

Content Solutions: Justice Gableman issues statement on Spring 2018 Supreme Court Election

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Madison, Wisconsin – Today, Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Michael Gableman released the following statement regarding the Spring 2018 Supreme Court Election:

Today, I announce it is my intention not to seek reelection to the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

I make this announcement with a heart filled with gratitude to the people of the great state of Wisconsin for permitting me to serve them in public office for the past twenty-three years, including the past eighteen years in elective office.

Ten years ago, I began my campaign for the Wisconsin Supreme Court by setting out a vision based on the rule of law—that judges ought to apply the law rather than make it. The people of Wisconsin agreed with this vision, and I defeated an incumbent justice for the first time in forty-one years and won sixty out of our state's seventy-two counties. Serving on the Wisconsin Supreme Court for the last nine years has been my great privilege. In decisions large and small, I have fulfilled my promises and put my judicial philosophy into practice. I trust the people of Wisconsin will elect a successor who is similarly committed to the rule of law.

In addition to my regular duties on the Court, I have been especially gratified by the

opportunities conferred upon me by way of my assignments as the Court's Liaison to the Tribal Courts, the Access to Justice Commission, and the Business Courts. Beyond my opinions, I have worked hard to improve the administration of justice throughout Wisconsin.

Though many thanksgivings are due, I want to offer special thanks to my colleagues on the court, past and present. It has been a privilege to engage with such capable people in the collaborative search for justice through law as the sacred mission it is. Through robust discussion, debate, and sometimes disagreement, my colleagues have been hard working, intelligent, and dedicated to the application of the law as they saw it.

Finally, my heart will always have a special place for the people of Burnett County, who in 2002 entrusted me with the office of Burnett County Circuit Court Judge by giving me 78 percent of the vote. With their help, I led the implementation of innovations such as the county's first Drug and Alcohol Court, the first Restorative Justice Program, and both the inmate and juvenile justice community service programs. Together, we helped save and improve the lives of many of our fellow citizens.

As I reflect on this chapter of my life coming to a close, I am more hopeful than ever in the triumph of the rule of law in Wisconsin. And I know I will be forever blessed to have been granted the opportunity to serve the great people of this state.

Statements from Justice Gablema's court colleagues regarding today's announcement:

Chief Justice Patience Roggensack

Justice Michael Gableman's extraordinary fund of legal knowledge has assisted the Supreme Court in all of its discussions and decisions for almost 10 years. His thoughtful insights and dedication to the rule of law will be greatly missed by the Supreme Court and the people of Wisconsin when he concludes his service on the Supreme Court.

Justice Rebecca Bradley

Nine years ago, then-Judge Michael Gableman courageously stepped forward to run for the Wisconsin Supreme Court. His historic election reversed what one judicial commentator accurately termed the "extraordinary activism" of the Court, fundamentally changing its direction by restoring respect for the rule of law. Justice

Gableman's opinions showcase his intellect and independence and reflect his resolute defense of the Constitution. While his departure from the Court will be a great loss to the people of Wisconsin, he leaves an enduring mark after 25 years of exemplary public service. When I joined the court two years ago, Justice Gableman warmly welcomed me as a colleague, guided me through the workings of the Court, and provided significant support for my election. I will deeply miss his leadership, friendship, and delightful sense of humor. It has been my honor and privilege to serve with my friend, Justice Gableman.

Justice Annette Kingsland Ziegler

While I will miss working with him, I am happy and excited for Justice Gableman—as a colleague and friend—as he pursues the next chapter of his career. Over the past nine years, I have come to appreciate his intelligence, his commitment to the rule of law, and cherish his good cheer and sense of humor. When we disagree on a point of law, we are able to do so respectfully and without being disagreeable with each other—a trait I think of great importance to the work of the Court and the people we serve. I wish him the best.

Justice Dan Kelly

Serving with Justice Gableman has been an honor and a joy. He is a man of keen mind, generous spirit, and abounding bonhomie. The court will not be the same without him, and I will miss him as a colleague. I wish my friend the very best as he begins his next professional chapter.

Justice David Prosser (Retired)

Justice Gableman's decision not to seek re-election is a big loss for the Supreme Court. In recent years, Mike has authored many of the Court's most significant decisions. He has orchestrated a number of consequential reforms of court procedure and made other vital contributions such as strengthening the Court's relationship with tribal courts.

Mike Gableman is a man of faith and a serious student of our history and culture. He was a kind and valued colleague to me, and a loyal friend who was responsible, more than anyone else, for encouraging me to run for re-election in 2011.

Mike Gableman has had a distinguished career in public service and will no doubt add to his legacy in the years ahead.

Justice Jon Wilcox (Retired)

Justice Gableman's nine years on the Wisconsin Supreme Court have been reflective of his intellectual rigor and courageous dedication to public service. Simply put, his election and his stalwart commitment to justice have helped lead to the restoration of the rule of law in Wisconsin. His opinions are clear and concise reflections of law, which also reflect the humility necessary to give proper deference to the collective will of the citizens of Wisconsin. I am happy to note that over the past fifteen years, I have come to know Mike not only as a colleague, but as a friend. As such, I have come to know his sense of public service as well as his great sense of humor. And while he takes his work seriously, he doesn't take himself that way. While I will miss his work on the court, I know his best days are ahead and I look forward to seeing what comes next.

Judge Brian K. Hagedorn

It would be difficult to understate the impact Justice Michael Gableman has had on the State of Wisconsin. He must surely rank as one of the most consequential jurists we have ever had. Justice Gableman changed the philosophical direction of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. He has written some of the most significant cases of our young century—upholding religious freedom, protecting the first amendment, and allowing the legislature to make policy decisions within constitutional bounds. More personally, he has been a mentor, counselor, and treasured friend. His sense of humor, courage, and commitment to doing the right thing, even against strong headwinds, will be gifts that are sorely missed at the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Judge Randy Koschnick

Justice Michael Gableman has been a stalwart supporter of the rule of law throughout his term on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. His unwavering commitment to the constitutional structure of our government has served the people of Wisconsin well. Justice Gableman is the epitome of steadfast judicial independence, having stayed true to his oath of office even in the face of fierce oppositional pressures, political and otherwise. He has been an inspiration to me as well as to other judges, lawyers and citizens around the state who look to the Wisconsin Supreme Court to set the standard for fairness, impartiality and commitment to the rule of law in dispensing justice. He will be missed.

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About Justice Michael Gableman:

Justice Michael J. Gableman was born in West Allis, Wisconsin, in 1966. He graduated from New Berlin West High School in 1984 and from Ripon College in 1988. At Ripon, Justice Gableman majored in history and education. He holds a teaching certificate for 7-12 grade history. Justice Gableman taught history at George Washington High School in the Milwaukee Public Schools. He graduated from Hamline University School of Law in 1993. He then served as a law clerk at the district court level in Minnesota and the circuit court level in Wisconsin. He became an Assistant District Attorney and then served as District Attorney of Ashland County. In 2002, he was elected Circuit Court Judge for Burnett County, with 78% of the vote.

While in Burnett County, in addition to presiding over a full time court calendar, Justice Gableman established an inmate community service program, a drug and alcohol court, and a restorative justice program for which he served as chairman of the board for six years. He also taught three semesters as an adjunct professor of law at Hamline University School of Law, teaching criminal procedure and professional responsibility.

In 2008, the people of Wisconsin elected Justice Gableman to the Supreme Court in an election where he won 60 out of the 72 counties of the state. Justice Gableman is consistently in the majority approximately 90% of the time, and legal commentators have noted the major cases he has authored, including: *Coulee Catholic Schools v. LIRC*, *Horst v. John Deere & Company*, *Star Direct v. Dal Pra*, *McConky v. Van Hollen*, *State v. Henley*, and *State v. Abbott Labs*.

Since his election in 2008, Justice Gableman has spoken throughout the state about the Wisconsin court system.