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Ken Buchele

Civic leader to serve as honorary bailiff at special session of Kansas Supreme Court

TOPEKA — Kenneth Buchele's role as a leader and volunteer is well-known in Emporia, which makes him an appropriate choice to serve as honorary bailiff for the Kansas Supreme Court when it convenes for a special session at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 3, at Emporia State University.

"Without question, Ken is a prime example of a community leader who has promoted and served this community in a variety of roles," said Chief Judge Merlin Wheeler of the 5th Judicial District. "The judges of this district were honored to nominate him for this office in recognition of his service to this community

and state."

Buchele's career in banking in Emporia spanned four decades, and five years after his retirement, he's still involved in two financial organizations that support the region.

After growing up on a farm in Chautauqua County, Buchele earned an agriculture degree from Kansas State University and worked for Cargill for a few years before joining the Peace Corps. There, he helped Brazilian agricultural cooperatives in marketing and finance.

"As a farm boy with an ag degree, it was a good fit for me," he said.

He returned to the United States to take a job with what was then Citizens National Bank in Emporia. He ended his career in finance at ESB Financial in Emporia.

For him, fulfillment as a banker came from the success of others.

"For a banker, the enjoyment is watching customers succeed with the resources that the banker was able to provide to help make it happen," he said.

As a longtime member of the business community, Buchele naturally took on leadership roles in a variety of organizations. He has maintained a presence in two since his retirement in 2012. He serves on the board of trustees of Emporia Community Foundation and has been a part of the organization for 20 years. And for the past 25 years he has worked with Frontier Financial Partners, an SBA certified development company.

His involvement in the community earned him the 2008 Liberty Bell Award presented by the Lyon/Chase County Bar Association.

Buchele has had a close relationship to the judicial system. He was appointed by Gov. John Carlin to serve on the Supreme Court Nominating Commission from 1982 to 1987, and he continues to serve on the 5th Judicial District Nominating Commission. The Supreme Court Nominating Commission recommends to the governor finalists for openings on the high court bench, and the 5th Judicial District group does the same for district court openings in Lyon and Chase counties.

"Ken has always sought the selection of the most qualified judges while also advocating for the continuing need to ensure the independence of the judicial branch," Judge Wheeler noted.

Buchele's brother, the late James Buchele, was a district court judge in Shawnee County for 18 years and previously served as the U.S. attorney for the District of Kansas. Buchele's cousin, Nancy Parrish, currently serves as a Shawnee County district court judge.

Buchele and his wife, Marilyn, enjoy traveling in their retirement. She retired three years ago as executive secretary to the vice president of student affairs at Emporia State University after a 40-year tenure.

As honorary bailiff, Buchele will call to order the audience assembled for the Supreme Court's special session in Webb Hall in the ESU Student Union. It will be the court's first visit to Emporia and the seventh time it has held a special evening session, designed to allow more of the public to witness the court in action.

The court will be in session from 6:30 to about 8 p.m. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. Following the session, during which the court will hear oral arguments in two appeals, the justices will meet with the public during an informal gathering in Webb Lobby.

For more information about the special session, go to kscourts.org and click on Emporia Special Session under *What's New*.

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