



MAR 17 2026

BOARD of CLALLAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES for the week of March 9-13, 2026

EXECUTIVE SESSION – March 6, 2026 at 1 p.m.

The Board convened in open session at 1 p.m. on March 6, 2026, to discuss litigation. Present were Commissioners Ozias, French and Johnson, Administrator Mielke, and Prosecuting Attorney's Office Reno

The Board may recess into Executive Session to consider employment or dismissal of personnel, to review The performance of a public employee, to consult with legal counsel, to consider the position to be taken in collective bargaining, to consider acquisition or sale of real estate, or other matters per RCW 42.30.110.

ACTION TAKEN: CRJm to executive session for 30 minutes, CMOs, mc

The Board recessed into executive session at 1:01 p.m.

The Board convened in open session at 1:31 p.m. and CMF noted action will be taken.

The meeting concluded at 1:31 p.m.

WORK SESSION – 9 a.m.

The work session convened at 9 a.m., Monday, March 9, 2026. Present were Commissioners French and Ozias and Administrator Mielke. Commissioner Johnson was excused.

Items of discussion per the agenda published March 5 were:

- Calendar/Correspondence
- Discussion regarding appointment of a full-time Coroner
- Pre-application questionnaire with Foundation for Washington Courts for a Courthouse Security Grant
- Open County position review
- Resolution adopting the Clallam County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2026)
- Briefing and call for hearing to be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. regarding an Ordinance amending Clallam County Code Chapter 5.100 Consolidated Fee Schedule to add a new fee schedule Clallam Bay / Sekiu Fee Schedule 600-A
- Briefing and call for hearing to be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. regarding an Ordinance amending Clallam County Code Chapter 13.04, Clallam Bay / Sekiu Sewer System
- Update on the Dungeness Off-Channel Reservoir Project
- Letter of support and landowner acknowledgement form for the Streamflow Restoration Grant for a Dungeness River Restoration Wetlands Feasibility Study
- Letter of support for the Streamflow Restoration Grant for a point of diversion fish screen at the Highland Irrigation District on the Dungeness River
- Discussion regarding future management and operation of Right of Way Franchises within the County
- Update on the Criminal Justice contract
- Legislative session update

The meeting concluded at 1:40 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CLALLAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chair French called the meeting to order at 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 10, 2026. Also present were Commissioner Ozias and Administrator Mielke. Commissioner Johnson was excused.

REQUEST FOR MODIFICATIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION TAKEN: CMOm to adopt the agenda as presented, CMFs, mc

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PUBLIC COMMENT

- Denise Lapio, Sequim, commented on item 1a
- Jake Seegers, District III, commented on item 1a
- John Worthington, Sequim, commented on items 1c, 2b
- Ed Bowen, Clallam Bay, commented on items 2a, 2b, upcoming calendar

CONSENT AGENDA – Any Commissioner may remove items for discussion

1a Approval of vouchers for the week of March 2

The Following warrants and electronic payments are approved for payment:

Accounts Payable:	Total
Warrant numbers: 9950368-9950614	\$493,863.85
Electronic payments dates: n/a	\$0.00
Total Accounts Payable:	\$493,863.85

1b Approval of minutes for the week of March 2

1c Resolution appointing Jon Hamilton and Brian Hilderman to the Marine Resources Committee

1d Resolution appointing John Gagan and Billie Bryant to the Trails Advisory Committee

1e Resolution authorizing an expenditure from the Clallam County Heritage Advisory Board Grant Fund – North Olympic History Center

1f Resolution correcting BOCC Resolution 21, 2026 to authorize a loan from the Opportunity Fund- Clallam County Public Works - Clallam Bay / Sekiu Sewer Pipe Replacement Project

ACTION TAKEN: CMOm to approve the consent agenda as presented, CMFs, mc

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

- CMO reported on in inpatient detox
- CMF reported on Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Legislative Steering Committee Meeting

CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

2a Easement agreement with Ecotrust Forest III, LLC for the Olympic Discovery Trail Forks to La Push

ACTION TAKEN: CMOm to approve, CMFs, mc

2b Agreement with Economic Development Council for 2026 services

ACTION TAKEN: CMOm to approve, CMFs, mc

2c Agreement with the Peninsula Daily News for legal advertising services

ACTION TAKEN: CMOm to approve, CMFs, mc

HEARING(S)

3a Public comment to consider the request for a Justice Susan Owens monument/recognition at the Clallam County Courthouse and/or District Court II in Forks

ACTION TAKEN: CMOm to open the public hearing, CMFs, mc

- The following provided testimony:
 - Eric Fehrmann, Sequim
 - Denise Lapio, Sequim
 - Mark Curtis, Sequim
 - Mary Wilson, Sequim
 - Steve Brown, Port Angeles
 - Ariel Speser, Port Townsend
 - Dan Blood, Port Angeles
 - Natalie Columbus, Port Angeles
 - Carol Mortensen, Port Angeles
 - John Worthington, Sequim
 - Ed Bowen, Clallam Bay
 - Karin Cummins, Sequim
 - Pepai Whipple, Sequim

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- Dr. Sarah Huling, District III
- Glen Parker, Sequim
- Jake Seegers, District III
- Heather Cantua, District III
- Michael Williams, Sequim
- Cheryl Baumann, Clallam County
- Karen Unger, Port Angeles
- Harry Gasnick, Port Angeles
- Teresa Miller, Sequim
- Rick Nichols, Sequim
- Jeff Tozzer, Sequim
- The following sent in written testimony: Ken and Janet Wahl, John Worthington, Pepai Whipple, Lori Oakes, Eileen Gieser, Susan Hahn, Marguerite Glover, Linda Stenzel, Mac, Vern Daugaard, Kathy Daugaard, Len Mahan, Karen Parsons, Amy Ruble, Gayle Baker, Lori Himmelman, Ben Phillips, Ward Dunscomb, Eric Fehrmann, Anna Brady, Susan Shane, Darmaris Rodriguez, B Gardner, Linda Stenzel, Marlene Bradow, Brad Anderson, Rita Romero, Sandra Larson, Denise Lapio, Susan Purvis, Renee Grall, Leonard Hills, Judith Reandeau Stipe, Pamela Caldwell, Mike, William Cwirla, Terri DiMartino, Leilani Wood, Jeff Tozzer, Jeff Williams, Kathy, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Quileute Tribal Council (see attached)

ACTION TAKEN: CMOM to close the public hearing and adopt, CMFs, mc

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Stacey Richards, Port Angeles, commented public lands, unlawful remaining on property, illegal dumping
- Eric Fehrmann, Sequim, commented on item 3a Justice Susan Owens, homelessness, drugs
- Ed Bowen, Clallam Bay, commented on Department of Community Development position request Streamkeepers, Comprehensive Plan, Charter Review Commission town hall meetings
- Mark Curtis, Sequim, commented on Revenue Advisory Committee letter, Taxing District funding, Department of Natural Resources
- John Worthington, Sequim, commented on item 3a Justice Susan Owens
- Karin Cummins, Sequim, commented on item 3a Justice Susan Owens, Wendy Sisk Peninsula Behavioral Health, taxes, Harry Gasnick testimony
- Mary Wilson, Sequim, commented on tax dollars going towards Health and Human Service kits
- Jake Seegers, District III, commented on advocating
- Glen Parker, Sequim, commented on visiting Arizona, homelessness, drugs, harm reduction
- Denise Lapio, Sequim, commented on item 3a Susan Justice Owens
- Pepai Whipple, Sequim, commented drugs, priorities
- Mike Doherty, Port Angeles, commented on America 250, District Court, history

The meeting concluded at 12:30 p.m. and continued until Monday, March 16, 2026 at 9 a.m.

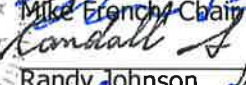
The Board of Commissioners attended a Behavioral Health Advisory Board Meeting, Coffee with Colleen, KONP Radio Show, WSAC Legislative updated and KSQM Radio Show during the week of March 9, 2026.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 17th day of March 2026

ATTEST: 
Loni Gores, MMC, Clerk of the Board

 BOARD OF CLALLAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Mike French, Chair


Randy Johnson


Mark Ozias

Public Testimony Item 3a

Justice Susan Owens

BOARD OF CLALLAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC HEARING

3a Public comment to consider the request for a Justice Susan Owens monument/recognition at the Clallam County Courthouse and/or District Court II in Forks

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that any testimony that I give is true and accurate. Please print name and address clearly.

Nº	PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS
1	Eric Fehrman	Eric Fehrman	Sequim
2	Denise Lapiro	Denise Lapiro	Sequim
3	Mark Curtis	Mark Curtis	Sequim
4	Mary Wilson	M. Wilson	Sequim
5	Shirley Richard	Shirley Richard	Port Angeles
6	Steve Brown	Steve Brown	PA
7	Alice Spence	Alice Spence	Port Townsend
8	Dan Bloor	Dan Bloor	PA.
9	Natalie Columbus	Natalie Columbus	Port Angeles 98363 (WWL)
10	Carol Martensen	Carol Martensen	PA
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Resolution No. 534

A resolution of the City of Forks paying tribute to the late Susan J. Owens by designating the District Court II Courtroom in City Hall as The Susan J. Owens Courtroom

WHEREAS, Susan J. Owens passed away in 2025 and during the past year, discussions on ways to honor her life and legacy have occurred; and,

WHEREAS, in 1976, Susan Owens moved to Clallam County after graduating from the University of North Carolina School of Law at Chapel Hill, worked as a Legal Aid attorney, and established a law firm with Karen Unger in Port Angeles; and,

WHEREAS, in 1981, Susan Owens was appointed as the first judge of Clallam County's District Court II in Forks and then was elected to six terms to serve the West End in that capacity; and,

WHEREAS, Susan Owens was also the Chief Judge for the Quileute Tribe and served in a part-time capacity for five years with the Quileute Tribe; and,

WHEREAS, Susan Owens was also the Chief Judge for the Lower Elwha S'Klallam Tribe and served in a part-time capacity for six years with the Lower Elwha S'Klallam Tribe; and,

WHEREAS, in 2000, Judge Owens was elected by the people of Washington to serve as a member of the State Supreme Court, becoming the seventh woman elected to the Supreme Court; and,

WHEREAS, Justice Owens was a strong advocate for both rural and tribal courts emphasizing the important impact of these court systems across the state; and,

WHEREAS, Justice Owens advocated for education and reforms associated with the impact of domestic violence, the need for treatment, and became a nationally recognized educator to the judiciary and the entire legal community; and,

WHEREAS, in 2015, Justice Owens arranged for the Washington State Supreme Court to hold court within the newly built Rainforest Arts Center, and also ensured that her fellow justices toured "her courtroom" during the Court's visit; and,

WHEREAS, Justice Owens served on the Supreme Court until she reached the mandatory retirement age for a justice, being the first woman to do so, and retired in 2024 ending a 44-year legal and judicial career in Washington; and,

WHEREAS, Susan Owens was a proud advocate for her beloved West End where she raised her children, and developed and maintained long friendships and ties to many here; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Forks wants to ensure that Judge and Justice Susan J. Owens' legacy and memory be acknowledged within the District Court II courtroom; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Forks also wants to recognize the role that Susan Owens played outside the courtroom here on the West End, in Clallam County, and throughout the State; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORKS, THAT

1. The City Council takes this action in honor of, and in tribute to, Susan Owens and the legacy that she created not only within the legal community of the State of Washington, but also as a proud advocate for the West End and all of its communities.
2. The City Council hereby designates that portion of the building that serves as the District Court II courtroom as the Susan J. Owens Courtroom.
3. The City Council further authorizes the Mayor and staff to obtain signage that reflects this designation to be placed in the foyer of City Hall, allowing the public to find this location. Such signage may also include "District Court II" to avoid any confusion by the public.
4. The City Council further approves the inclusion of a photograph of Susan Owens, her biography as printed by the Washington State Supreme Court, and any additional tribute that pays respect to Susan Owens' life and career. A reasonable amount of funds may be expended on the framing of such materials or in association with the installation thereof.

Passed this _____ day of March 2026 by the City Council.

Tim Fletcher, Mayor

Joe Soha, Councilmember

Jeff Gingell, Councilmember

Vilkesh Patel, Councilmember

Corey Pearson, Councilmember

Kaylan Kimball, Councilmember

Attested and Authenticated To:

Approved as to Form:

Caryn DePew, Clerk/Treasurer

William R. Fleck, City Attorney

Gores, Loni

From: ken wahl <kwahl1@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 7:44 AM
To: French, Mike; Ozias, Mark; Johnson, Randy; Gores, Loni
Subject: Clallam County Courthouse

Please leave the building known as the Clallam County Courthouse as it presently stands. Do not name it after a person as a memory of a person, Susan Owens, who practiced law in Forks.

Many more functions of Clallam County are performed in that building and a person's name on the building does nothing to enhance its functions. History of certain judges can be displayed on walls inside the building, not outside. The price tag of \$50,000 is too high. Inside a plaque or a bust or photo could be done for a lot less. This would honor a judge honorably.

Just say no the renaming the entire building we citizens know as the Clallam County Courthouse.

Ken and Janet Wahl
Sequim

Sent

Gores, Loni

From: john worthington <worthingtonjw2u@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 11:02 PM
To: French, Mike; Johnson, Randy; Ozias, Mark; Gores, Loni
Cc: Jeff Tozzer; Pepai Whipple; Eric Fehrmann; Clallamity Jen; Denise Lapio
Subject: RENAMING COURT HOUSE.

Dear Clallam County Commissioners,

I am writing to strongly oppose any proposal to rename the Clallam County Courthouse—or the courthouse complex, a courtroom in Port Angeles, or any major portion of the facility—after the late Justice Susan Owens. While I respect her long service as a District Court judge in Forks, where she was the first woman on the bench and served for 19 years starting in 1981, her record on the Washington State Supreme Court does not warrant such a prominent, county-wide honor in Port Angeles.

Justice Owens was a good regional judge for the Forks area, but her Supreme Court tenure included decisions that, in my direct experience litigating multiple cases before her and the court, often favored government interests, agencies, and expansive regulations over individual rights, transparency, and accountability. This pattern personally affected me through repeated adverse rulings in public records and related matters.

For example:

- In the line of cases stemming from *Worthington v. WestNET* (including the 2019 Supreme Court order denying my motion to recall the mandate), Justice Owens joined the majority in refusing to hold WestNET accountable as a suable entity under the Public Records Act, despite evidence of it acting as one in court documents for fines, fees, and forfeitures. Only Justice Gordon McCloud dissented, courageously calling it a "miscarriage of justice" due to WestNET's inconsistent positions. If any Supreme Court justice from outside the district deserves special recognition, it should be Justice McCloud for his principled stand—not Justice Owens.
- In *Cannabis Action Coalition v. City of Kent* (2015), she sided with upholding local bans on medical marijuana dispensaries by ruling that medical cannabis remained illegal under state law at the time.
- Less than a year later, in connection with *Nickerson v. Washington State* and related denials of review, she supported not reviewing Court of Appeals decisions allowing the state to tax medical marijuana sales, treating it as legal for revenue purposes while earlier rulings limited access.
- In *Worthington v. Washington State Legislature* and related PRA matters, she was part of the court that denied review in cases where legislators avoided Public Records Act obligations—despite later rulings (like *Associated Press*) affirming the legislature's subjection to the Act. These decisions shielded government from transparency at significant personal cost to citizens like me pursuing accountability.

Across at least 12 cases involving me (as documented in public dockets and opinions), Justice Owens contributed to a court that repeatedly protected state and agency interests, saving Washington hundreds of thousands in potential PRA fines while denying relief to individuals. Her voting record often aligned with expansive environmental regulations, strong deference to agencies and tribal treaty interpretations, and Growth Management Act restrictions—positions that critics argue have limited rural economic development, property rights, and housing in areas like Clallam County.

Additionally, her 2006 campaign received substantial support from the Washington Education Association (including a \$50,000 PAC donation), raising questions about influence in education-related rulings.

The historic Clallam County Courthouse in Port Angeles should remain named as is—a neutral symbol of justice for all residents. Any honor for Justice Owens should be limited to the Forks area, where she primarily served locally (e.g., a courtroom naming, plaque, tree, or memorial there, as some have suggested). Proposals for a "Hall of Justice," renaming the entire building or complex, or similar broad changes in Port Angeles overlook her mixed Supreme Court legacy and the need for broader community consensus beyond a small advocates group.

I urge you to keep the Clallam County Courthouse named the Clallam County Courthouse. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input at this public hearing.

Sincerely, John Worthington Sequim, Washington

Worthington v. WestNET, No. 90037-0
(Gordon McCloud, J., Dissent to Order)

its raid on his residence and that it wrongfully failed to respond to his record request in violation of the PRA. In light of that significant possibility, it is to characterize WestNET's flatly contradictory assertions that blocked access resolution of Worthington's PRA lawsuit as anything other than a miscarriage of justice.

That document can be read in its entirety.

https://www.courts.wa.gov/content/publicUpload/Supreme%20Court%20Orders/PublicOrderMotion9003704_10_2019.pdf

In Cannabis Action Coalition v. City of Kent, Judge Owens went with the system again by ruling marijuana was illegal to justify the banning of medical marijuana dispensaries.

Cannabis Action Coal. v. City of Kent

Document

Justia Case Summary

Cited authorities (20)

Cited in (46)

Precedent A

Decision Date 21 May 2015

Docket Number No. 90204-6.

Citation Cannabis Action Coal. v. City of Kent, 351 P.3d 151, 183 Wash.2d 219 (Wash

Court Washington Supreme Court

Parties CANNABIS ACTION COALITION, Arthur West, David Hallin, Plaintiffs, Steve Petitioners, v. CITY OF KENT, a local municipal corporation, Kent City Cour

Less than a year later, in Nickerson v. Washington State, Judge Owens sided with the majority in deciding not to take review of a Court of Appeals ruling that held marijuana was legal and that therefore Washington State could keep tax revenue from medical marijuana sales.

<https://www.courts.wa.gov/content/petitions/94032-1%20Answer%20to%20prv.pdf>

In Worthington v. Legislature, Judge Owens also was one of the judges who denied review of a Court of appeals decision in Worthington v. Washington State Legislature. 11 legislators never even had to respond to the Washington State Public Records Act. This was a total burn job. After the Associated press case held, the legislature was subject to the act. I waited for that decision and the media law firms got paid, but I got screwed. This case alone should disqualify Judge Owens from being more than a plaque in Forks.

WORTHINGTON v. WASHINGTON STATE LEGIS

No. 56427-1-II, Consolidated with No. 56457-2-II.

View Case

JOHN WORTHINGTON, Appellant, v. WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE, WASHINGTON STATE SENATOR BOB HASEGAWA, WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OFFICES OF: Fran Kristiansen-Ranking Minority Member, Joel Kretz-Assistant Ranking Minority Member, Steve Berg, Hargrove, Mark Harmsworth, Jeff Holy, Norm Johnson, Vicki Kraft, John Lovick, Joan McBride, Joyce Ortiz-Self, Tina Orwall, Eric Pettigrew, Marcus Riccelli, Tana Senn, Larry Springer, Derek Stanford, P. Tarleton, Luanne Van Werven, J.T. Wilcox, Sharon Wylie, Respondents.

Court of Appeals of Washington, Division Two.

Filed October 25, 2022.

Attorney(s) appearing for the Case

John Worthington (Appearing Pro Se), 90 S. Rhodfer Rd. E-101, Sequim, WA, 98382, Counsel for Appellant
Jennifer Steele, Attorney General's Office, 800 Fifth Ave Ste 2000, Seattle, WA, 98104-3188, Counsel for Respondents

Across at least 12 cases involving me (as documented in public dockets and opinions), Justice Owens contributed to a court that repeatedly protected state and agency interests, saving Washington hundreds of thousands in potential PRA fines while denying relief to individuals. Her voting record often aligned with expansive environmental regulations, strong deference to agencies and tribal treaty interpretations, and Growth Management Act restrictions—positions that critics argue have limited rural economic development, property rights, and housing in areas like Clallam County.

<https://www.plainsite.org/dockets/ubxvwly4/washington-court-of-appeals/john-worthington-v-state-of-washington/>
<https://case-law.vlex.com/vid/worthington-v-washington-state-888641494>
<https://case-law.vlex.com/vid/worthington-v-washington-state-890398310>
<https://law.justia.com/cases/washington/supreme-court/2016/93173-9.html>

Additionally, her 2006 campaign received substantial support from the Washington Education Association (including a \$50,000 PAC donation), raising questions about influence in education-related rulings.

The historic Clallam County Courthouse in Port Angeles should remain named as is—a neutral symbol of justice for all residents. Any honor for Justice Owens should be limited to the Forks area, where she primarily served locally (e.g., a courtroom naming, plaque, tree, or memorial there, as some have suggested). Proposals for a "Hall of Justice," renaming the entire building or complex, or similar broad changes in Port Angeles overlook her mixed Supreme Court legacy and the need for broader community consensus beyond a small advocates group.

I urge you to keep the Clallam County Courthouse named the Clallam County Courthouse. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input at this public hearing.

Sincerely, John Worthington Sequim, Washington

Gores, Loni

From: Pepai Whipple <pepalapu@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 5:54 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Courthouse RENAMING

Loni, could you please forward this email to the Clallam County Commissioners and Todd Meilke, thank you.

Commissioners,

There appears to be much controversy in renaming the Clallam County Courthouse after Susan Owens. Whose idea was this? It is our understanding the Washington Women Lawyers Olympic Peninsula Chapter initiated the proposal. The courthouse was built in 1914 & 1915 replacing an older wood courthouse built in 1892 officially dedicated June 14, 1915.

Clallam County Courthouse was named over a century ago so why is “this woman”, Ms. Owens so deserving of this type of honor & has the county considered any other individuals within the last century? Are our commissioners playing politics with the Women lawyers?

Clallam County is politically diverse, acting as a historic presidential “bellwether” by picking the national winner for decades, though it trends Democratic in state/local races and voted for Biden in 2020, showing a mix of Republican and Democrats voters with deep-blue roots near the coast and more conservatives areas inland, making it neither strictly Republican nor Democrat.

The courthouse should remain named Clallam County Courthouse as it has for over 100 years. Perhaps honoring Ms. Owens with the naming of a court room or library would be the more acceptable and appropriate idea.

We ask that all Commissioners do not rename the historical Clallam County Courthouse & it will remain named Clallam County Courthouse appropriately another 100 years.

Regards,
Thomas & Pepai Whipple
Sequim, Wash

Sent from my iPad

Gores, Loni

From: Lori Oakes <lorio63@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 4:22 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Re naming the court house

You don't often get email from lorio63@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Please let the commissioners know that I am apposed to the renaming of at the courthouse. She was never here as a judge. Forks has already started something for her, (rightfully so). The court house is for Clallam County.

Thank you,
Lori Oakes

Mielke, Todd

From: Eileen G. <eileengieser@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2026 7:03 AM
To: Mielke, Todd
Subject: Fwd: justice owens

You don't often get email from eileengieser@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello Mr. Mielke,

Unfortunately, no contact email was given in the article by myclallamcounty.com for commenting by email about this commemoration. I see no reason for the county to rename the courthouse for a judge who did her job, if the people who are pushing for this want to take up a collection and place a bench or other useful item in a county site that is their choice, but to have the name of the courthouse changed would be completely inappropriate for any person to expect. The thought of even considering this idea is such poor judgement by the commissioners office that I am sure they have not considered how this looks like a page from the current occupant of the White House. The commissioners office is not the dept to even have the authority for this action, since this is a building owned by all of the county residents, nor is it in their scope of authority to add the burden of the paperwork and renaming process. The judge herself would have thrown this out of court if it was ever presented and challenged. If you want to honor one of your employees, maybe you should do it while they are still alive. Most of us had never heard of this judge until this announcement in the news. The commissioners are public servants, not lord of the manor. The confusion caused by taking off the Clallam county name would be substantial, especially

when searching for contacts for this county by outsiders who don't know the name is changed. What a ridiculous idea. I think the next vote for your commissioners should be given to someone who is not so swayed by private interest groups and has more sense. Leave this issue for the people who want a commemoration, not the entire county. It's their circus, not ours. Doesn't your dept have any other work to accomplish? E. Gieser

Gores, Loni

From: Susan Hahn <sassh48@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 2:32 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming County Courthouse

Dear Commissioners,

I am NOT in support of renaming the Clallam County Courthouse.
It should remain annd be called exactly what it is, The Clallam County Courthouse.

Susan Owens did not work in the building or have a place in it.

Sincerely,
Susan S. Hahn
Port Angeles, WA

Sent from my iPad

Gores, Loni

From: Marg <marg@sequim.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 1:46 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Commissioners Agenda Item honoring Justice Susan Owens

Loni, please send this along to the County Commissioners as a public comment.

I definitely support honoring Justice Susan Owens for her service in our county courts and tribal courts, and for serving on the Washington State Supreme Court until her mandatory retirement at age 75.

I like some of the ideas being proposed, such as dedicating a court room to her, or having a Hall of Justice in the county courthouse. Then, along with Susan Owens, we could honor other justices from Clallam County.

I am not in favor of renaming the entire courthouse the Susan Owens Courthouse. The Courthouse should remain as the Clallam County Courthouse. That speaks for all of us. Everyone in Clallam County.

What would happen if Clallam County wound up having a Washington State Governor? Would we rename the Courthouse again? We have had distinguished State Representatives and State Senators. We wouldn't rename the Courthouse for them.

Thank you for letting me present my thoughts.

Marguerite Glover
marg@sequim.com
360-461-3365
103 Pond Lane
Sequim WA 98382

Gores, Loni

From: Linda Stenzel <stenzel4@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 12:20 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Courthouse

Commissioners,

Please use common sense and leave the courthouse as-is. We need public buildings to be inoffensive to all residents, and picking names is a sure way to upset many, not to mention it's a waste of money when you are all looking for any way to take more of our money. I realize you are not known for listening to your constituents, but it's past time to give it a try.

Sincerely,
Linda Stenzel

Gores, Loni

From: Mac <jmac092852@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 11:40 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: County Courthouse

You don't often get email from jmac092852@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I don't think renaming the courthouse is good idea. Let the people of Forks pay tribute like they are doing since that is where she worked and lived.

Gores, Loni

From: Vern Dugaard <doogsx4@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 11:28 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming the Clallam County Courthouse

[You don't often get email from doogsx4@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Good Morning. Renaming ANY public buildings, parks or structures anywhere should be something the public should have input. I'm not discrediting Susan Owens in any way but I disagree with memorializing a building that she never served in, is a shame! Taking a look at HARM REDUCTION, in many peoples opinion, is something that needs to change. Get out from behind a computer and check out what's going on in our public spaces! Thank you, Vern Dugaard Sent from my iPhone

Gores, Loni

From: Kathy Dugaard <doogsx4@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 10:44 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming Courthouse

[You don't often get email from doogsx4@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

I do NOT agree with renaming the Clallam County Courthouse. Especially for an individual that never presided in that courthouse. And is being honored in the area in which she served.

Once again, it is a total waste of taxpayers money.

Maybe the commissioners should focus on something that would serve all Clallam County taxpayers.

Thank you,
Kathleen A. Dugaard
Sent from my iPhone

Gores, Loni

From: Len Mahan <snafubyu@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 10:15 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming of Susan Owens

[You don't often get email from snafubyu@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Renaming something after a local Justice might seem like a good idea, but it could be a significant financial investment, potentially another \$50k. It seems like the county commissioners might not be the best at cutting back on spending. For instance, supporting and supplying kits to get HI safe kits might be adding to the problem, creating more zombies in the area who will need to be taken care of by county tax dollars—my tax dollars. It doesn't seem to be helping. My property taxes are already high, and it seems like these people who represent the public don't fully understand the situation.

Please stop spending like there is no tomorrow. Tomorrow will come, and we will be broke. Maybe take the \$50k and find some incentives to attract new businesses and support the local economy.

You are not there to just spend money.
Len Mahan
1531 Marine Dr
Sequim WA 98382

Gores, Loni

From: Karen Parsons <karenpinwa@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 9:48 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming County Courthouse?

Everyone I have talked with think renaming the courthouse to a personal person's memory is a bad idea. Place a bench as originally suggested in her name is a better idea because where does it stop on renaming buildings with a personal person's name? I am totally against this and hope the commissioners listen to voters!

Thank you,
Karen Parsons
Sequim, WA

Gores, Loni

From: Amy Ruble <mainsthairamy@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 9:35 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Rename of building

3-9-2026

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express that I highly oppose renaming a county building, especially in these strained budget and financial times. It does not display to the taxpayers of the county good financial decisions. Especially while some departments are operating under reduced hours and staff.

This expenditure is frivolous and should be reconsidered, especially for the fact the honorable supreme court judge NEVER was a judge in the Clallam county courthouse. She is properly already honored in Forks where she spent a lifetime serving our community.

Please reconsider this foolish waste of tax dollars!

Amy Ruble

Forks, Washington

Gores, Loni

From: Gayle Baker <gaylebaker7458@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 9:31 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Cc: Crawford, Donald
Subject: Renaming Clallam County Courthouse

Dear Commissioners and Mr. Crawford,

Please reconsider renaming the Clallam County courthouse. Your efforts are a waste of taxpayer money and your time. Instead of finding ways to spend tax dollars on silly endeavours, that money would perhaps be better served as savings in the contingency fund.

Gayle Baker
Sequim

Gores, Loni

From: Lori Jayne <byzzy22@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 9:25 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming the Courthouse

You don't often get email from byzzy22@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

As a resident of Clallam county, I adamantly oppose renaming the courthouse! More waste of taxpayer money!

Lori Himmelman

Gores, Loni

From: Ben Phillips <223benp@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 9:15 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Courthouse Renaming

You don't often get email from 223benp@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I would like to express my strong disapproval of renaming the Clallam County Courthouse. Justice Owens never served in the Clallam County Courthouse. Our commissioners are wasting their time and taxpayer money in this vain unnecessary pursuit. Don't they have better things to focus their efforts on? The answer that is a resounding YES! Yes they do. If we start randomly renaming buildings, where does it stop???

The Clallam County Courthouse is and always should be, the Clallam County Courthouse. A building that represents the citizens and taxpayers of Clallam County.

Ben Phillips

Gores, Loni

From: glassguy@olympen.com
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 8:35 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Susan Owens Issue

Importance: High

You don't often get email from glassguy@olympen.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To:
Board of Clallam County Commissioners,
Randy Johnson
Mark Ozias
Mike French

Susan Owens served as district II judge in Forks for many years prior to being appointed to the State Supreme Court.

The District II Court along with the City of Forks are already in the process of installing a memorial in Susan's Courtroom.

Susan NEVER held court in the Clallam County Courthouse in Port Angeles,

The memorial being planned in the District II Courtroom is adequate.

Spending \$40,000.00 to \$50,000.00 of taxpayer funds on another memorial in Port Angeles is uncalled for.

If those promoting such a plaque or such want to come up with the funding, let them raise the money and THEN make a proposal to the Citizens of Clallam County as to how Susan should be memorialized.

Do not spend County Dollars on this issue. Period.

Respectfully,

Ward S. Dunscomb

PO Box 2336
263 Black Hawk Loop
Port Angeles, WA. 98362
360-461-2700
glassguy@olympen.com

Gores, Loni

From: Eric Fehrmann <efehrm_3@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 7:27 AM
To: Gores, Loni; Mielke, Todd
Subject: Courthouse

Clallam County Commissioners and Administrator

I urge the Clallam County Board Of Commissioners (CCBOC) to vote against renaming Clallam County Courthouse. You are the Clallam County Board of Commissioners, not the Susan Owens Board of Commissioners. Nor is it credible to pick one name to represent the Clallam County Hall of Justice.

Spending \$50,000 on a plaque, when there's even one "unhoused" resident in the county, or one pothole on a county road, is reckless and unconscionable. Sending money, we don't have to Silverdale for a plaque, when we have plenty of artisans right here in Clallam County that could fashion a memorial piece, is even more incredulous.

Eric Fehrmann

Constituent

Gores, Loni

From: Anna Brady <abrady@ziontzchestnut.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2026 7:56 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Cc: arielspeser@gmail.com
Subject: Letter to BoCC in support of Justice Owens memorial
Attachments: Brady_Clallam Cty BoCC ltr re Owens memorial (3.5.26).pdf

You don't often get email from abrady@ziontzchestnut.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Ms. Gores,

Attached is a letter to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the effort to commemorate the legacy of Hon. Justice Susan Owens with a tribute monument at the Clallam County Courthouse.

If you would, please confirm receipt of this email and transmittal of the attached letter to the Board.

Thank you!

Anna

Anna E. Brady
Ziontz Chestnut LLP
2101 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1230
Seattle, Washington 98121
Office: (206) 448-1230
Cell: (360) 774-6102
abrady@ziontzchestnut.com

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ZIONTZ CHESTNUT LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

BRIAN W. CHESTNUT
BRIAN C. GRUBER
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WYATT F. GOLDING
ANNA E. BRADY
LILIANA R. ELLIOTT
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FOURTH AND BLANCHARD BUILDING
2101 FOURTH AVENUE, SUITE 1230
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98121-2331
TELEPHONE: (206) 448-1230
FAX: (206) 448-0962
WWW.ZIONTZCHESTNUT.COM

March 5, 2026

Clallam County Board of County Commissioners
c/o Loni Gores, Clerk of the Board
Commissioners' Office
223 East 4th Street, Suite 4, Port Angeles, WA 98362

Re: Support for Justice Susan Owens Clallam County Courthouse Memorial

Dear Commissioners Ozias, Johnson and French,

I write to you as a longtime Olympic Peninsula resident and former law clerk of the late Hon. Justice Susan Owens to strongly encourage the Board to memorialize Justice Owen's lasting legacy through the enactment of a monument in her honor at the Clallam County Courthouse.

I was raised in Port Townsend from the age of 10 on, attended the Running Start program through Peninsula College, and graduated third in my class from Port Townsend High School. Growing up on the Olympic Peninsula instilled in me a deep sense of place, an appreciation for the natural world, a respect for Native peoples as the original sovereigns of this continent, and a drive to contribute to a more just and sustainable future. Those interests eventually led me to pursue legal training: I graduated from the University of Oregon School of Law near the top of my class, with a certificate in environmental and natural resources law and a strong focus on Indian law and tribal representation.

After law school, I was lucky to join the chambers of Justice Owens at the Washington State Supreme Court as a judicial law clerk in 2018-2019. In that role, I worked daily with Justice Owens, reviewing briefing, preparing memoranda, attending oral arguments, conferring with her Honor about cases, and assisting with drafting opinions. I learned a tremendous amount from Justice Owens about lawyering, the judiciary, and appellate practice. I also learned from her about human nature, mentorship, work-life balance, and being a strong woman in a traditionally masculine-dominated profession. I continue to aspire daily to, as she advised, "take our work seriously, but not take ourselves too seriously."

Justice Owens and I bonded over our shared connection to the Olympic Peninsula we both loved. She would tell stories of practicing in Forks, first as a lawyer and later after she was elected District Court judge at age 32. She reminisced about holding court while her infant son lay on a

blanket at her feet. Her stories almost always left us laughing, but they also had a message. She was a model for me and other young attorneys, especially women, of how to be tough while also holding true to one's values and always, amid the myriad demands, making time for family and friendship.

Now as a mother myself, I live on the Peninsula once again, raising my two young children (Owen, 4, and Lila, 2) among family in Port Townsend. I work in a hybrid-remote role as an attorney for a respected Seattle law firm primarily representing tribes, including the Makah Tribe, on environmental and natural resources matters. I have managed to thread the needle of personal and professional goals in part because of Justice Owens' influence and example. She was an esteemed jurist, a loving mother, a true friend to many, and a mover-shaker for sure.

Clallam County was her found home. She dedicated her career as a lawyer to serving its people, and then carried that ethic to the state's highest court when she was elected as the seventh woman to serve on the Washington State Supreme Court. And though she dwelled in Olympia for the past two decades, Clallam County was where her heart lived: she would return to Forks each year for the annual 4th of July parade, and she often spent Thanksgiving and other major holidays in Port Angeles.

Commemorating Justice Owens' achievements, spirit and legacy through a formal recognition at the Clallam County Courthouse is a fitting tribute that would have pleased her. I strongly recommend renaming the Clallam County Courthouse or the historic courtroom in her honor. A plaque bearing her likeness and a short description of her life and career is an appropriate gesture to help ensure that future generations of residents and visitors to the Peninsula continue learn about Justice Owens' remarkable life and work, so that she may continue to be a model to others of what is possible and what matters most.

Thank you for your consideration. It is my honor and pleasure to have known Justice Susan Owens and to write this letter in her memory. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or wish to speak with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anna E. Brady". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anna" being the most prominent.

Anna E. Brady
WA Bar # 54323
abrady@ziontzchestnut.com
(360) 774-6102 mobile

Gores, Loni

From: Web_DCDAAdmin
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 8:29 AM
To: Gores, Loni; Clark, Donella
Subject: FW: Online Form Submission #9262 for Contact the Planning Commission

I believe the comment below is for the County Commissioners.

Anastasia White | Administrative Specialist III

CLALLAM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Department of Community Development

223 E 4th St, Suite 5 | Port Angeles, WA 98362

P: 360.417.2416 | **F:** 360.417.2443

www.clallamcountywa.gov



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From: noreply@civicplus.com
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2026 5:51 PM
To: Web_DCDAAdmin
Subject: Online Form Submission #9262 for Contact the Planning Commission

Contact the Planning Commission

First Name	Susan (Sue) Shane
Last Name	Shane
Email	sueshane@centurytel.net
Phone Number	3606404295
Subject	Susan Owens Memorial
Comments/Questions	She was one of my dearest friends and such a good person--thoughtful and respectful of everyone who

came before her. First, anything like a garden, fountain or statue would require the city's by-in for maintenance. She had a soft spot for people who had a rough life so she would probably like to see something that made life easier for the homeless or others who are down and out. Not sure what that would be but what she would have loved would be a hygiene station accessible to all. I know that is not as fancy as some would like for her but maybe it could be of an artistic design. She would like something dignified for people who are down on their luck. And finally, her kids should have the final say. No one loved their kids more than Susan and they are kids to be proud of.

Please Note

This form is not for emergencies. If you have an emergency, please phone 911.

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)

Gores, Loni

From: Damaris Rodriguez <nw.rain@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 11:11 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: How to honor Justice Susan Owens

You don't often get email from nw.rain@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To Whom it May Concern,

Hello, as a lifelong Port Angeles resident I was surprised to hear about the upcoming discussion on how to honor Justice Susan Owens. My surprise arose because even though I have been an active community member for decades I honestly had never heard of her before. After some research, I discovered that is most likely because she was most active on the West End and with the tribes before serving on the Washington Supreme Court.

To change the name of the County Court House seems somewhat extreme. We are fortunate to have had several wonderful people over the years who have honorably served Clallam County. Senator Gordon Sandison comes to mind and I don't believe there has been anything done to honor others.

I believe a monument or perhaps naming a courtroom for Justice Owens would be a more appropriate way to honor her. Additionally a statue would be nice out on the West End where she is better known for her dedication and service. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Damaris Lucille Rodriguez
918 East Lauridsen Blvd.
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Damaris Lucille Rodriguez
"Just singin', singin' in the rain."

Gores, Loni

From: bgardner@olympus.net
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 9:15 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Please advise Clallam County Commissioners

[You don't often get email from bgardner@olympus.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

I would like to chime in on the issue of renaming the Clallam County Courthouse. I would like it to remain as is and NOT be renamed with the name Susan Owens. Thank you

Gores, Loni

From: Linda Stenzel <stenzel4@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 8:50 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming the courthouse and tax fairness

Dear Commissioners,

Please do NOT rename our courthouse. It needs to remain as-is and represent all of us. There are other ways to honor your friend without messing around with something that should be non-controversial.

Also, when are you going to pressure the tribes to contribute to our financial difficulties? We give them a tremendous amount of land, water and power that hurt the rest of us. We, too, are citizens, and equally so.

Please remember that you represent all of us and we actually pay for your salaries!

Thank you,
Linda Stenzel

Gores, Loni

From: Marlene Bradow <marlenebradow@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 10:00 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming Clallam County Courthouse

You don't often get email from marlenebradow@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

County Commissioners:

I would like to comment on the proposal to rename the Clallam County Courthouse in honor of the late judge Susan Owens.

I understand those who want to honor someone who served our community, but believe there are other ways to acknowledge contributions of many great citizens who have lived in our county.

That said, I am opposed to renaming the Clallam County Courthouse. The court house is a long-standing symbol of our county's history. It is generations of civic life, public service, and shared community identity. Changing the name of such a historic public institution is unnecessary and to honor one person, when there are so many who could also be honored, is disappointing, inefficient and self serving. The name of Clallam County Courthouse represents every citizen in our community.

If people want to memorialize or pay tribute to honor the judge, they can choose to contribute to funding a plaque, a scholarship, courtroom dedication, or annual recognition in their name.

I ask that you consider preserving the longstanding name of the Clallam County Courthouse and explore alternative ways to honor the judge in a way that reflects their contribution and respect for our county's history.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marlene Bradow

Gores, Loni

From: Brad Anderson <brad.anderson479@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:47 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: If you have thoughts on renaming the courthouse — or on tax fairness — contact the Clerk of the Board

I oppose to:
The subject title above

- 1) Stop useless spending of our tax dollars in renaming a courthouse.
 - 2) Start charging all applicable taxes and fees to the sovereign nations that we as the general public are required to pay.
- Sent from my iPhone

Gores, Loni

From: Rita Romero <punkypoo71@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 4:17 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming the courthouse

You don't often get email from punkypoo71@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good morning ,

I personally do not like the idea of renaming the clown County courthouse after Susan Owens not that I disrespect her in anyway I feel it would be wonderful to name one of the court chambers after her. That would be more appropriate she did her work predominantly for the Forks Community. Or maybe a statue in front of the courthouse or a beautiful bench named after her.

Please take this under advisement.

Respectfully,

Evrita Romero
Sequim resident

Gores, Loni

From: Eric Fehrmann <efehrm_3@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 6:11 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Clallam County Courthouse

Commissioners

The Clallam County Courthouse was built in 1914 and located in Port Angeles, Washington.

Clallam County provides services as required by law or mandated by the public. Through effective management of personnel and other resources, the County strives to provide the basic facilities and programs, which promote health, safety, and quality of life for its citizens. Another lie?

Renaming the courthouse to honor one individual would be an affront to the citizens of Clallam County. Three TEMPORARY commissioners should not assume the providence of renaming the courthouse that has been here since 1914. How would they determine what one individual should be enshrined as the noteworthiest. Leave it alone.

Eric Fehrmann

Gores, Loni

From: Sandra Larson <river.breeze@icloud.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 14, 2026 10:19 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Susan Owen's Memorial

[You don't often get email from river.breeze@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

We certainly need to honor THE HONORABLE Judge Susan Owens. A star paver set in the concrete walkway entering the Clallam County Courthouse could be doeable,as well as a wall plaque with her photo and biography.

BUT we certainly do NOT need our courthouse name changed to honor her. We live in Clallam County, our Courthouse represents ALL in Clallam County, it is the the seat of Clallam County, sitting proudly on its hilltop.

We've had THE STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA sadly changed to Salish Sea, to us born and raised on The Olympic Peninsula it'll always be The STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA. As with the GULF of AMERICA... it'll always be THE GULF OF MEXICO. I rest my case.

Sandra Larson

Clallam County resident for 72 years.

Sent from my iPad

Gores, Loni

From: dylapio@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 3:51 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: RE: Renaming of the County Courthouse

February 10, 2026

Loni,

Please direct this email to all three BoCC Commissioners and Administrator Mielke.

Dear Board Members,

I, a taxpaying constituent, am reiterating my stance on not renaming the Clallam County Courthouse to posthumously honor Justice Susan Owens. Recognizing her accomplishments to our County's history is significant, but the Courthouse is for all County citizens and should not be designated as one that reflects the desires of special interest groups.

If I may offer another alternative: The Law Library may be more of an appropriate location.

Additionally, the original requests initially brought forth by the Oly Pen WWL for a bench and plaque may be the best approach for honoring Justice Susan Owens and her contributions to our County.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Denise Lapio

Gores, Loni

From: SUSAN S <purvislll2@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 8, 2026 4:44 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Cc: callamityjen@gmail.com
Subject: Clallam County Courthouse = Filion Courthouse

Dear Commissioners,

I understand you are considering renaming the Historic Clallam County Courthouse. I have an exceptional candidate who deserves attention. Fred Filion born 10-29-1897, deceased 11-28-1975. Port Angeles born and raised. Died here too, age 78. Justice of the Peace Clallam County 1934-1963.

Fred Filion's mother was Rosanna Alice Filion and father was Alfred I Filion. Alfred was the son of Pioneer Ismael Filion who brought sawmill equipment with him from Michigan to Port Angeles in 1892 to erect a mill at 12th and C Street [the old family home still stands on this lot] When that mill burned down a new sawmill and shingle mill was built at 16th and C Street [which is now occupied by Angeles Millwork]. This statement was in Ismael's obituary featured in The Port Angeles Evening News issue of Feb 6th, 1928: "The Filion Mills operated all through the hard times of the nineties and provided the only payroll in Port Angeles for many years". Ismael Filion came to Port Angeles with his brothers Felix Moses Filion [Civil war veteran] and Simon Filion. Felix served as a councilman for the City of Port Angeles [from the 6th ward as it was governed at the time]. Ismael's other son Charles J Filion was a Port Angeles City commissioner

Alfred Ismael Filion was born in Ontario Canada and immigrated with his Father Ismael and stepmother Catherine (McLeod) [Alfred's mother Jane McLeod died in 1867] to Michigan when he was a child. Alfred I Filion age 32 is listed as father and occupation "lumber mill owner" on Fred's 1897 Clallam County birth certificate. In Ismael's 1928 obituary Alfred was listed as "operator of the city dock". Alfred died in 1930 at age 65. Fred would've been 33 when his dad died.

I will now recite Fred Filion's obituary from Clallam County pioneer listings. I thought it was important and relevant to understand Fred's family historical presence here in Clallam County. The Filion name is woven through Clallam County yesteryears.

Fred Filion Nov 28, 1975

Memorial services will be at 2pm Tuesday in Harper Funeral Home for Fred Filion, 78, 224 W 3rd St, who died here Friday. Dr Peter Raible of Seattle will conduct the service. Cremation was at Mt Angeles Cemetery,

Mr Filion retired as a Justice Court Judge in 1963 after serving since 1935.

He was born Oct 19, 1897 in Port Angeles to Mr and Mrs Alfred Filion and attended Lincoln Heights grade school. He graduated from Port Angeles High School [Roosevelt] in 1917 and was salutatorian of his class. In 1923 he graduated from the University of Washington majoring in history. Later he decided to study law and was admitted to the bar in 1930.

About the same time he became blind.

All the way through school his eyesight had worsened and much of his legal study had been done with the aid of people who read to him. He also studied Braille while he could still see.

In 1934 he ran for Justice of the Peace in Port Angeles precinct against William B. Ritchie and W.F. Phillips. He was never opposed after his election to that office. After his retirement in 1963 he continued to be active.

He served on the board of Diversified Industries and was a member of the Unitarian fellowship, Democratic club, Washington State Association for Retarded Children and the Grange. He also belonged to the Clallam County Historical Society.

The late attorney John Wilson of Port Angeles who helped tutor him in his law studies said of him: "He determined what he wanted and got it. He exerted a persistence that has helped make him a good judge."

Surviving are sisters Ruth Filion and Alfa Peterson [correct name Alfa Pierson] of Port Angeles. [Brother Stuart Filion preceded him in death who was also blind and famously led a fog bound fishing boat home using his keen hearing sense of the fog horns.]

Fred Filion was a judge here in Port Angeles officially as Justice of the Peace for 28 years. The historical classical revival style Clallam County Courthouse was dedicated in June 1915. Fred Filion was a judge there beginning in 1935 so he presided in the original courtroom surrounded by beautiful woodwork that he could not see.

Alfa Pierson was my grandmother and she often told a story about her brother the judge. She said a defendant made a comment that Fred, the judge, was making assumptions on his character due to his appearance. Fred silenced him with two words. "I'm blind".

What better candidate to impart "blind justice"?

Consider Filion Courthouse to honor Judge Fred and also other Filion family members who have contributed so much to Clallam County.

Thank you

Susan Purvis

Gores, Loni

From: Renee Grall <cochran_grall@wavecable.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 2:37 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: RENAMING THE COURTHOUSE -- NO THANK YOU

You don't often get email from cochran_grall@wavecable.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

As well meaning as this is, NO!

This is Clallam County. It's all our County. Makes no sense to change the name. Some things need to stay as is. Time passes, many don't know who she is. Do you think people will come to see our renamed Courthouse??? No! Do not set this precedent. Commissioners should not do this.

If you feel the need to honor her, do a proclamation or a plaque on a courtroom door or even by the front door if it's so important.

Women have been successful in a lot of ways for years, this is not appropriate, this is not necessary.

Please, absolutely not!

Thank you,
Renee' Grall
P.O. Box 333
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Gores, Loni

From: noreply@civicplus.com
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 1:58 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Online Form Submission #9166 for Contact the Clerk of the Board

Contact the Clerk of the Board

First Name	Denise
Last Name	Lapio
Email	Dylapio@aol.com
Phone	760-297-0053
Subject	RE: Renaming CC Courthouse
Comments	Dear Board of County Commissioners,

I am concerned with last Monday's Work Session discussion on renaming the Clallam County Courthouse in Port Angeles to posthumously honor Justice Susan Owens. The current name on the Courthouse is one that suffices to represent all citizens who live in Clallam County. I understand the emotional response to emphasize her contribution to our County, but as there have been many notable individuals who preceded her accomplishments, I firmly stand on keeping the name that is presently on the building. If you feel obliged to acquiesce to a lobbying group on Owens's behalf, I need to remind you that you represent all individuals, and your responsibilities need to align with those of the citizens of your respective districts. Any further discussion on the matter must include the public and the public's perspectives, including those that may lead to a County wide vote.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Your Constituent,

Denise Lapio

Please Note

This form is not for emergencies. If you have an emergency, please phone 911.

Gores, Loni

From: LEONARD HILLS Owner <shashii@centurylink.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 10:55 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Court House

Dear sirs, Why are you renaming a Courthouse. It stands for all peoples. Not just some, as renaming it implies. I do not want it renamed. I have lived in Clallam Count longer than that judge! Thank you
Leonard Hills

Gores, Loni

From: Judy Stipe <judithstipe@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 10:09 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Reminder to Commissioners

Loni,

Please forward this to Commissioners.

I'm sorry that I forgot to include this with original email about name change info.

I would like to remind everyone that the Clallam County Courthouse is listed on the Washington State list of Historical Sites and the National List of Historical Sites. These lists are published for decades in every form of media. It is impossible to change the names of those sites.

Submitted by,

Judith Reandeau Stipe

Gores, Loni

From: Judy Stipe <judithstipe@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 9:29 AM
To: Gores, Loni; Sequim Museum & Arts; doherty_mike@yahoo.com
Subject: Please do not change the name of our Clallam County Courthouse

Loni,

Could you please see that all three commissioners get a copy of this request?

As a local resident and taxpayer, I am begging you to not change the name of our Clallam County Courthouse. Please do not wipe away our history and invent ways to make it different just for the sake of change. This is so unnecessary when there is much to be fixed in our county. None of you were born here, probably didn't go to school here or have the blood connections with this land to understand what you are suggesting to change. New ideas should not be the focus here but just simply, leave our history alone.

There are many ways to honor Judge Susan Owens but not renaming our courthouse. She was an amazing woman who accomplished much in her career but I believe when you are paid to do a worthy job well, your rewards are many forever. Changing the name of this historic building does not have anything to do with honoring Judge Owens, the name should never be changed. It is our history that needs to be honored.

Please concentrate on our desperate needs in Clallam County and not further thinking of "new ideas" that just create ways to wipe out the past. We are all a blink on the radar of history which is static and can't be changed because it has already happened. Don't do damage to existing names that are imbedded in generations of families. You aren't representing us if you don't understand that fact. Sitting in your current elected positions for a short time does not give you the right to make these statements as if it is already decided.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Reandeau Stipe
Pioneer Family

Gores, Loni

From: Pamela Caldwell <pandmcalldwell@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 9:00 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Courthouse name change

NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! Name change! Never!!!!

Gores, Loni

From: Mike <sovereign4freedom@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 8:52 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming The Clallam County Courthouse...

To: Tha Clallam County Commissioners,

We here find it outrageous that the county commissioners have the time to waste on renaming the county courthouse, when there are very clearly SO many other FAR more serious matters for them to deal with. We strongly resent the fact that the county commissioners constantly scream about not having enough money, and then turn right around to squander our money on such utter nonsense as this insane renaming of OUR public property~! We are also offended by the gross mischaracterization of the true history of Susan Owens, the horrific damage that she caused to our economy, environmental destruction, and the harm to the public trust of the government in our community for many years that she was responsible for~! We are also deeply concerned about our local and state election system that has very clearly been corrupted for decades, through the "no ID, mail-in voting" crime spree, and ESPECIALLY the fact that corruption in our government has become undeniable. We are disgusted by the obviously self-serving nature of those who were very clearly never legally or lawfully elected into the offices that they have held, and therefore we completely reject their so-called "appointments" of all of these dubious Individuals who do NOT represent the will of the majority of folks who live here~! We are sick and tired of watching this political assault unfolding in Clallam County and after decades of failures, disasters and deaths we will no longer comply with ANYTHING that the county commissioners or so-called "government managers" attempt to impose upon the good folks of our community~! Rebuild the public trust that YOU have created and cease this insane political assault upon our community, or resign from office and let better Individuals do the job that "we" demand and deserve~!!!

Sincerely, Mike

Gores, Loni

From: Karen Parsons <karenpinwa@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 8:27 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming Clallam County Courthouse

Everyone recognizes the Clallam County Courthouse name. Renaming it after this lady judge means nothing to me and once again Commissioners don't ask the public what we want done. This is happening more and more. I thought Commissioners work for citizens, yet they are catering more and more to the tribe, NGO's and special interest groups. I thought they are not supposed to be biased. At least put it to the people of Clallam County before once again ignoring the public.

Karen Parsons
Sequim, WA

Gores, Loni

From: William M. Cwirla <wcwirla@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 7:37 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Re: Naming of the Clallam County Courthouse

[You don't often get email from wcwirla@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Ms. Gores.

I am a resident of Clallam County residing between Sequim and Port Angeles and have learned of plans to rename the country courthouse in honor of Justice Susan Owen's. Regardless of Justice Owens' accomplishments, this action is wholly inappropriate. The country courthouse belongs to the people and its name should indicate as much. We would be offended by the current administration naming the White House The Donald J. Trump White House or the congressional building the Barack Obama Congressional Building. Public buildings, such as a hall of justice are public property belonging to "we the people." They do not belong to country commissioners or special interest groups.

There is surely a better, more appropriate manner to honor Justice Owens than renaming a public building that belongs to the people.

Sincerely,

William M. Cwirla

Sent from my iPad

Gores, Loni

From: Terri DiMartino <girldog2007@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 7:36 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Cc: Terri DiMartino
Subject: Where can I submit my suggestion to rename the Clallam County Courthouse?

Dear Loni,

Please share the following inquiry with the Commissioners.

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to inquire about the established public process for renaming public buildings funded and maintained by taxpayers in Clallam County.

I understand there is a proposal to rename a building in honor of the late Judge Susan Owens. I would appreciate information regarding the official procedures for such a proposal.

Furthermore, I wish to express my opposition to this change. Renaming publicly funded buildings incurs unnecessary costs for new signage and letterhead. I believe Clallam County should avoid these non-essential expenditures.

Thank you,

Terri DiMartino
Sequim, Washington

Gores, Loni

From: Leilani Wood <leilani@olypen.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 6:54 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming the courthouse

You don't often get email from leilani@olypen.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Clallam County Commissioners:

What about Jim Buck? Steve Tharinger? Mike Chapman?
Does our community remember Paul Conner? Do you?

The list goes on....

Renaming the courthouse after one person is sacrilege to the memory of the others who work so hard for our County.

It is not in the community's best interest to rename the courthouse after just 'one' person?

This is a Disagreement to the idea of renaming the courthouse after any one.

Leilani Wood
50 year resident
Clallam County

Gores, Loni

From: Jeff Tozzer <jeff.tozzer@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 6:47 AM
To: French, Mike; Ozias, Mark; Johnson, Randy; Mielke, Todd; Gores, Loni
Subject: Renaming the Courthouse, Ignoring the Public

Dear Commissioners,

Work sessions are typically not scheduled for public comment. What justification was used to allow comment at this work session, and will that be formalized as part of a broader outreach plan?

Thanks,

Jeff



[CLALLAM
Renamin.](#)

0:00

Listen now

Renaming the Courthouse, Ignoring the Public

A proposal to honor Justice Susan Owens raises a deeper question: who, exactly, does county government exist to serve?

[JEFF TOZZER](#)

FEB 4



[READ IN APP](#)

What began as a modest idea to honor the late Justice Susan Owens has rapidly escalated into a proposal to rename the Clallam County Courthouse itself—without public process, without debate, and without any meaningful discussion of how her judicial legacy affected everyday residents. As commissioners praise character and affiliations, they avoid a harder question: should a courthouse symbolize special interests, or equal justice for all?

In the podcast: Public comment highlights.



Dedicated in 1915, the Clallam County Courthouse has carried the same name for 111 years. County commissioners are now considering changing it.

What started last year as a casual discussion about how to honor the late Justice Susan Owens has moved far beyond a plaque, a tree, or a bench on the courthouse lawn. This week, county commissioners openly floated renaming the Clallam County Courthouse itself—**without a public process**, without debate, and without any real discussion of how Owens’ judicial legacy affected the people who live here.

Instead, the focus stayed on personality, friendships, and affiliations.

At Monday’s work session, Commissioner Mark Ozias said he believed it would be “wholly appropriate” to consider naming the courthouse after Owens. Commissioner Mike French

quickly agreed, saying renaming the courthouse would be “the way to spread the message the furthest.” Commissioner Randy Johnson suggested forming a group to look at memorial options and added that if that group decided the courthouse should be renamed, “that’s great.”

French went a step further, suggesting a courtroom in Forks also be named after Owens, citing her years serving District Court 2 on the West End. Commissioners also floated the idea of naming the historic courtroom in the courthouse after Owens.

What was never explained is why the county’s central symbol of justice—meant to represent *everyone*—should be named after a judge whose body of work consistently favored certain interests over others.

That question never came up.



When the Rules Suddenly Bend

Monday work sessions are **not** supposed to include public comment. That has been made very clear in the past—especially in 2023, when Towne Road supporters were repeatedly told by Commissioner French that work sessions are for the public to “observe, not participate.”

That rule didn’t seem to apply this week.

In a rare break from protocol, French invited “stakeholders” in the audience to speak. Karen Unger stood up and was invited to the staff table.

Unger explained that Owens had been her former law partner in 1981, worked in Forks for 19 years, and that the courthouse-renaming effort was being pushed by **Washington Women Lawyers**. She spoke at length about Owens attending Fourth of July parades in Forks and being a frequent Thanksgiving guest at her home. Owens, Unger said, was a “hometown girl who did good”—even while noting that Owens was from North Carolina and spent roughly a quarter-century living and working in Olympia during her time on the Supreme Court. Owens passed away in California.

“So putting a plaque on a tree, I’m sorry, is not appropriate,” Unger said.

What was not mentioned at the table—but matters for the public record—is that Unger is also a practicing attorney who performs paid legal work for Clallam County. Earlier this same week, county commissioners approved a \$6,250 payment to Unger for “Superior Court Conflict” services.

apChkLat
01/29/2026 9:44:52AM

Final Check List
CLALLAM COUNTY

Bacc

Page: 1

Bank : apbank U S BANK							
Check #	Date	Vendor	Invoice	Inv Date	Description	Amount Paid	Check Total
2/3/2026	0000907	LEXISNEXIS	3096191347	1/21/2026	LEXISNEXIS PLUS SUBSCRIF	427.00	427.00
2/3/2026	0001607	KAREN L UNGER, P.S.	FEB2025 KU	1/21/2026	JAN2026 SUP CRT CONFLICT	6,250.00	6,250.00
2/3/2026	0001632	U S POSTMASTER	JURY MAR/APR	1/22/2026	JURY SUMMONS MAR/APR 21	610.00	
			JURY APR 2026	1/22/2026	JURY SUMMONS APR 2026	610.00	1,220.00
2/3/2026	0018162	PENINSULA TRAILS COAL	19925.26.020 TF	1/21/2026	LTAC 19925.26.020 PENINSUL	64,000.00	64,000.00
2/3/2026	0021617	WOLFLEY LAW OFFICE P	FEB2025 LW	1/21/2026	JAN2026 SUP CRT CONFLICT	6,250.00	
			FEB2025 BV	1/21/2026	JAN2026 DISTRICT CT CONFI	3,000.00	9,250.00
2/3/2026	0023383	PAYNE LAW, PS	FEB2025 WP	1/21/2026	JAN2026 SUP CRT CONFLICT	6,250.00	6,250.00
2/3/2026	0045706	ST MARIE LAW PLLC	FEB2025 JSM	1/21/2026	JAN2026 DISTRICT CT CONFI	3,000.00	3,000.00
2/3/2026	0045731	RODRIGUEZ, JAMES ART	FEB2025 JR	1/21/2026	JAN2026 CIVIL CONTEMPT/P/	1,000.00	1,000.00
2/3/2026	0046882	FIELD ARTS & EVENTS H	19925.26.026 FII	1/21/2026	LTAC 19925.26.026 PA WATER	321,164.00	321,164.00
2/3/2026	0048234	HURRICANE RIDGE WINT	19925.26.005 H	1/21/2026	LTAC 19925.26.005 HURRICAI	60,000.00	60,000.00
2/3/2026	0051013	DUNGENESS CRAB FEST	19925.26.012	1/21/2026	LTAC 19925.26.012 THE DUNC	59,500.00	59,500.00
2/3/2026	0051780	TOP LEFT TRAILS CO-OP	19925.26.015 TI	1/22/2026	LTAC 19925.26.015 TOP LEFT	80,000.00	80,000.00
Sub total for U S BANK:							612,061.00

There's no indication that the payment was improper. But the timing, combined with the **special access** Unger was given during a work session where public comment is normally prohibited, raises obvious questions about optics and fairness. At the very least, it shows how selectively the word "stakeholder" gets applied—and how easily the **rules shift depending on who is speaking** and what they're advocating for.

Support From Tribes—And a Missing Question

Leaders from the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and the Quileute Tribe also spoke in favor of renaming the courthouse. They highlighted Owens' service as a **tribal judge**. Owens served as Chief Judge for the Quileute Tribe for about five years and as Chief Judge for the Lower Elwha S'Klallam Tribe's court for more than six years.

What went unasked was whether either sovereign nation plans to name buildings **on their own lands** after Justice Owens — or whether the expectation is that Clallam County taxpayers should be the ones to permanently memorialize her legacy.



The Record Nobody Wanted to Talk About

Throughout the discussion, commissioners and supporters spoke warmly about Owens as a person. She was kind. She smiled. She gardened. She was well-liked.

What they didn't talk about was her record—and how it shaped life here.

Owens was appointed to the Washington Supreme Court in 2001 by Governor Gary Locke and served for more than two decades. During that time, she was a reliable vote for **expansive environmental regulation**, broad deference to state agencies, strong **interpretations of treaty rights**, and a narrow view of when property owners are entitled to compensation.

Those positions regularly aligned with **tribal and agency interests**. They also helped reinforce **Growth Management Act restrictions**, shoreline buffers, and regulatory frameworks that continue to limit housing, constrain rural landowners, and keep Clallam County **economically depressed**.

That record may be admired by some. But it clearly produced winners and losers. None of that was acknowledged on Monday.



A Tale of Two Women

The contrast is hard to miss.

Just last month, this same board quietly removed a woman from the Heritage Advisory Board. She was a longtime Clallam County resident, had served two terms as chair, and is the only person to have built a museum in this county in the last 40 years. She grew up here. She is, by any definition, a hometown contributor.

She was ousted by the commissioners and given a proclamation on paper.

Her replacement, Derrick Eberle, was appointed despite growing questions about whether he even lives in Clallam County—questions the commissioners declined to seriously investigate.

No work session rally.

No discussions.

No urgency to honor service.

In Clallam County, political connections matter more than local roots.

When Public Input Doesn't Matter

The contrast becomes even sharper when viewed alongside a very recent example.

Last year, **Jake Seegers** led an effort to stop the county commissioners from adding a new \$5 parcel fee to property tax statements to fund the Clallam Conservation District. The proposal was widely unpopular. Over several weeks, Seegers and other volunteers gathered **1,032 signatures** from residents asking the commissioners not to impose the fee.

The message from the public was clear.

The commissioners imposed it anyway.

Now compare that to what happened Monday. No petition. No signatures. No public vote. Just a handful of friends and political insiders speaking during a single work session—one where public comment is normally prohibited—and suddenly the idea of renaming the *entire Clallam County Courthouse* is moving forward as if it were a foregone conclusion.

It raises a fair question: how is this equitable? When more than a thousand residents speak up, they are ignored. When a small circle of insiders asks for something symbolic and permanent, the rules bend and the path clears.

The pattern should feel familiar. Towne Road was never the commissioners' to give away. County parks are not theirs to hand over to political donors or favored partners. And the Clallam County Courthouse is not a personal canvas for commissioners to rename based on who has access, influence, or the right connections. These are public assets, held in trust for the people—not bargaining chips to be reshaped behind closed doors.

What the Courthouse Is Supposed to Mean

The building at 4th and Lincoln is currently called the Clallam County Courthouse.

That name matters because it represents *everyone*.

Most people don't care much what the courthouse is called. What they care about is whether the people inside it work for *all* residents—not just tribes, not just NGOs, not just environmental causes, and not just politically connected agencies.

Renaming the courthouse after a figure whose jurisprudence consistently favored certain interests sends a message, whether intended or not, about whose voices count.

“The government is us; we are the government, you and I.” — Thomas Paine

✓ [Subscribed](#)

A Better Way Forward

This decision rests solely with the Clallam County Board of Commissioners.

Before any renaming happens, the county should slow down, invite formal public comment, seriously consider alternative memorials, and be honest about Justice Owens' full legacy—personal and professional.

Honor shouldn't be decided by insider consensus.



Call to Action

Residents who want a say should email the **Clerk of the Board** at loni.gores@clallamcountywa.gov, which ensures correspondence is shared with all three county commissioners. Decisions about the courthouse should reflect public values—not political comfort.

Because in the end, the courthouse shouldn't be named for power, prestige, or politics.

It should stand for justice—for everyone.



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1052 Jamestown Rd, Sequim, WA 98382

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Gores, Loni

From: jeff williams <wjeff3388@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 6:35 AM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Courthouse

You don't often get email from wjeff3388@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I have lived in Clallam County for the whole of my 70 years. I would like to go on the record as being opposed to renaming the Clallam County courthouse.

Gores, Loni

From: Kathy <whiskkerz@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 2, 2026 9:44 PM
To: Gores, Loni
Subject: Owens and Stipe

Loni, please submit the following to the Commissioners - thanks.

Commissioners:

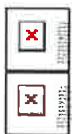
The Olympic Peninsula Chapter of the Washington Women Lawyers Association requested a memorial such as a bench and plaque to honor Justice Susan Owens. Their thought behind it was a good one, to inspire young women. You supported this proposal but somehow it has evolved (or shall I say blown up) into a discussion about renaming the Clallam County courthouse and the courtroom in Forks after her.

Judith Stipe does not only inspire young women, she inspires everyone. She's kept Clallam county's history alive so it can easily be remembered by the old timers, and gives our youngest citizens a chance to learn about the county's past. The new museum would likely not have been built without her efforts.

Will Judith Stipe merit even a plaque or do you consider her insignificant in comparison to Justice Owens? Please tell me what your plan is to recognize Judith for all she has done for the county and everyone in it.

Thank you,

Kathy





LOWER ELWHA KLALLAM TRIBE

Wə́x̣əwə́ṣəỵəwə́ "Strong People"

2851 Lower Elwha Road
Port Angeles, WA 98363

Phone: 360.452.8471
Fax: 360.452.3428

January 30, 2026

Clallam County Board of County Commissioners
Clallam County Courthouse
223 East 4th Street, Room 160
Port Angeles, WA 98362

RE: Support for Renaming the Clallam County Courthouse in Honor of
Justice Susan Owens

Dear Clallam County Commissioners:

On behalf of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, I write in strong support of renaming the Clallam County Courthouse in honor of Justice Susan J. Owens, a jurist whose lifetime of service profoundly shaped our legal community and whose legacy continues to uplift our tribal community, our rural communities, and all who seek justice in Clallam County and beyond.

Justice Owens' career was defined by an extraordinary commitment to fairness, inclusion, and community-centered justice. She served for nearly two decades as a judge on the Clallam County District Court. She was the first woman to serve in that capacity and earned enduring respect for her integrity, wisdom, and compassion. As a judge, she treated those appearing before her with dignity and used the court to elevate and protect every voice, particularly those who were underserved, marginalized, or vulnerable.

Central to Justice Owens' legacy was her unwavering advocacy for survivors of domestic violence. Long before such issues were widely understood within the judicial system, she recognized the complex realities victims face and the essential role courts play in ensuring their safety and healing. She worked tirelessly to strengthen judicial responses through trauma-informed practices, meaningful offender accountability, and enhanced protections for families. Her leadership significantly advanced judicial understanding of domestic violence across Washington and the broader Northwest, leaving a lasting impact on how courts approach these cases with humanity.

Justice Owens also served as the first Chief Judge of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal Court for more than six years. In this role, she demonstrated a deep respect for tribal sovereignty and cultural traditions, while skillfully bridging Indigenous perspectives with Western legal systems in ways that promoted healing and community wellbeing. Her leadership in the tribal court was not merely judicial and administrative; it was transformative, helping to strengthen the Tribe's judicial capacity and honor tribal customs within the broader context of justice.

Throughout her distinguished 24-year tenure on the Washington Supreme Court, where she was the first woman to serve until the court's mandatory retirement age, Justice Owens remained a

tireless advocate for rural and tribal courts and for expanding access to justice for all citizens. She founded the Rural Courts Committee of the Washington District and Municipal Court Judges' Association, and taught statewide judicial education focused on rural courts. She also played a vital role in the Tribal State Court Consortium, where through collaboration and mentorship she built lasting bridges between tribal and state courts and advanced shared principles of fairness and respect.

To the people of Clallam County and surrounding tribal communities, Susan Owens was far more than a jurist. She was a trusted community partner, a steady mentor, and a guardian of justice whose compassion and humanity shaped every courtroom she entered. Susan Owens is the only Washington Supreme Court Justice to have served as a judge in Clallam County before being seated on the Supreme Court. Renaming the Clallam County Courthouse in her honor is a rare opportunity and would serve as a lasting tribute to a woman whose life work uplifted our shared community and strengthened the rule of law. Her legacy reflects the highest ideals of justice, fairness, and cross-cultural respect to which our legal institutions aspire to uphold. This recognition would honor her extraordinary contributions and inspire future generations of lawyers, judges, and community leaders, particularly women, to lead with courage, integrity, and moral clarity.

On behalf of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, I respectfully urge the Board of County Commissioners to support this meaningful and historic dedication.

Sincerely,



Frances G. Charles
Chairwoman, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe



Quileute Tribal Council

• QUILEUTE INDIAN TRIBE •

P.O. Box 279 • La Push, WA • 98350-0279
Phone: (360) 374-6163 • Fax: (360) 374-6311



January 29, 2025

Subject: Letter of Support Honoring Justice Susan Owens

Honorable Commissioners,

On behalf of the Quileute Tribe, I write to express our support for the request to honor the late Washington State Supreme Court Justice Susan Owens by naming the Clallam County Courthouse in her honor.

Justice Owens's legacy of public service, dedication to the rule of law, and commitment to fairness and justice left a lasting impact on Washington State and the communities she served. Her leadership and integrity continue to be held in high regard, and this recognition is a fitting and meaningful tribute to her contributions.

The Quileute Tribe values opportunities to stand alongside neighboring Tribes, local governments, and community partners in recognizing individuals whose lives and work strengthened our shared institutions and advanced justice for all.

Thank you for considering this letter of support. We respectfully support honoring Justice Susan Owens in this manner.

Rio Jaime
Chairman
Quileute Tribal Council