

# Thank you, Judge Moore

by *Rebecca A. Schmelz*  
*Probate Court Administrator*



This month's column is one of the most important I will write, because it gives me the opportunity to try and adequately recognize Judge Eugene Arthur Moore for his 44 years of service to the Oakland County Probate Court. Judge Moore will be retiring at the end of this year. Some may consider him to be an "institution," which Dictionary.com defines in part as "any familiar, long-established person, thing, or practice." From my conversations over the years with various people, I know others believe he has moved into the category of "legend."

When I began thinking about what to write for this particular column, I thought about focusing on how much things have changed in our world during the time that Judge Moore has been at the court. For example, when Judge Moore took the bench, Lyndon B. Johnson was president of the United States, we had not yet set a man on the moon, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were still alive.

I also thought about a more narrow approach, detailing instead how much things have changed here within the probate court since Judge Moore began his first term. When he took the bench, his fellow judges were Judge Donald E. Adams and Judge Norman R. Barnard. Amongst other changes, he has seen the enactment of the Revised Probate Code, the Estates and Protected Individuals Code and the Michigan Trust Code. We've gone from hand-writing each court action in huge books to recording them for instant retrieval on a computer.

I decided instead, though, not to write about what has changed, but to write about what has remained consistent. And that would be Judge Moore himself.

Since taking the bench, Judge Moore has been steadily focused on ensuring that the probate court provides the highest level of service possible to the residents of Oakland County. His involvement on a local level has ranged from focusing on prevention services for juveniles through Youth Assistance, to treatment programs and training opportunities at Crossroads for Youth. He has focused on not only making sure that the services were there, but that the individuals in front of him were actually being offered the services available.

His dedication to the task of improving the justice system to the benefit of juveniles and families led to his involvement at the state and national level as well. Judge Moore is a past president of the Michigan Probate Judges Association, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the Children's Charter of the Courts

*(continued on page 35)*

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## Probate Court

(continued from page 31)

of Michigan, Inc. He has been actively involved as a director or trustee for the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the Oakland County Youth Assistance Advisory Council, Crossroads for Youth, Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, and the Child Support Leadership Council.

Judge Moore's consistency has also been apparent in his dedication to education, training and the legal profession. He was an adjunct professor at Detroit College of Law for 25 years teaching juvenile law and probate procedure. He has taught for both the National College of Juvenile Court Judges and the Michigan Judicial Institute. He is currently a member of the Judicial Tenure Commission. He is also a former vice chair of the Michigan Trial Court Assessment Commission.

I could actually keep writing about Judge Moore's personal and professional accomplishments, as I have not covered a large percentage of them. But I feel that it is important to introduce you to just a few things about the judge of which you might not be aware.

In the nearly 10 years that I have worked for Judge Moore, I have learned that when an issue arises that may have some effect on court staff, he will immediately question whether the staff knows about it and has the information that they need. He does not take it for granted that things should be done a certain way just because they always have been, or that "it is just the way it has to be done."

He has supported me in attempts to try new things, and to provide opportunities for staff. He openly expresses his appreciation for the work that the probate court staff performs and the efforts they make to provide the best service possible. I have also become familiar with the fact that he has a sweet tooth and I know his favorite candy.

One thing I feel comfortable guessing is that, come January, Judge Moore will not be sitting somewhere warm, doing nothing. He will be thinking of new things that need to be done and staying involved in the legal profession. Although I'm certain he will be spending more time with his three wonderful granddaughters.

I asked Judge Daniel A. O'Brien, the newest member of the Oakland County Probate Court bench, for his thoughts on Judge Moore and his retirement. I think his response thoroughly sums up the impact of Judge Moore's tenure. Judge O'Brien noted:

I consider it one of the greatest privileges of my legal career to have served as a judge with someone of such high legal distinction and moral character as Judge Moore. He has been a great example to me of the true mission of a probate judge, to protect the rights and secure the best interests of some of the most vulnerable members of our society. I will miss him.

Judge Moore, we from the Oakland County Probate Court wish you a long and wonderful retirement. Thank you for your service to the people of Oakland County.

*The Oakland County Bar Association  
would like to congratulate our members*

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