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## 3 join Linn County District Attorney's Office

By Alex Paul

*Communications Officer*

ALBANY — Robert Beaver, Jace Cook and Melissa Allison have joined the Linn County District Attorney's Office as deputy district attorneys.

Beaver, 29, is a North Carolina native and North Carolina State University graduate, with a degree in zoology.

He earned his law degree in 2020 from Lewis and Clark Law School.

"I originally wanted to be a veterinarian," Beaver said. Hed has a focus on environmental law.

Beaver comes to Linn County after about 18 months at the Coos County District Attorney's Office, where he worked on domestic violence cases and had an interest in wildlife and animal abuse issues.

"I had visited the Albany area several times and it's beautiful here," Beaver said of his move to the mid-valley. "I have met some great, hard-working people, much like those in North Carolina."

Beaver said he and his girlfriend enjoy traveling. She would like to visit Iceland and he tends to like warmer climates, such as Mediterranean.

Beaver enjoys reading, music and being outdoors hiking or kayaking.

"I'm excited to be here," Beaver said. "It's a great office and everyone has been very welcoming."

### Jace Cook

Jace Cook took a winding route to law school and his new job in Linn County.

A Grants Pass native, Cook spent one year at Gonzaga University in Spokane before transferring to the University of Oregon, where he earned a degree in Kinesiology in 1999.

"I had thought about going to medical school," Cook said of his degree choice. "I had always enjoyed science, health and exercise, but I wanted to explore my options and gain real-world experience before making any final decisions."

Cook had several jobs in ensuing years, from being a financial adviser to EMT at a rural fire station near Grants Pass.

Cook spent nearly two months training with Morgan Stanley at the World Trade Center in New York City, and left the city only days before the twin towers were attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001.

Cook spent two years in Weimar, Germany, where he taught English as a Second Language and met a German man who was in law school there.

That led him to auditing law classes taught in English by an American and sparked his decision to attend law school.

"I have always been interested in the concept of justice and standing up for what is right," he said. "That has



Robert Beaver



Jace Cook



Melissa Allison

always been important to me, plus I enjoy serving my community."

Cook earned his law degree in 2015 and worked with several attorneys in the Portland area before opening his own law firm in Lake Oswego. He gained broad experience in personal injury law, criminal law, family law and contracts.

In December 2020, Cook met another long-term goal when he earned a direct commission in the Oregon Army National Guard as a JAG lawyer. He completed basic training at Ft. Benning, Georgia, then completed the Judge Advocate Officer Basic Course in Charlottesville, Virginia.

He was commissioned as a First Lieutenant.

When he isn't working, Cook is learning to ride a horse with his daughter Alice, has completed an ultramarathon, hunts chuckers in eastern Oregon and said he would like to get back into fly fishing.

"I'm really grateful to be a part of the District Attorney's Office," Cook said. "I have always been interested in prosecution. There is a strong sense of purpose and teamwork here. We are on a mission, which is what I enjoy so much about being in the military."

### Melissa Allison

Melissa Allison was in the seventh grade when she realized she wanted to become an attorney.

"I was standing up for another student and a teacher asked if I thought I was her lawyer," Allison said. "I knew then that I wanted to stand up for people."

Allison recently joined the Linn County Attorney's Office specializing in juvenile cases. She will work 19 hours per week.

Allison grew up in Estacada and Gresham, graduating from Sam Barlow High School and then Portland State University with a degree in business and a minor

in communications.

She traveled to Western New England College in Springfield where she earned her law degree in 2005.

"I worked my way through college, I usually had at least one job," Allison said.

In the summers, Allison would return to Oregon where she had internships in district attorney offices.

Her first job as an attorney was with the Marion County District Attorney's Office in 2006. She had been a volunteer victim's advocate in the office for about a year.

"I prosecuted all type of criminal cases, from disorderly conduct to murder, DUI and domestic violence," she said.

Allison also focused on aid and assist for the mentally ill population.

Allison spent 13 years in that office, then took time off to raise her daughter, 6, and son, 4. Her husband is an elementary school counselor.

Since 2019 she has taught criminal law and trial classes at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training in Salem.

"That's how I got to know Linn County prosecutors," Allison said. "I want to stand up for victims. I also want to help kids stay out of the legal system by addressing their issues early and helping them have a meaningful life."

Allison and her family enjoy the outdoors; water sports, hiking, backpacking, hunting and fishing.

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