

Newest Tuolumne judge a native of Stockton

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SONORA - Tuolumne County's newest judge is also a familiar face in San Joaquin, Calaveras and Amador counties.

By Dana M. Nichols SONORA - Tuolumne County's newest judge is also a familiar face in San Joaquin, Calaveras and Amador counties.

James Boscoe, 64, was born and raised in Stockton, served as a public defender there and also served as a court commissioner in Calaveras and Amador counties.

Last month, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Boscoe to the judge's seat that came open when William Polley retired after 16 years on the job. "My experience with Jim was that he was very meticulous in everything that he did," said Ann Chargin, who was assistant public defender for San Joaquin County when Boscoe worked there as an attorney in 1971 and part of 1972. "He's very self-disciplined."

Boscoe began learning those work habits almost five decades ago, thanks in part to his uncle, Donald Boscoe, who was an attorney in Stockton.

"When I was in high school, I actually worked in his law office after school," Boscoe said. At that time, Donald Boscoe's office was on the 10th floor of the Bank of America building just east of the San Joaquin County Courthouse.

Donald Boscoe was still practicing law when he died two years ago at age 99. Following his uncle's example, the younger Boscoe says he's unlikely to retire any time soon, if ever. "You can only play so much golf," Boscoe said.

Not that Boscoe doesn't like golf. He regularly plays that game, as well as racquetball, and has the physique and energy not usually associated with a desk job. He admits that Stockton was a better place when he was young for an active spirit.

"The University of the Pacific ended at the Calaveras River," Boscoe said. "We used to hunt pheasant where those buildings are now on Brookside Road."

Then came college. Boscoe earned his bachelor's degree at the University of California, Berkeley. He earned his law degree at Santa Clara School of Law. He passed the bar in 1969.

After stints with the Public Defender's Office in San Joaquin County and with a law firm in Tracy, Boscoe landed a job in November 1972 as a deputy counsel for Tuolumne County. He and his wife, Linda, have lived there ever since.

Over the years, his jobs in the Mother Lode have included prosecuting narcotics offenses for a regional task force, being a city attorney for Sonora, and in private practice specializing in family and personal injury law. For the past nine years, he was a court commissioner handling family law and child support cases in Amador, Tuolumne and Calaveras counties.

In his new position, Boscoe, a Republican, will receive an annual salary of \$149,160.

Because he focused on family law for the past decade, he's now doing a lot of reading in his new office in Sonora to get up to date on criminal law and other California laws. "This new appointment has created a bit of a learning curve for me," he said.

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