



# SUPREME COURT

## THE JUDICIARY REPUBLIC OF PALAU

P.O. Box 248 Koror, Palau 96940  
Telephone: Koror: (680) 488-2607 / 4979/3331/1585  
Capitol: (680) 767-2482 / 2607  
Facsimile: Koror: (680) 488-1597 or  
Capitol: (680) 767-2606  
e-mail address: palaujudiciary@palaunet.com

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*(It is our duty at the Judiciary to inform the people what we do.  
This Press Release is one way to achieve that responsibility.)*

The Republic of Palau Judiciary is pleased to publicly announce and welcome Part-time Associate Justices Antonio L. Cortés, Richard W. Pollack, Arthur R. Barcinas, and R. Barrie Michelsen. Following their appointments by President Surangel S. Whipps, Jr., on February 8, 2021, these Justices took their oath of office on March 4, 2021, and are assigned to the Trial Division of the Palau Supreme Court. To acquaint you with the Justices' background, legal education, experience, and accomplishments, a brief curriculum vitae for each Justice is provided below.

#### Antonio L. Cortés



A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and Yale Law School, Justice Cortés has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a litigator in California and Guam handling land disputes, corporate law, intellectual property, and tax litigation. Justice Cortés was admitted to the Palau Bar in 1995 and served as General Legal Counsel for the Koror State Government, in which capacity he represented the Koror State Public Land Authority, advised the Koror State Legislature and Administration during a period of governmental reorganization by constitutional amendment, and negotiated a complex settlement involving over half the land area of Koror State. More recently, Justice Cortés has been appointed by the Superior Court of Guam to defend criminal defendants when the Public Defender and Guam Legal Services have conflicts.

#### Richard W. Pollack



Justice Pollack retired as an Associate Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court in 2020 after eight years of service, during which time he authored more than 150 published opinions. Prior to this appointment, he was a Circuit Court Judge in Hawai'i for twelve years, presiding over both civil and criminal proceedings. Before serving as a judge, Justice Pollack had a long career in the Office of the Public Defender in Hawai'i, as a deputy public defender in the Appellate and Trial Divisions, as a supervisor of the Office's Maui branch, and as the State Public Defender responsible for the management of 99 attorneys, investigators, and support staff for the state-wide office. During his tenure as the State Public Defender, Justice Pollack served as a member of the committee that drafted more than 400 pattern jury instructions for criminal proceedings. He also frequently taught as an Adjunct Professor/Lecturer at the William S. Richardson School of Law in Honolulu and has resumed teaching at the law school following his retirement. Justice Pollack is a graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and UC Hastings College of the Law.

### Arthur R. Barcinas



Justice Barcinas has served as a judge of the Superior Court of Guam since 2005. He maintained a private practice for 14 years prior to his judicial service, and he served as the Hearings Officer for Small Claims Court, as Traffic Court Judge Pro Tempore, and as an Administrative Hearings Officer prior to becoming a judge. He also served as legal counsel to Governor Felix P. Camacho and as Chairman of the Chamorro Land Trust Commission Board of Directors.

Justice Barcinas currently presides over Mental Health Court, Family Court, and General Jurisdiction cases. He is a member of the Judicial Council, and the subcommittee on Rules Governing the Admission to the Practice of Law and the Rules for the Discipline of Attorneys. Additionally, he is a member of the subcommittees on Pro Se Litigation, Criminal Jury Instructions, Rules of Civil Procedure & Rules of Court Revision, and E-Filing Rules.

Justice Barcinas entered military service in 1982 and is a distinguished military graduate. He received his commission as Second Lieutenant while attending the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where he received a B.S. in Political Science in 1986. He received a J.D. from Gonzaga University School of Law in 1989.

### R. Barrie Michelsen



This will be Justice Michelsen's third investiture as a justice of the Palau Supreme Court. He first served as an Associate Justice from 1996 to 2004. Then, when the Trial Division and Appellate Division were formally separated, he returned to help in the transition and was appointed as one of the original appellate division justices in 2016. He retired in 2019. Justice Michelsen now returns to assist the Court as a part-time Justice.

Prior to his original appointment to the bench, Justice Michelsen headed a law firm based in Pohnpei, and represented clients in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau. After his retirement from the Court at the end of 2004, he returned to private practice as a litigation attorney with the Honolulu law firm of Coates and Frey. At the invitation of Professor Jon Van Dyke, he also served as an adjunct instructor at the University of Hawai'i Law School for a course on Pacific Island jurisdictions.

A 1976 graduate of the University of Maine School of Law, Justice Michelsen previously held positions as Chief Litigator for the National Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, Deputy Attorney General for the Territory of Guam, Assistant District Attorney in Maine, and as a litigation associate for the Law Offices of Trafton and Matzen, in Maine.

During his legal career, his bar admissions included Maine, Hawai'i, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands. He was admitted to the Palau bar by Chief Justice Mamoru Nakamura.