

THE HONORABLE ROBERT D.S. KIM

The Honorable Robert D. S. Kim grew up on the Big Island having attended Waiakea Elementary and Intermediate. He is a graduate of Hilo High School, Class of 1972. He received his B.A. in Political Science from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and served as Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH) President from 1976-1977. Judge Kim worked in the Hawai'i State Senate prior to law school for five sessions, and served for two years as the Committee Clerk for the Senate Judiciary Committee. He also served as Chairperson for the Hawai'i Democratic Party for the Island of Hawai'i from 1996-1998.

Judge Kim received his J.D. from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa William S. Richardson School of Law, where he was a member of the law review. After law school, he worked on O'ahu for several firms in the areas of construction, banking, and other civil litigation. In 1990, he returned to the Big Island where he practiced in the areas of real estate and civil litigation. Thereafter, he opened his own firm in Kona and practiced civil, criminal, family, and environmental law. Judge Kim was elected West Hawai'i Bar President nine times in an effort to secure the funding for the Keahoulu Courthouse in Kailua-Kona. He also had been appointed by U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye to serve on the Saddle Road Task Force to help guide the development of the cross-island road. He volunteered his time on this task force for 20 years. Judge Kim litigated numerous cases on a *pro bono* basis, including serving as local counsel for Na Loio in domestic violence matters, assisting the most vulnerable members of our society, namely immigrant women who were unable to converse in English and were susceptible to domestic and financial abuse. He also served as *pro bono* counsel in environmental cases in West Hawai'i, including the landmark decision in *Ka Pa'akai O Ka'aina v. Land Use Commission* which addressed the constitutional obligation to preserve and protect customary/traditional rights of Native Hawaiians.

In 2017, Robert D. S. Kim was sworn in by Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald to serve as Judge of the Circuit Court of the Third Circuit in Kona. He is currently Chief Judge for the Third Circuit Court, Island of Hawai'i, State of Hawai'i. He oversees over 200 employees and 10 judges, with an annual budget of approximately 20 million dollars. Judge Kim was recently selected by the Chief Justice as the Jurist of the Year for 2023, for outstanding leadership and service.