



# Kansas Courts News Release

## *Office of Judicial Administration*

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### **Cowley County District Court chief clerk Marilyn Leith to bring audience to order for Supreme Court special session**

TOPEKA—Marilyn Leith has had a wide variety of duties in her 31 years working for the [Cowley County District Court](#), including acting as bailiff in a few trials, but she will experience a first when she serves as bailiff for a special session of the [Kansas Supreme Court at Southwestern College](#) in Winfield this week.



*Marilyn Leith  
Chief Clerk  
Cowley County District Court*

"I'm honored and a little nervous," Leith said, adding that the last time she served as bailiff, she didn't have the benefit of a computer or the jury program the court now uses. Neither will be required for her to call to order the audience in the Richardson Performing Arts Center as the Supreme Court's seven justices walk onto the stage Thursday evening.

Leith said she didn't anticipate this duty, and she admits she was surprised when she was told she had been recommended for it by Judge Nicholas St. Peter, chief judge of the 19th judicial district composed of Cowley County.

Being bailiff for the Supreme Court would not have been possible had Leith taken the job she was offered by the school district back in 1986.

"I turned down the job with the school system hoping I would get the job with the court," Leith said of the risk she took. "It was my inner voice. I needed a job, but I knew working for the court would allow me to do something completely outside my comfort zone and it would allow me to help people."

Leith got the job and her wish to help people came true.

"A lot of people coming into contact with the court have no idea what they're doing. Maybe they have lawsuits against them for not paying hospital bills, and it's daunting and scary," she said. "I can't give

legal advice, but I can tell the person what the process is, and what to expect when they are in the courtroom before the judge."

It is her commitment to the people of Kansas and her strong work ethic that prompted Judge St. Peter to nominate her to be honorary bailiff for the Supreme Court's special session.

"Marilyn has been an enormous help to me executing my duties as chief judge," St. Peter said. "She really works two jobs; one as our chief clerk and one as our court administrator. She is who I think of when I hear the term 'dedicated public servant.'"

St. Peter had the support of his local judges when he nominated Leith to serve as honorary bailiff, but the decision resides with the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Lawton Nuss followed-up on the recommendation by sending a letter to Leith on behalf of the Supreme Court inviting her to serve as honorary bailiff.

"Marilyn came highly recommended to us with an endorsement from her chief judge," Nuss said. "We are honored she agreed to take an active role in the Supreme Court's visit to Winfield."

The Supreme Court will be in session from 6:30 p.m. to about 8 p.m. Thursday, March 30, in the Richardson Performing Arts Center in the Christy Administration Building on the Southwestern College campus at 100 College Street. After the session concludes, the justices will greet the public in an informal reception in the lobby of the performance hall.

It will be the Supreme Court's first visit to Winfield in the court's 156-year history and it will be only the sixth time that the court will hear cases in the evening. It is part of the court's ongoing outreach to familiarize Kansans with the high court, its work, and the overall role of the Kansas judiciary.

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