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NEWS RELEASE



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ATTORNEY GENERAL TAPS ANCHORAGE DISTRICT ATTORNEY TO HEAD CRIMINAL DIVISION

(Juneau) - Attorney General Gregg Renkes announced today the appointment of Anchorage District Attorney Susan Parkes to serve as Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Division of the Department of Law. She will begin her new duties on June 2, 2003.

"Locating the Deputy Attorney General in Anchorage is an important step in the ongoing reorganization of the Department of Law. Susan brings to the job a solid understanding of the department and over 15 years of law enforcement experience. This is an example of the Administration's policy of emphasizing competence in state government, promoting the best people and giving them a chance to make a difference," Renkes said.

Parkes has served as the Anchorage DA with her responsibility for handling the prosecution of felonies and misdemeanors extending to communities in Bristol Bay and the Aleutian Chain. Prior to that, she supervised the child protection and juvenile delinquency work for the Civil Division in Anchorage, served as the lead attorney for the Medicaid Provider Fraud Unit, and worked as an assistant district attorney in Anchorage. Parkes began her legal career in Alaska in 1986 as a law clerk for the Alaska Court of Appeals, the appellate court for criminal cases in Alaska.

As Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Parkes will assist Attorney General Renkes in supervising and supporting Alaska's 13 district attorney offices and the Office of Special Prosecutions and Appeals.

"We have many talented and experienced District Attorneys across the state. Susan understands their value and is committed to traveling to their offices and providing them the support and direction they need. She will work closely with me as we look for ways to improve public safety by getting tough on crime. At the top of our agenda will be legislation to give prosecutors a fighting chance to put violent criminals behind bars and to stop the increasing level of gun violence that plagues our communities," Renkes said.

John Novak, a long-time felony prosecutor in the Anchorage DA's office, will serve as Acting District Attorney until a permanent DA is appointed. Attorney General Renkes will interview candidates for the job in June.

"I'm looking for a new Anchorage District Attorney who will provide leadership to our hard working prosecutors and who can build public confidence in our aggressive approach and new emphasis on violent crime in Anchorage," Renkes said.

Attorney General Renkes also announced that Dean Guaneli will be the new Chief Assistant Attorney General supervising the Office of Special Prosecutions and Appeals. Guaneli has worked for the Attorney General's Office since 1976 and is an experienced appellate attorney. He has handled both civil and criminal cases in the trial and appellate courts, and is currently the chief legal advisor for the departments of Public Safety and Corrections.

The Office of Special Prosecutions and Appeals represents the state in all criminal appellate proceedings and state and federal post-conviction and habeas corpus proceedings. In addition, the office handles civil litigation challenging statutes related to criminal justice such as sex offender registration, victims' rights, and physician-assisted suicide. The prosecution function in this office was previously led by Brian Clark who was recently appointed District Court Judge in Anchorage by Governor Murkowski.

"Dean has over 26 years of law enforcement experience and represents the institutional memory for the Criminal Division at the Department of Law. His legal skills, experience and knowledge of the departments of Public Safety and Corrections make him the natural choice for leading our special prosecutions and appellate practice," Renkes said.

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