



SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF MISSOURI

For immediate release:
September 20, 2024

Contact: Scott Lauck
Public Information Officer
816-881-3552
scott.lauck@courts.mo.gov

Two from 16th Circuit honored at Annual Meeting

Two judges of the 16th Judicial Circuit were honored during the 2024 Annual Meeting of The Missouri Bar and the Judicial Conference of Missouri.

- Presiding Judge Jalilah Otto received a [judicial excellence award](#) from Chief Justice Mary R. Russell, who praised her for her “passion for justice, leadership, and teamwork, as well as her ability to unify people in difficult times.” The chief justice specifically cited Judge Otto’s handling of the on-duty death of longtime court employee Drexel Mack in February.

Judge Otto began her two-year term as presiding judge on January 1, 2023. She has served on the circuit bench since 2017 and previously had been an associate circuit judge since 2014. Prior to that she served as a federal and state prosecutor.

Judge Otto was among 11 judges, two lawyers, 12 legislators and a team of staff members honored on September 19 during the Judicial Conference, the organization of all the state’s judges.

- Associate Circuit Judge Abbie Rothermich was one of three people to receive the [Lon O. Hocker Award](#) on September 18. The award, given by The Missouri Bar Foundation during The Missouri Bar’s Annual Meeting, honors three trial lawyers under the age of 40 who demonstrate “zealousness, honor, strength, courtesy, confidence, and respect.”

Judge Rothermich earned the award through her prior work as deputy chief of the Employment Litigation Division in the Missouri Attorney General’s Office. While there, she tried 15 jury trials, nine of which were within a two-year period.

Judge Rothermich was an assistant attorney general for seven years and previously worked as an attorney with Legal Aid of Western Missouri for six years in its Warrensburg office. She was named to Division 25 in December 2023.

#

The Supreme Court of Missouri’s announcement of the chief justice awards can be found at:
<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=211673>

The Missouri Bar’s press release on the Lon O. Hocker Award recipients can be found at:
<https://news.mobar.org/estep-kiesewetter-fax-rothermich-named-2024-exemplary-trial-lawyers/>