



HONORABLE NANCY PORTER Fourth Judicial District, Department 1

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Elko native Judge Nancy Porter is the first woman to serve as a district judge in Elko County; she isn't, however, the first of her family to spend time in her courtroom. Recently Porter presided over a naturalization ceremony. She and her staff undertook the task with enthusiasm: arranging for speakers, music and the participation of an area Boy Scout troop. After all, Porter's courtroom would have a place in the family histories of 20 brand new U.S. citizens. As it turns out, it already had a place in Porter's family history.

"In the course of preparing for the ceremony, I discovered that my grandfather became a citizen in this same courtroom in 1937," she explained. "Performing the ceremony was a very meaningful experience for me and was one of the few happy things that happen in a courtroom."

EDUCATION AND LEGAL CAREER

Porter received a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Nevada, Reno and her law degree from Willamette University College of Law in Oregon. She spent several years representing the Oregon Department of Corrections as an Assistant Attorney General with the Oregon Department of Justice. In 1991, Porter returned to Nevada where she worked as an associate attorney

PROFILE

for Puccinelli & Puccinelli before starting her own practice, which she ran for nearly 20 years.

In December 2011, Governor Brian Sandoval appointed Porter to the Fourth Judicial District Court bench. Porter maintained her position following a primary election in June 2012. She says keeping up with a heavy caseload while learning the job has been a challenge. At present, she has approximately 2,500 open cases. Fortunately, Porter also has a terrific staff to help her stay on top of things.

JOB SECURITY

In addition to her work on the bench, Porter oversees the Elko County Felony DUI Diversion Program and is actively involved in the Nevada Supreme Court's Court Improvement Program, which assists children in state custody. She has also been working with her colleagues in the Fourth Judicial District to create and implement security in the courthouse.

"We have used funds collected from court security fees to make capital improvements," Porter explained. "We were also able to persuade the Elko County Commission to include, in their budget, salaries for deputies who will provide courthouse security." If all goes as planned, the new security should be in place by the end of the summer.

COURTLY BEHAVIOR

Porter lists dedication, preparation and punctuality as key attributes of a successful lawyer. Above all, however, she believes an attorney must be honest. "The judge and, more importantly, your clients need to know that what you say is always truthful," she said.

Porter is also impressed by attorneys who are thoroughly prepared, with a good working knowledge of both the law and the facts of their case and who aren't repetitive. She expects them to show respect, not just to the court and opposing counsel, but to those they represent and work with on a regular basis. Finally, though she says it *should* go without saying, Porter has another piece of advice for attorneys heading to her courtroom: leaving your cell phone off or at home is always good. ■