



Kansas Courts News Release

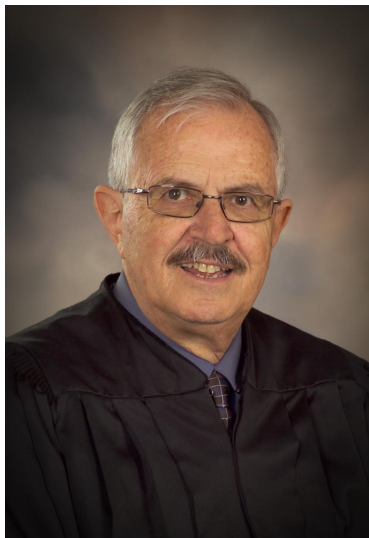
Office of Judicial Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2018

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Senior Judge Jack Burr

Longtime judge to serve as honorary bailiff for Kansas Supreme Court

TOPEKA — Judge Jack Burr has overseen countless trials in his 40 years on the bench, but he will be doing something new when the Kansas Supreme Court comes to Colby.

Burr was selected to be the honorary bailiff at the special session of the Supreme Court, which starts at 6:30 p.m. CDT April 9 in the Colby High School Auditorium.

"That's one thing I haven't done," he said.

As a judge, he relied on a bailiff to call the court session to order and announce the docket. This time, that will be his task before the seven justices of the Supreme Court and a sizable audience.

In nominating him for the honor, Chief Judge Kevin Berens of the 15th Judicial District said, "Judge Burr has devoted 40 years to the judicial branch as a district judge and a senior district judge. The district judges felt having him serve as honorary bailiff was a good way to thank him for his service."

The honor couldn't happen to a nicer person, said District Magistrate Judge Paula Keller of St. Francis.

Keller worked with Burr as his court reporter for 28 years.

"Everyone who worked for him would say the same thing: 'He was such a pleasure to work with,' " she said.

It was watching him on the bench that inspired her to file for election as a district magistrate judge. She was elected in November 2016.

"He was a good person to learn from," she said.

Burr, who lives in Goodland, is well-known in the 15th Judicial District, which is composed of seven counties in the northwest corner of the state — Cheyenne, Logan, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, and Wallace.

He was appointed a judge in 1978 after practicing law for about eight years in Goodland.

Born in Toronto, Kansas — located in the southeast part of the state — Burr grew up in Wichita, graduated from Wichita State University, and earned a law degree from Washburn University in 1970.

"We went to Goodland because I was offered a job," he said. "My wife, Sandy — who also was from Wichita — and I wanted to go to a smaller town. She taught school here, and we raised our family."

After serving 30 years as a local judge, he received senior judge status, which made him available to serve on an as-needed basis in courts across the state.

"I've served on Court of Appeals panels several times, as well as sitting with the Supreme Court to hear oral arguments," he said. "I've been all over the state as a senior judge. I enjoy getting out and seeing how other people do things, meeting people, and seeing new courthouses. And it's easier deciding a case elsewhere than it is in your hometown."

His wife has retired from teaching, and he said that in June, he will retire, as well.

"We've been married 50 years, and I decided it was time to hang it up and try something else. We travel a lot and go to see the grandkids," he said.

They have two daughters — Krista Hamilton, who lives in Colby, and Kelli Carney, who lives in Gardner — and five grandchildren.

Burr said he was honored to serve as bailiff for the special session in Colby and has been honored to serve as a judge.

"Serving on the bench has really reinforced my faith in the judicial system," he said. "It's not perfect, but it serves us pretty well. It's been an honor to be a part of it."

This will be the Supreme Court's first visit to Colby and the eighth 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. CDT. Doors will open at 6 p.m. CDT. 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 the commons area outside the auditorium.

For more information about the special session, go to kscourts.org and choose the "Colby Special Session" link under *What's New*.

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