



16th Judicial Circuit, Jackson County

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Judge Robert L. Trout to Retire

Judge Robert L. Trout, 69, will retire on October 31, 2018 after serving as an associate circuit judge for 31 years. He was appointed to Division 32 in Independence by Governor John Ashcroft in 1987.

Trout said what he liked the most about serving as a judge was “the challenge of making the right decision.” He especially liked hearing small claims cases due to the variety of issues and disputes. And, he enjoyed talking with people, many of whom represented themselves.

“I would just try and explain to them if they were not right, why that was,” Trout said. “I would explain what the law says.”

Presiding Judge John M. Torrence said, “Judge Trout dedicated 31 years of his life to our Court. He did so in an exemplary manner and enjoyed the highest level of respect and appreciation amongst the members of the bar. I speak from personal experience as a practicing lawyer when I say that you were always happy to have a case assigned to Division 32. Judge Trout called them straight and he called them fairly. His retirement leaves a hole in the heart and soul of our Court. We wish him the best as he enjoys the next chapter of his life.”

Trout said the most significant change in the judicial system during his tenure was the increased use of technology. When he was first appointed, the clerks were using IBM selectric typewriters to create the dockets. They would bring large stacks of paper traffic tickets into the courtroom. Trout recalls a conversation he had with retiring Judge James Horn, whose place Trout was taking in Division 32.

“He told me at that time,” Trout said chuckling, “they are trying to get you to go to computers. Don’t do it. It will never work.”

Since then, Missouri’s judicial system has not only gone to computers, but also implemented electronic filing. Case information is available on-line through Missouri Case.net.

Trout graduated from William Jewell College with a bachelor’s degree in 1971. He served as a police officer for two years in Liberty, Missouri, before attending law school. He obtained his J.D. degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1975. Prior to his appointment to the Jackson County Circuit Court, he practiced law in Blue Springs and Odessa, and served as a municipal judge for the City of Lone Jack from 1980 to 1987.

“I am proud to have been a part of this Court, a great court with great judges and a great staff,” Trout said.

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