



16th Judicial Circuit of Jackson County, Missouri

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Valerie Hartman
Public Information Officer
(816) 881-3552

Jackson County Circuit Court makes two appointments to the Probate Division

At a meeting of the Court en Banc, Deputy Probate Commissioner Jerri J. Zhang was appointed as probate commissioner to serve a four year term. She will take the place of Scott Manuel who joined the law firm of Kirkland Woods & Martinsen earlier this month after serving in the Probate Division since 2014.

At the time of her appointment as deputy probate commissioner in September 2016 by Probate Judge Mark A. Styles, Zhang was serving as an attorney in the Jackson County Counselor's Office. She had previously served as legal counsel for the Jackson County Public Administrator. She received her J.D. degree in 2009 from the University of Missouri-Columbia after earning her bachelor's degree in journalism there.

The probate commissioner is appointed by the judges meeting as a whole. The deputy probate commissioner position is appointed by the probate judge.

After the Court en Banc elevated Zhang to commissioner, Styles appointed attorney Brian A. Tillema as the next deputy probate commissioner. Tillema started his own law practice in May 1993 as a solo practitioner. Fifty percent of his practice is in the Jackson County Probate Division. Prior to 1993, he served as a law clerk to Probate Judge John A. Borron, Jr. and Circuit Judge Donald L. Mason both of the Jackson County Circuit Court. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas in 1987, and his J.D. degree from Washburn University School of Law in 1990.

Upon their appointments made on February 21, Judge Styles said, "The Probate Division of Jackson County is extremely lucky and extremely excited to have these two great commissioners serving our community."

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