

Milwaukee County: Circuit Court judge to retire

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Dec. 22, 2017) – Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge John J. DiMotto will retire Feb. 28, 2018 after a 42-year career in the justice system, including 27 years on the bench and 15 years as an assistant district attorney.

“I have been very fortunate to have served in the Wisconsin Judiciary for these many years with you and our Milwaukee County colleagues,” DiMotto wrote in a letter announcing his retirement. “I hope that my service has made a positive difference in the lives of everyone who came before me,” DiMotto wrote.

DiMotto was first elected to the bench in 1990 as the first judge in Branch 41, which had just been created by the Wisconsin Legislature. He was re-elected without opposition in 1996, 2002, 2008 and 2014. During his 27 years on the bench DiMotto served in every division of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court. He is currently one of 12 judges handling cases in the civil division and former presiding judge of the family division.

DiMotto is widely recognized as a leader in judicial education who has generously shared his legal knowledge with judges across the state, said Wisconsin Supreme Court Chief Justice Patience Drake Roggensack.

“Judge DiMotto has taken so many independent steps to improve the level of judicial services in our state, he has almost become a legend in his own time. There can be no question that Wisconsin courts, as well as the people who appeared before him in court, have benefitted because of his work as a member of the judiciary,” Roggensack said.

DiMotto serves on the faculty of the National Judicial College and is a former

Associate Dean of the Wisconsin Judicial College. He has served as an educator at numerous judicial conferences and on many committees, including the criminal jury instruction committee, which he formerly chaired. He has authored numerous outlines and guides to help judges navigate complex issues.

“DiMotto will be missed, not only for his in-depth knowledge of legal issues and procedures, but also for the compassion and care with which he handled cases of all types,” said District One Chief Judge Maxine A. White, Milwaukee County Circuit Court.

Prior to his election to the bench, Judge DiMotto was an Assistant District Attorney in Milwaukee County from 1975 to 1990. For nine of those years, he was the Director of the Sensitive Crimes Unit, which was responsible for the review and prosecution of all cases of sexual assault, child neglect, child abuse and child homicides committed by adult offenders.

DiMotto has been recognized with many awards for his accomplishments over the years, including recognition as Wisconsin Judge of the Year by the American Board of Trial Advocates and Jurist of the Year by the Wisconsin Justinian Society of Lawyers, among others.

In 2008, DiMotto was recognized in an article by the Wisconsin Law Journal for his record as a circuit court judge on appeal. From Jan. 1, 2000 through 2006, DiMotto’s decisions had been reviewed and affirmed by the appellate court 46 times without reversal, the Law Journal reported as the streak ended.

District I Court of Appeals Judge Kitty K. Brennan, who worked previously with DiMotto as a fellow assistant district attorney and circuit court judge, said DiMotto represents what judges aspire to be.

“Being a great judge is not just about legal knowledge, it’s about people skills. And John DiMotto is a man of the people. He understands and listens. Consequently, he gets the highest praise judges ever get – lawyers and their clients on both sides all want Judge John DiMotto to preside on their cases. He’s a class act and we are all better for having his leadership all these years,” Brennan said.

Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Jeffrey A. Kremers, who also worked with DiMotto as an assistant district attorney and judge, said DiMotto has dedicated his career to improving the quality of the legal system. “He has been a mentor and

source of support to Judges all over Wisconsin,” Kremers said.

DiMotto is married to retired Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Jean DiMotto and plans to travel more in retirement. He also plans to serve as a reserve judge. Gov. Scott Walker is seeking applicants for the appointment to fill DiMotto’s seat.