, Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation *“The JNE Commission found Justice Sakauye to be exceptionally well qualified. She is immensely respected for her objectivity, her impartiality, her good judgment and lack of bias, her common sense and her decisiveness”*

The commissioners then asked a whole series of pointed questions, inviting the candidate to present her views and qualifications in her own words. She acknowledged that the Chief Justice’s job is a difficult one.

Hon. Tani Cantil-Sakauye, 3rd Appellate District, Sacramento *“There have been many descriptions of this job, and I read them all, but none of them said easy.”*

But she said she was confident that any internal challenges could be worked out, as the branch works its way through its “growing pains.” In the end, the appointment was confirmed.

Hon. Ronald M. George, Chief Justice of California *“I’ll inquire whether the members of the commission are ready to vote and if so how do you vote? I vote to confirm. I vote to confirm, I do too. The Commission on Judicial Appointments hereby confirms her nomination. Congratulations Justice Sakauye.”*

Hon. Tani Cantil-Sakauye, 3rd Appellate District, Sacramento *“I can’t speak enough to how grateful and full my heart is.”*

California voters will have the final word. Justice Sakauye’s name will be on the ballot in November. If she’s approved, Justice Sakauye will be sworn in in January.

I’m Leanne Kozak reporting in San Francisco for California Courts News.