

12-15-2011

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Recommended Citation

LaRoe, Ginny, "Senate Confirms Obama Nominee to Ninth Circuit" (2011). *Articles About GGU Law*. Paper 7.
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Senate Confirms Obama Nominee to Ninth Circuit

Ginny LaRoe

2011-12-15 04:58:24 PM

SAN FRANCISCO — Morgan Christen, an Alaska Supreme Court Justice nominated by President Obama to the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, won Senate confirmation on Thursday.

Christen is the first Golden Gate University law school graduate to join the Ninth Circuit and the second Obama nominee to the court to get through the Senate. The vote was 95-3.

Christen, 50, was considered a noncontroversial nominee, carrying a silver of conservative credibility because then-Gov. Sarah Palin named her to the state Supreme Court. Palin had to choose between two nominees, though, and both had liberal ties — Christen had been a member of the board of directors at Planned Parenthood of Alaska.

Before her rise to the Supreme Court in 2009, Christen served on the state superior court from 2001 to 2009. Prior to that, she was a litigation partner at the Anchorage office of what is now K&L Gates, focusing on civil work. She was part of a team that represented the state of Alaska in litigation over the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Christen's confirmation leaves three Ninth Circuit nominees pending before the Senate. They are Los Angeles federal Judge Jacqueline Nguyen, Munger, Tolles & Olson litigation partner [Paul Watford](#) and Arizona Supreme Court Justice Andrew Hurwitz.

Christen will fill a vacancy created when Judge Andrew Kleinfeld took senior status in 2010.



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