

LawClips

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Topic for the Quarter

How Our Partner
Became a Judge

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Legal Solutions That Fit.

Judicial Appointments: The Wisconsin Constitution, at Article VII, Section 9, gives the Governor the power to fill judicial vacancies, by appointment. When a vacancy occurs in any judicial office (i.e. Supreme Court; Court of Appeals or Circuit Court), the governor has the power to fill the vacancy, by appointment. Over the past 20 years, Wisconsin Governors have appointed 122 Circuit Court Judges.

Circuit Court Vacancy in Brown County: On January 15, 2008, Judge Peter Naze announced his retirement from Branch 5, Circuit Court of Brown County, effective March 21, 2008. Judge Naze had served as a Circuit Court Judge for 20 years. In an interview with the *Green Bay Press Gazette*, Judge Naze said that he hopes to work as a reserve judge and handle mediation cases.

Search for a New Judge: At the Circuit Court level, judges are elected for 6 year terms. Since Judge Naze retired prior to the end of his 6-year term, a new judge needed to be appointed by Governor Doyle. Judge Naze's announcement triggered the gubernatorial appointment process. On January 15, 2008, the governor's office announced that it was seeking applications for appointment to fill Judge Naze's judicial seat. A public notice was issued, stating that all applicants had to be a member in good standing of the Wisconsin State Bar and a resident of Brown County, at the time the appointment becomes effective. All applications were to be submitted by January 30, 2008. **One of our senior partners, Marc Hammer, submitted an application.** The following attorneys also filed applications: Avram Berk, Brown County Court Commissioner Jane Sequin, William Appel, Thomas Walsh and Brown County Deputy District Attorney John Luetscher.

All applications were then reviewed by the governor's office and submitted to a Judicial Selection Committee, which consists of a group of attorneys, chosen and appointed by the Governor. The Judicial Selection Committee reviewed all applications and conducted interviews of all applicants. After those interviews, the application list was narrowed down to three finalists. On February 26, 2008, the governor's office published the list of finalists: Attorneys Avram Berk, Marc Hammer and John Luetscher. Each finalist was then invited to the governor's office for a personal interview.

Governor's Announcement: On March 20, 2008, Governor Doyle announced the appointment of Marc Hammer, as a Brown County Circuit Court Judge. The official announcement from Governor Doyle's office stated, in part: "I am pleased to appoint Marc Hammer as Brown County Judge. From his work in private practice and to his service as a Special Prosecutor, Marc brings a wealth of legal expertise and experience to the bench and I know he will serve the people of Brown County well." Attorney Hammer's official response to the announcement was: "I sincerely appreciate the opportunity provided me by the Judicial Selection Committee and Governor Doyle to serve as Circuit Court Judge. I will carry out my duties to the community with integrity and administer justice in a fair and impartial manner."

Attorney Hammer's Resume: Marc has been a senior partner at Stellpflug, Janssen, Hammer, Kirschling, & Bartels, S.C. for over 14 years. Marc is also an Adjunct Professor for St. Norbert College, a Brown County Court Commissioner, and an Assistant Special Prosecutor for the City of De Pere. He is the Past President and acting board member for Cerebral Palsy, Inc. and a member of the Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission. Marc received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Illinois at Champaign - Urbana in 1986 and earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Missouri - Columbia School of Law in 1989. Marc is 44 years old and lives in Ashwaubenon with his wife, Kathryn and their three sons.



Investiture of Attorney Hammer: An Investiture is a formal proceeding where Attorney Hammer will take the oath of office. He will be sworn in by Judge Naze. The Hammer investiture is scheduled for **4:30 p.m. on April 18, 2008** in the Branch 7 Courtroom of the Brown County Courthouse. The investiture is open to the public.

Election Cycle: As per the Wisconsin Constitution, soon to be Judge Hammer, will preside over Branch 5 until the next election cycle. In the spring of 2009, Judge Hammer's judicial seat will be subject to an election challenge.

Our Congratulations: To say that we are proud of Marc is an understatement. Attorney Hammer has played a pivotal role in the success and growth of our firm. We know that Marc will make an excellent judge and we wish him the best as he embarks on this next phase in his life.

Our Family Law Practice: The success of our Family Law practice is also a tribute to what Attorney Hammer helped to build. Our firm philosophy has always been to build a team of attorneys in each practice area we handle. This approach will provide for a smooth transition when Attorney Hammer takes the bench. Other members of our Family Law Team are Attorneys Peggy Miller and Katie Ver Boort. Both Attorney Miller and Attorney Ver Boort are assisting Attorney Hammer with his caseload, as he transitions to becoming a judge. If you have any questions about family law issues, please feel free to contact either Peggy Miller or Katie Ver Boort.



Peggy Miller

Katie Ver Boort