



16th Judicial Circuit of Missouri

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News Release **Judges Burnett and Youngs to retire from 16th Circuit**

Two long-serving judges of the 16th Judicial Circuit of Missouri will retire later this year.

Judge S. Margene Burnett will step down from Division 7 on October 31, marking the end of her 22 years as a judicial officer. Judge J. Dale Youngs of Division 6 will leave the bench on November 28, closing out a 16-year judicial career that included a term as the circuit's presiding judge.

Both positions are expected to be filled under the Nonpartisan Court Plan in the months following their retirements.

Judge Burnett joined the court in 2003 when the court appointed her as deputy commissioner of its probate division. She became the first commissioner to be elected president of the Association of Probate and Associate Circuit Judges. She served as deputy probate commissioner until Gov. Jay Nixon appointed her to Division 7 in November 2013.

A life-long Kansas City area resident, Judge Burnett began her career in private practice with Morris & Larson and engaged in multiple areas of litigation including insurance defense, plaintiff personal injury, employment, business and family law. She formed her own practice in 1995 and added probate to her legal expertise. She earned her law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law and her bachelor's degrees in magazine journalism and political science from the University of Missouri in Columbia.

In her letter to Gov. Mike Kehoe, she closed by saying, "It has truly been my great honor and pleasure to serve the judiciary and the citizens of the state of Missouri. While I will miss the

daily interaction with litigants and counsel, I know my fellow judges, commissioners and staff will continue the important work of the judiciary. They are among the very best in this state and it has been a privilege to serve with them.”

Judge Youngs was appointed to the bench in April 2009 by Gov. Nixon, and he served as the 16th Circuit’s presiding judge from 2021 to 2022. Prior to his appointment, he had been in private practice with the law firm now known as Husch Blackwell LLP, where his practice included business and commercial litigation, white collar criminal defense, and government affairs. From 1996 to 2002, he served as an assistant Missouri attorney general, prosecuting civil and criminal consumer fraud cases as well as computer-related crimes.

Judge Youngs earned his law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law and his bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri.

“It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to serve the citizens of this state — and this community — as a judge,” Judge Youngs wrote in a letter to Gov. Kehoe. “I am grateful to have had the opportunity to do so with such a committed group of public servants, including my fellow judges and commissioners here and around the state, and the other dedicated employees of Missouri’s judicial branch.”

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