



State, The (Columbia, SC)

2004-11-28

Section: METRO

Edition: FINAL

Page: B1

PROSECUTOR PASCOE TAKING OVER AS 1ST CIRCUIT SOLICITOR

RICK BRUNDRETT

Staff Writer

Longtime criminal defense lawyer **Jack Swerling** has battled prosecutor David Pascoe more than once in a courtroom.

But **Swerling** said he gained even more respect for the younger Pascoe earlier this year when the two men were on the same side in a Richland County trial. **Swerling** testified as a victim of a home invasion during which he, his wife and his grown daughter were bound and held at gunpoint by a former client. Pascoe was on the 5th Circuit prosecution team that won a conviction of Jimmy Causey.

"I could not have been more comfortable with the people handling my case and my family," **Swerling** said recently. "I had the best prosecution team you could possibly have."

These days, the 37-year-old Pascoe is preparing for a new job as the 1st Circuit solicitor representing Orangeburg, Calhoun and Dorchester counties.

The St. Matthews Democrat defeated Republican incumbent Robby Robbins in the general election earlier this month. He takes office in January.

Swerling believes Pascoe, currently the first assistant solicitor for Richland and Kershaw counties, will make a great solicitor.

"It's the 5th Circuit's loss and the 1st Circuit's gain," **Swerling** said.

Pascoe's boss, 5th Circuit Solicitor Barney Giese, agreed.

"When I think of David Pascoe, I think of someone who takes a hard line and is very aggressive against crime," said Giese, a Republican. "He's an excellent trial lawyer."

Giese has not named Pascoe's replacement.

Pascoe said he hopes he can be as good a solicitor as Giese, who has been in office for nearly a decade.

"He's been a tremendous mentor to me," Pascoe said, "and a lot of decisions I will make will be based on what I think Barney would do."

In the 1st Circuit, Pascoe said he plans to address overcrowding in county jails by clearing out a backlog of pretrial cases. He also wants to start a diversion program in which low-risk juvenile offenders are mentored through area churches.

Don Sorenson, an assistant solicitor in the 5th Circuit whom Pascoe describes as his "right-hand man," will be moving with him to the 1st Circuit.

Pascoe first sought the 1st Circuit post in 2000, when he lost to longtime Republican incumbent Walter Bailey. Gov. Mark Sanford, a Republican, appointed Robbins to the position in January, after Bailey retired.

Robbins said he planned to meet with Pascoe to ensure a smooth transition. Robbins also said he would be looking for a new job.

Pascoe will be the second youngest solicitor in South Carolina next to Chrissy Adams, the newly elected Republican solicitor for Anderson and Oconee counties, according to the S.C. Commission on Prosecution Coordination. Adams turned 37 earlier this month; Pascoe's 37th birthday was in March.

Pascoe has spent most of his 11-year legal career in Giese's office. He has prosecuted juvenile, public corruption, drug and violent crimes; the U.S. Department of Justice recognized him in 1998 for his work in prosecuting major drug organizations in the state.

Last year, he successfully prosecuted Richland County's first "no body" case in which the defendant was convicted of murder even though the victim's body was never found.

Jeffrey Weston was sentenced to 40 years in prison for killing his 78-year-old mother, Frances Franchey, who disappeared in 1998.

Swerling was Weston's lawyer. He said he expects to face Pascoe someday again in a courtroom in either Orangeburg or St. Matthews.

"He can run," **Swerling** joked, "but he can't hide."

DAVID PASCOE

Age: 37

Residence: St. Matthews

Education: Bachelor's degree, magna cum laude graduate, The Citadel, 1989; law degree, USC, 1993

Work Experience: First assistant solicitor, 5th Circuit; joined office in 1993; left in 1995 to work in the state attorney general's office; returned to the 5th Circuit in 1997.

Personal: wife, Kristen; three sons, including twin 4-year-olds

Reach Brundrett at (803) 771-8484 or rbrundrett@thestate.com

David Pascoe



[News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Living](#) | [Shop Local](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#)
[About TheState.com](#) | [About the Real Cities Network](#) | [About the McClatchy Company](#)
[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Copyright](#)