



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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BRENDON WOODS APPOINTED ALAMEDA COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has announced its unanimous appointment of Brendon Woods as Alameda County Public Defender, effective December 17, 2012.

Woods replaces Diane Bellas, who served as Alameda County Public Defender for 12 years before retiring in March. He has worked with the Alameda County Public Defender's Office since 1996 and served in several posts in the office before becoming Senior Assistant Public Defender under Bellas.

"I am honored and privileged to be the next Public Defender of Alameda County," Woods told the Board of Supervisors after his appointment was announced this morning. "I am excited to lead the amazing group of lawyers, investigators and support staff that work in our office (and) I am deeply, deeply committed to ensuring that the indigent clients of Alameda County receive excellent representation."

The Public Defender is the primary defense attorney for all indigent accused persons in Alameda County. The Public Defender is mandated by law to provide competent and effective legal defense in the State court system for all persons within the County who require legal counsel at public expense.

The Office of the Alameda County Public Defender is the second oldest Public Defender office in the United States. In 1927 Earl Warren, then the Alameda County District Attorney, successfully campaigned to have the Public Defender included in the new County Charter. Earl Warren went on to be the attorney general of California, governor of California, and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

ACPD has grown dramatically from its charter year when it began as a tiny law office with one attorney and a single secretary handling less than three hundred matters in a single twelve month period. Today the Public Defender is a major public law office operating in five branch offices, employing 104 attorneys, 20 field investigators, and support staff. Public Defender attorneys and staff now deal with an incoming caseload exceeding 4,500 new legal matters every month.

Nate Miley, President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, said, "We had a number of very qualified candidates who applied for this job. But at the end of the day we offered the job to Brendon because he's performed very well in just about every job inside that office. We are very pleased he is going to head up the office that he has pretty much grown up in since finishing law school."

Woods has a law degree from the University of San Francisco Law School and a Bachelor's Degree from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Susan S. Muranishi, Alameda County Administrator, said "We look forward to Brendon's leadership as the Public Defender and as a key member of the County's public safety and executive teams."