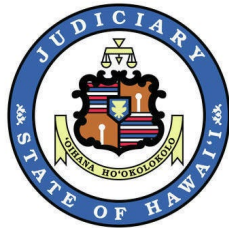


# Supreme Court of the State of Hawai‘i



## 2021 JURIST OF THE YEAR

*The Honorable Paul B.K. Wong was sworn in as Judge of the District Court of the First Circuit on May 29, 2012. On December 20, 2017, he began serving as a Circuit Court Judge, after being appointed by Governor David Y. Ige. Judge Wong quickly established himself as a competent, compassionate, articulate, and efficient adjudicator. He is unfailingly fair in his decision-making, thoughtfully applying the law to the facts of each case. He is committed to making the court experience a positive one for every person who walks through the courthouse door. He exhibits a high degree of integrity, fairness, and respect for others, is a good listener, and communicates in plain, concise language.*

*In April 2020, Judge Wong relied on all those attributes as he helped lead the Judiciary's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, Judge Wong became the chair of the newly-formed Committee on Operational Solutions, which was tasked with maintaining vital court services while ensuring the safety of court users, staff, and judges. In that role, he immediately began working to transition court proceedings to a virtual format, to minimize the number of people who were required to visit our courthouses in person. He diligently researched steps taken in other states, tested various virtual mediums, ordered equipment, coordinated the purchasing of program licenses, and trained judges and staff on how to conduct their proceedings online. Additionally, together with Judge Jim Ashford, he created a blueprint for the safe resumption of jury trials, meticulously researching alternate locations for the jury selection process. They coordinated securing the needed equipment, prepared courtrooms to maintain six-foot distancing, and conferred with the Department of Health to develop appropriate procedures. They drafted trial protocols and worked with judges and staff across the state, as well as members of the bar, to ensure that everyone understood the new procedures and could have their questions addressed.*

*Throughout his work, Judge Wong maintained an unwavering can-do attitude, which inspired others and reassured those who were understandably concerned. He found solutions by thinking outside the box, which enabled the Judiciary to move forward and carry out its vital mission. His contributions and exceptional stewardship of this undertaking have earned him great respect from his colleagues and staff, and was critical to the Judiciary's ability to address these unprecedented challenges.*

*The Jurist of the Year is selected for exceptional judicial competence evidenced by decisional quality, significant extra-judicial contributions to the administration of justice, and active participation in public service to the community at large. **On behalf of the Hawai‘i State Judiciary, it is my privilege to bestow upon the Honorable Paul B.K. Wong the recognition of 2021 Jurist of the Year.***

*DONE, at the Supreme Court of the State  
of Hawai‘i, this 29<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2021.*

/s/ Mark E. Recktenwald

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**MARK E. RECKTENWALD**  
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of the State of Hawai‘i