



Applying for appointment as a Provincial Court judge: a judge shares what it feels like

The BC Provincial Court website explains how lawyers can apply for appointment as a Provincial Court judge. But what is the process like for applicants? What are the challenges, the high points, and the low points? A judge who was appointed in the last few years agreed to share their impressions.

The BC Judicial Council requires lawyers seeking appointment as Provincial Court judges to submit detailed applications using an online system.

How did you find the process of preparing your written application and filing it online?

“The mechanics were simple and smooth enough, and much more efficient and earth-friendly than the traditional paper application process would have been. However, putting together the content for the application is a rather formidable task that requires you to detail almost every facet of your life!

A particularly memorable aspect of the application process was composing my response to why I was seeking a judicial appointment. That section of the application sets out competencies or skills required for judicial excellence. After reading the list, I wrote a note in the margin that said, “dream job?” because I loved the idea of using those kinds of skills every day in a public service context. I really enjoyed being able to articulate for myself and for the Judicial Council why I wanted to be a judge, and that exercise confirmed that I should take the plunge and apply.

For me, the most daunting part of the application process was reaching out to 20 people to ask if they would serve as references for me. The required references are drawn from both your professional and personal life. Mine included my mentors, mentees, employees, colleagues, clients, and friends, along with opposing counsel, mediators, and judges.

Declaring to all those people that I wanted to be a judge and asking if they would be willing to speak to a member of the Judicial Council about me and my application made me feel incredibly vulnerable. I wondered, “Will they agree to act as a reference? Will they support

me? Do they think I would be a good judge?"

My father had been telling me for several years that I should apply to be a judge. He passed away in April 2020 and I promised him before he died that I would apply. That promise helped propel me through the discomfort of approaching my references to submit my application."

After reviewing reports of investigations conducted by the BC Branch of the Canadian Bar Association and the Law Society of BC, as well as credit, driving, and criminal record checks, Judicial Council interviews qualified candidates.

What were your impressions of the interview?

"My interview happened when COVID restrictions were still in place, so it was conducted by video-conference using Microsoft Teams. The members of the Council appeared on my computer screen all at once in separate boxes, like the opening of the "Brady Bunch" show (for those who can remember).

I think that format added to the intensity of the interview, which was comprehensive. All the Council members asked me questions, and without exception, those questions were challenging and thought-provoking. Having said that, while the circumstances of the interview were intimidating, everyone was kind, and we even shared a few laughs, for which I was immensely grateful."

How did you find the time after your interview?

"One notable aspect of the application process is that you submit your application and then you just wait to find out if the Judicial Council will interview you – they don't advise you either way in the interim.

Similarly, after you are interviewed, the Judicial Council does not tell you whether they have approved you and added you to the list of potential candidates for appointment. If you are on the list, you can remain there for up to three years from the date of your interview.

So as an applicant, you go through this intense process and then you simply wait to see if the Attorney General calls you. It was a challenge to continue to run and build my law practice, without thinking about whether the phone might ring one day and instantly transport me from my practice to the bench. It was also difficult for my friends, family, and references who were collectively holding their breath with me."

How did you learn about your appointment? How did you feel?

"I was working at home, which I did not do very often at that time, and my cellphone rang, which was another rarity. I did not recognize the number but decided to answer the call since I welcomed a distraction from the file I was working on.

When the caller identified himself as the Attorney General, I immediately understood what was happening. After the call ended, I turned to my dog and said, "I'm going to be a judge!" It was a surreal moment as I tried to process what that meant for me, for my family, and for the law

firm where I had worked for almost 30 years. It wasn't until a week later when the government made the official announcement and the congratulations started pouring in that I truly accepted that it was happening!"

What came next?

In a future eNews article, we'll hear about the highlights of the judge's first year and the challenges of adjusting to the new role.

Would you be a good judge or judicial justice?

The Judicial Council of BC encourages qualified lawyers to apply for appointment as a judge or judicial justice. The Council also encourages applications from candidates of diverse backgrounds.

The BC Provincial Court is a progressive, collegial court with a wide variety of interesting work. To learn more about the Court's work and the judicial application process, see its [Annual Reports](#).

More information

[Skills for appointment as a judge](#) (see page 2)

[Skills for appointment as a judicial justice](#) (see page 2)

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