

VICTORIA S. KOLAKOWSKI

Seeking Position for: Superior Court Judge
www.kolakowskiforjudge.com

1. *If elected, what are your top priorities during your term? What would you like to accomplish and how would you go about doing so? Please be specific.*

I see three priorities for Superior Court Judges: (1) maintaining a fair court; (2) making the court more accessible to everyone, including self-represented individuals; and (3) promoting meaningful reforms to the legal system.

Language and culture can be a barrier to access to justice for immigrant communities, including APA communities in Alameda County. Translation services, while often sufficient for criminal cases due to Constitutional requirements, is often inadequate for civil and family law matters, and for self-represented individuals. I am committed to making the courts more “user-friendly” and accessible to all people without both physical barriers and those of language and culture. Written materials, instructions, etc. need to be available for all people.

In addition, I am committed to educating the public about what is happening in the courts. Many people are unaware that the court system has been negatively impacted by the budget problems, including furloughs and layoffs. Judges need to be at the forefront of bringing these issues to the public.

2. *How have you in the past and how will you in the future use your position to expand the presence and influence of Asian Pacific Americans in public policy and politics?*

Over the past two dozen years I have supported a number of APA individuals seeking elective office, including California Board of Equalization Chair Betty Yee and San Francisco Community College Director Steve Ngo, who have endorsed me in this campaign.

I am firmly committed to the courts reflecting the diversity of our county. Only 29% of the judges in Alameda County are women, and none are visibly LGBT. Only 8.7% are APA, and only one APA woman judge! I am particularly interested in mentoring and supporting young APA women lawyers who seek appointment and election to the bench.

3. *What have you done that demonstrates your commitment to and effectiveness in promoting Asian Pacific American interests in the following areas (and if you have not contributed in these areas, please discuss any area(s) in which you have made a contribution):*

- Education
- Health Care
- Civil Rights

- ***Business***

In addition to the issues mentioned above, I have worked in a number of community service roles in which I have had an impact on the APA community.

As Chair of Berkeley's Human Welfare and Community Action Commission, I presided over hearings for contracts for all of the community-based social service providers in Berkeley. I always strove to ensure that we supported a range of services, including several that focused on the Asian Pacific American community.

As a board member of the Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center, I worked hard to address social problems of the Tenderloin, which has a large APA immigrant community.

As co-chair of the board of the Transgender Law Center, I have worked closely with APA transgender leaders such as Cecilia Chung and Tamara Ching, who are supporting my campaign.

As a leader in the LGBT community, I have always worked closely with LGBT APA leaders.