

Brantmeier to run for Koschnick's bench

By Ryan Whisner rwhisner@dailyunion.com | Posted: Friday, November 11, 2016 10:21 am

HEBRON — Jefferson city attorney Ben Brantmeier has filed his declaration of candidacy to seek a seat on the bench in Branch 4 of Jefferson County Circuit Court.

Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Randy Koschnick has been appointed as the new director of state courts.

Koschnick will fill the post now held on an interim basis by J. Denis Moran, effective Aug. 1, 2017.

His seat on the bench is up for election in April 2017. Nomination papers for that post can be taken out starting Dec. 1.

Brantmeier, of Hebron, said he is seeking the Jefferson County Circuit Court judgeship to continue serving the community, and to make it a better and safer place for area youth.

“I became a lawyer because I wanted to help people,” Brantmeier said. “I wanted to be able to help my neighbor that had a problem. I see that in becoming a judge I can continue to do that.”

In criminal proceedings, he noted that the defendant, if convicted, will have to realize the specific deterrence to him or her as well as general deterrence to the public and also the victims' rights.

“As a judge you have to decide many things,” Brantmeier said. “I think Judge Koschnick has done a great job in trying to send a message to people who may be interested in criminal activity.”

He said he believes that message needs to continue to be sent that if you are convicted of a crime in Jefferson County and preying on the residents of Jefferson County, you will receive a stiffer sentence. Brantmeier said there will be a message specifically to that convicted criminal defendant and to the general public that Jefferson County is very hard on a crime.

Within Jefferson County, the judges serve on a rotating system where two of the judges cover criminal and traffic matters, one is assigned civil and family matters, and the fourth handles general court such as juvenile and small claims matters.

Koschnick currently is on the criminal rotation. It is not clear if the incoming judge would maintain that position.

However, Brantmeier suggested he is prepared for whatever comes before him.

“I have what I think nobody else in Jefferson has that is interested in being a judge — a vast diverse legal experience,” Brantmeier stated.

Three months out of law school, he was involved in a two-week criminal trial.

"I always knew I wanted to be in the courtroom," Brantmeier said.

Brantmeier obtained a bachelor of science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in 1989 and later graduated from the UW-Madison Law School, cum laude, in 1992. After some time with a private practice in Oshkosh, he joined the Jefferson firm of Krek & Hue, SC in 1994 where he gained a varied legal experience from family law to civil rights defense.

In 2005, he left the Krek & Brantmeier, SC firm to form Brantmeier Law, LLC. He currently practices in downtown Jefferson predominately in litigation/municipal defense and has acted as special prosecutor for the Jefferson County District Attorney's office.

Upon starting with Krek & Hue, he did much of the criminal defense work. He also took on appointments from the State Public Defender's Office.

On the opposite side of the courtroom, over the past 14 years he has been Jefferson city attorney and prosecuting cases of disorderly conduct and operating while intoxicated citations.

He also has done special prosecutions for the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office.

"I have also been a municipal attorney for the City of Jefferson and other townships in Jefferson and Dodge counties for 15 years," Brantmeier said.

He defends towns around the state against numerous types of claims involving land disputes, discrimination and other issues.

"That gives me the edge in terms of my trial experience from criminal, family to civil," Brantmeier said. "I've done everything a circuit court judge is going to see."

Also, he cites his community involvement as a reason to consider elevating him to the bench.

Brantmeier has coordinated Law Day at the Jefferson County Courthouse to introduce area fourth- and fifth-graders to the various aspects of the courthouse, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and court system through a mock trial involving the Three Little Pigs.

In addition, he has coordinated a job-shadowing event through which eighth grade students are invited to spend the day with local lawyers and partake in a mock civil trial.

Outside of the legal profession, Brantmeier touts himself as being very community minded, being active as a Scoutmaster for Troop 147 in Jefferson from 1994 to 2002.

A member the Jefferson Kiwanis Club, he was the co-chair of the group's Youth Committee which organizes the annual Arbor Day trees for area fifth-graders as well as the annual "Take a Kid Fishing Day."

Also, Brantmeier is an active member of the Jefferson County Bar Association, serving as president in 1998-99 and earning the Gordon Sinykin Award of Excellence for outstanding contributions in public service for his coordination of "Real Life Marriage and Divorce," a class designed to teach high-schoolers the issues they will face in marriage and help prevent early divorce rates.

He said he subsequently chaired the Local Bar Grant Competition Committee for the State Bar of Wisconsin from 1998 to 2013. He also actively was involved in Local Bar Leaders and Local Bar Relations Committee with the State Bar from 2000-2013.

"I'm very pro law enforcement," Brantmeier added.

Prior to being city attorney he was a member of the city's Police and Fire Commission.

In addition Brantmeier has served on the Jefferson County Civil Service Commission, which is involved with the hiring and promotions of deputies within the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

He also has been an active supporter of People Against Domestic and Sexual Abuse (PADA).

For more information about Brantmeier, visit brantmeierfojudge.com.