

Opinion: Hope for Idaho to have competent family lawyer

Jul 31, 2022

When I received a call from Tom Arkoosh a couple of weeks ago, asking if I would support his candidacy for Idaho attorney general, I did not hesitate to say yes. It is an interesting fact that he favored me with his support for that same office 40 years ago. Tom was Gem County prosecuting attorney at that time, and I was looking for prosecutor support because my primary and general election opponents were both county prosecutors. I won the elections and served eight years as attorney general. I know what it takes to be the family lawyer for the Gem State, and Tom has the right stuff.

Tom grew up on the Arkoosh family livestock operation near Gooding, graduated from Harvard in 1974 and got his law degree from the University of Idaho in 1978. He has practiced law in the state for 44 years. Tom has wide-ranging experience in the law, which is essential for running the largest law office in Idaho. The attorney general is responsible for managing 125 lawyers, together with investigators, paralegals and support staff. Electing an inexperienced lawyer like his opponent to that office is asking for trouble.

Tom Arkoosh is well-versed in water law and understands the vital importance of Idaho water to the well-being of our state. Monied interests would love to gain control of significant portions of our water, and the attorney general must be dedicated to protecting that precious resource for beneficial use by Idahoans. Tom will be up to that critical task.

The attorney general is responsible for managing all of the state's litigation in both state and federal courts. Tom has handled hundreds of cases in federal and Idaho courts at both the trial and appellate levels. It makes no sense to put a lawyer with a narrow scope of legal experience in charge of legal work of such importance to Idaho taxpayers.

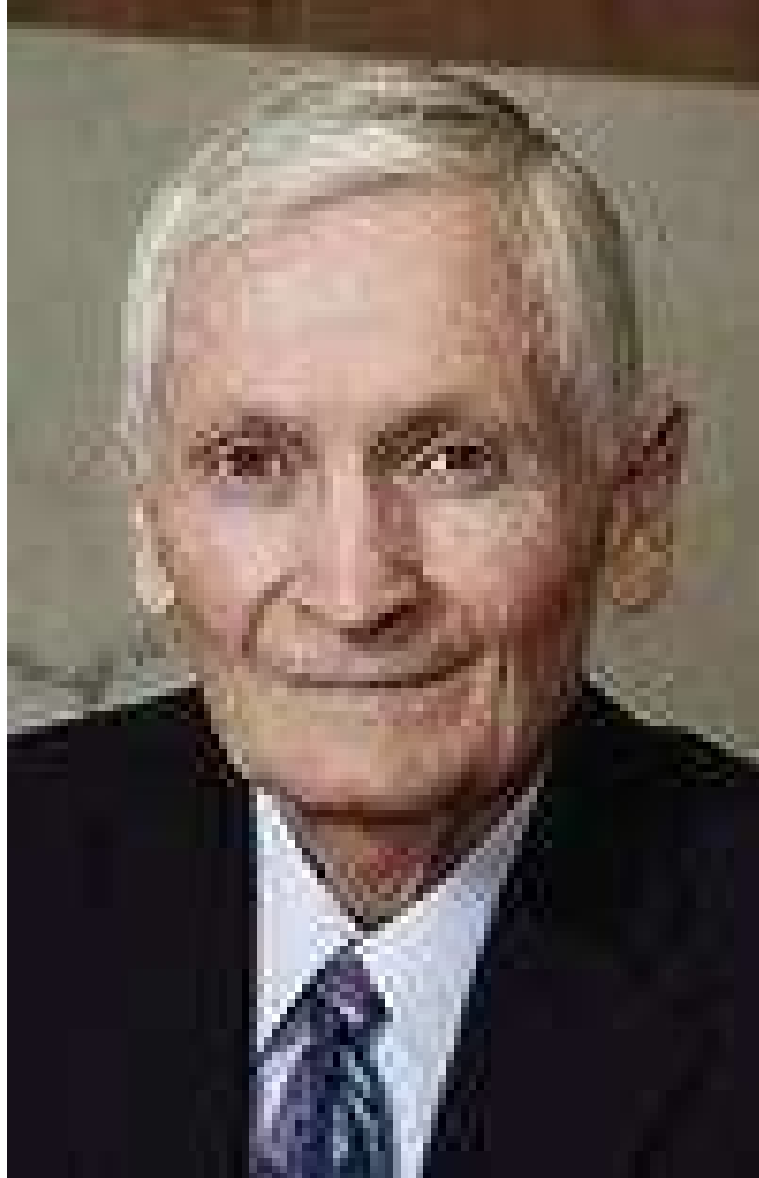
The attorney general handles regulatory enforcement in administrative and court proceedings and must be knowledgeable in that important arena. Tom has practiced before numerous state administrative agencies and understands the need to apply fairness, common sense and due process under the law.

Another critical job of the attorney general is to handle all criminal appeals in state and federal courts and, when asked, assist county prosecutors with investigations and trials. Tom Arkoosh has experience as both a prosecutor and defender. He won't have to get on-the-job training in this important work.

The attorney general provides legal advice and assistance to practically every state official and agency. That work must not be corrupted by political considerations. The

attorney general is the state's family lawyer. We would not stand for our personal lawyer to give us biased, incorrect advice. That is a recipe for legal disaster. The people should reject any attorney general candidate who promises to put politics above the law. Tom is dedicated to the rule of law and will not allow politically-tinged advice to be provided to state governmental officials. He won't be bullied into corrupting the work of the attorney general's office.

Having grown up on the farm, Tom has a clear understanding of the importance of farmers and ranchers to the economic health of Idaho. He has an appreciation of what it takes to make a living in the state's natural resource industries and will bring that knowledge to his work on the State Land Board. He understands that producing good financial returns from state endowment lands is a constitutional requirement but that there must be a healthy customer base to sustain those yields.



Jim Jones

Because of Tom's broad background, strong legal experience and dedication to the rule of law, I was pleased that he stepped forward to run for Idaho attorney general and more than happy to sign on as his campaign treasurer. When you have served in that office, you get protective about it. When Lawrence Wasden did not prevail in his election contest, I was disheartened about the future of the office. With Tom Arkoosh in the running, there is hope that a competent adult will be in charge of the state's important legal business — if he prevails.

Jim Jones is a Vietnam combat veteran who served eight years as Idaho attorney general (1983-1991) and 12 years as a justice on the Idaho Supreme Court (2005-2017). He is currently a regular contributor to The Hill online news. He blogs at JJCommonTater.