



16th Judicial Circuit
Jackson County, Missouri

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NEWS RELEASE

Judge Marco A. Roldan to retire after 27 years of service

Judge Marco A. Roldan, who was the first minority appointed to serve as a judge in Independence in the entire history of the circuit court, will retire on August 4, 2023.

Roldan, 66, was appointed as the circuit judge of Division 16 in September 1999 by Governor Mel Carnahan. He served at the Eastern Jackson County Courthouse in Independence. Prior to that, Roldan had served as the court's first drug court commissioner from 1996 to 1999.

He was also the first minority to ever serve as the court's presiding judge when he was elected by his fellow judges as administrative judge of the court, serving a two-year term from 2013-2014.

"I am very proud of that," said Roldan. "There had never been a minority presiding judge."

Roldan moved to the United States from Mexico with his family when he was eight-years-old. His mother, who worked extremely hard, had sought a better life for him and his siblings. "She sacrificed her life for us," he said. She instilled in her children the desire to obtain an education and to excel in whatever you do.

As he leaves the bench, he said, "I have a true love for the law and being a judge is one of the best jobs for really getting deep into the law on these tough issues that come before us."

He said difficult issues can be found not only in civil cases, but criminal and domestic ones too. He enjoys sorting out the questions you might find in a law school setting.

"It is intellectually stimulating. There is no answer until you get into the weeds and read all the case law and sometimes all the way up to the Supreme Court level to get a true feel. After I do that, I know how I am going to rule on this case."

Roldan said in his years as a judge, technology is what has changed the most.

"In today's world where there are cameras everywhere, there is going to be video of a defendant. There will be video from near the scene of a crime or a video of someone driving a car. Technology has really changed the practice of criminal law."

Roldan served in the United States Marine Corps and as a police officer prior to attending law school. He graduated from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Law School in 1983.

Presiding Judge Jalilah Otto said, "Words cannot express our gratitude for Judge Roldan's years of service. On behalf of the entire Sixteenth Circuit, we wish him a very relaxing retirement!"

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