



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI
415 EAST 12TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64106

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NEWS RELEASE
Judge Messina Honored as
Dean of the Trial Bar

The Honorable Edith Messina, Judge, 16th Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri, was recently honored by the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association (KCMBA) for her superb litigation skills and professional demeanor. The award, “Dean of the Trial Bar” also honors judges and lawyers for their length of service and lifelong commitment to the profession.

Judge Messina was appointed to the bench in 1984 by Governor Christopher S. Bond, becoming the first female Circuit Judge in Jackson County. Judge Messina was also the first woman to be the 16th Circuit Court’s Presiding Judge. When presenting the award, Greg Bentz, KCMBA President, said, “Judge Messina has provided outstanding service as a member of the 16th Judicial Circuit in Jackson County since her appointment in 1984. She has a long history of assisting in the training and development of young lawyers, and greatly impacted how we all practice law when she oversaw a large number of technology improvements while serving as Presiding Judge. She is a Dean of the Trial Bar, without question.”

Judge Messina is a native of Kansas City. She received her Bachelor’s degree from Avila University, and then served as a volunteer in the Peace Corps, stationed in Nigeria. The idea of becoming a lawyer first occurred to Judge Messina as a freshman in high school. But, after college, she put the idea of law school on hold. Then, “after witnessing the Biafran civil war in Nigeria, I committed again to pursuing a law degree, because the idea of aiding people in resolving their disputes in a civil and fair fashion seemed a worthy way to spend my life.” Judge Messina returned to Kansas City, and obtained her J.D. from the University of Missouri – Kansas City in 1974.

Nominations for the award are submitted by members of the association and screened by a selection committee. The KCMBA Board of Directors then makes the final decision on recipients, and presents the award at the annual Bench-Bar Conference.

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