



16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of Jackson County, Missouri

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Probate Commissioner Daniel Wheeler leaving the bench**

Jackson County Probate Commissioner Daniel Wheeler is leaving the Court at the end of this week after serving 14 years on the bench. He announced in August that he is returning to private practice, and will be joining the firm of Kirkland Woods & Martinsen which specializes in estate planning, and trust, probate and guardianship administration and litigation.

"I have enjoyed working with my fellow judges and commissioners, the outstanding court staff and the probate bar," Wheeler said. "As I rotate from one side of the bench to the other, I look forward to assisting families as they confront some of life's most difficult legal issues."

During his tenure on the bench, Wheeler has seen some trends emerge. He says the number of minor guardianships in the Kansas City metro area has more than doubled, and that violence in our community is sometimes leaving children without parents. He is also finding that as baby boomers reach retirement age, more families are struggling with the effects of Alzheimer's and other age-related diseases. Disputes can arise within families regarding the care of the disabled family member, the handling of assets during their incapacity, or the transfer of property after their death.

Wheeler will continue working on these difficult legal issues. In private practice, he will be resolving disputes in trust, probate and guardianship matters, and will also act as a mediator.

Wheeler was appointed deputy probate commissioner in 2000, and probate commissioner in 2003. He authored a chapter on civil commitment for the Missouri Bar Association's "Estate Administration" desk book. He has served as chairman of the Association's Guardianship and Conservatorship Subcommittee, and a member of its Special Needs Committee. He has been a presenter on probate matters at the Missouri Judicial College since 2001.

"Commissioner Wheeler's return to private practice is a great loss to our Court," said Presiding Judge Marco A. Roldan. "He is recognized throughout the State as a leading authority in the area of probate law. Countless times I have had compliments about Commissioner Wheeler from judges throughout the state regarding his knowledge of probate law."

Wheeler attended the University of Missouri-Columbia where he earned a law degree, a master's degree in Business Administration and a bachelor's degree in Engineering.

Deputy Probate Commissioner Scott R. Manuel was appointed to replace Wheeler as Probate Commissioner, and Attorney Mark A. Styles Jr. was appointed to become the next Deputy Probate Commissioner effective November 1.

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