



Kansas Courts News Release

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District Judge Robert Burns

District Judge Robert Burns to sit with Kansas Supreme Court October 26

TOPEKA—District Judge Robert Burns of the 29th Judicial District has been appointed to sit with the Kansas Supreme Court to hear oral arguments in one case on the court's October 26 docket.

After hearing oral arguments, Burns will join Supreme Court justices in their deliberations and decision drafting.

“I am pleased that District Judge Burns is taking time from his duties in the 29th Judicial District to sit with the Supreme Court,” said Chief Justice Lawton Nuss. “It’s a great help to our court, and we look forward to his contributions in deliberating and eventually deciding this case.”

Burns was elected a district court judge for the 29th Judicial District, which is composed of Wyandotte County, in 2004.

Burns said, “I am honored to be asked by Chief Justice Nuss to sit on the Kansas Supreme Court. I thank all of the justices for this opportunity, and I look forward to this unique experience.”

A lifelong resident of Kansas City, Kansas, Burns received an undergraduate degree from Harvard University in 1988 and a law degree from the University of Notre Dame Law School in 1991. He was in private practice from 1991 to 1995 and a legal department attorney for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, from 1996 to 2004.

All Supreme Court oral arguments are webcast live through the *Watch Supreme Court Live!* link in the right-hand column of the Kansas judicial branch website at www.kscourts.org.

The case Burns will hear is the fourth one scheduled on the court's 9 a.m. docket October 26:

Appeal No.118,693: *In the Matter of Lara M. Owens, respondent*

Original Proceeding Related to Attorney Discipline: (Six-month suspension) Owens was admitted to practice law in Missouri in 2004 and in Kansas in 2005. Owens violated the Kansas Rules of Professional Conduct regarding competent representation, diligence, communication, safekeeping property, representation, engaging in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice, and cooperation when she: 1) failed to timely file a lawsuit for a terminated employee against the employer and, 2) failed to provide competent representation in a paternity action. Owens entered into an agreement with the Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program and established a probation plan. However, Owens belatedly found a practice monitor, and the Disciplinary Administrator's Office objected to the probation plan. The hearing panel found Owen's probation plan was workable, substantial, and detailed, and that she completed the diversion agreement, but her completion did not prevent the misconduct at issue. The panel recommended suspending Owens' license for six months and requiring her to undergo a reinstatement hearing. The disciplinary administrator concurred. Owens did not give a closing argument at the formal hearing, but the hearing panel assumed Owens wants to continue the plan of probation.