

For Official Release
PR 004-01092023
Office of the Governor
Utulei, American Samoa
January 09, 2023



Honorable Lemanu Appoints Juliet Kristi Thaxton as Chief Legal Counsel for the Office of the Governor

“I congratulate Ms. Thaxton on her appointment as Chief Legal Counsel. Her expertise and vast knowledge makes her the best contender for this position.”

Governor Lemanu has appointed Kristi Thaxton as the new Chief Legal Counsel for the Office of the Governor. Former Chief Legal Counsel Jason Mitchell has served American Samoa well in his tenure since the beginning of the Lemanu and Talauega Administration.

Juliet Kristi Thaxton began practicing law in 1997 after graduating from Georgia State University Law School. She practiced in child welfare, family law, and prosecuted misdemeanors and traffic offenses. Ms. Thaxton became a Child Welfare Law Specialist in 2012. After prosecuting for nine years, she served as Judge in several courts from 2011 - 2021. In 2020, Counsel Kristi received the Council of Municipal Court Judges President's Award for improving the lives of people in her community and throughout Georgia based on her service on the Council and her committed devotion to justice. Ms. Thaxton arrived and served in the American Samoa Government's Office of Governor's Counsel in June 2021 where she now serves as Chief Counsel.

Also under the Office of the Governor is Counsel Terry VanEaton. Terry VanEaton joined the Office of the Governor of American Samoa as Legal Counsel in October of 2022. Prior to joining the Governor's Office, Counsel VanEaton served as an attorney in the Compliance Division of the Nebraska Department of Revenue, and as Director of Compliance for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. He has served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Prosecution Division of the Office of the Attorney General of Guam, and has worked in private practice serving clients in both the private and public sectors. Counsel VanEaton is a graduate of the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis and is licensed to practice law in American Samoa, Tennessee, and Nebraska.

“I congratulate Ms. Thaxton on her appointment as Chief Legal Counsel. Her expertise and vast knowledge makes her the best contender for this position.” commended Honorable Lemanu. He continued, “I also would like to welcome Mr. VanEaton to the team and look forward to the great work that is to come. Please provide Chief Counsel Thaxton and Counsel VanEaton with your full support and cooperation.”

###