Three Circuit and One District Court Judgeships
Of 7 Appointees Go to UH Law School Alumni

Three Richardson Law School alumni have been sworn in as judges in the First Circuit Court in Honolulu in recent days, and a fourth was sworn in on the Big Island as a District Court judge in the Third Circuit in Hilo.

The new First Circuit judges include: Ronald G. Johnson '89, Trish K. Morikawa '95, and Kevin A. Souza '97 on O'ahu, and Jeffrey Hawk ‘97 is the new Hawai‘i Island District Court judge. (Jack Tonaki, also sworn in on O'ahu, graduated from Hastings Law School.)

The new appointments bring to 29 the number of Hawai‘i judges and justices trained at the William S. Richardson School of Law, out of a total of 80 throughout the islands. The Legislature recently funded two new judgeships, which will bring the judicial total to 82, according to a spokesperson for the Hawai‘i State Judiciary.

Included in the Richardson alumni who are currently Hawai‘i judges are: Supreme Court Associate Justice Sabrina McKenna '82; ICA Chief Judge Lisa Ginoza ‘89; and ICA Associate Judges Alexa Fujise ‘80 and Katherine Leonard '91.

Law School Dean Avi Soifer stated, “These judicial appointments underscore the high quality of our alumni and the vital role they play as lawyers and leaders throughout our state. He added, “This was an important part of the reason that Chief Justice Richardson and his allies fought hard to launch our Law School.”

BACKGROUND:

- Ronald Johnson was an attorney advisor for the Transportation Security Administration, co-chief of the Violent Crime and Drug Section in the U.S. Attorney’s office, and a Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu.
• Trish Morikawa served as a District Court judge prior to her new appointment, and she was also a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Deputy Attorney General, and a lawyer at Gallagher Kane Amai.

• Kevin Souza has been a Family Court judge and a per diem Family Court judge, a solo practitioner, a litigation attorney with McCorriston Miho Miller Mukai, a Deputy Public Defender, and Chief of Staff in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

• Jeffrey Hawk has been a District Family Court per diem judge on both Hawai‘i Island and O‘ahu, a solo practitioner in the Volcano area of the Big Island, a litigator handling criminal cases with Hawk, Sing & Ignacio, and a Deputy Public Defender.