

Happ to run for attorney general

By Steve Sharp steves@wdtimes.com | Posted: Thursday, January 23, 2014 11:21 am

JEFFERSON -- Jefferson County District Attorney Susan Happ has made it official -- she is getting into the state attorney general's race.

Happ, who publicly said in December 2013 she was contemplating a run for the office, filed paperwork with the state Government Accountability Board on Wednesday announcing she has formed a campaign.

Happ, a Democrat, is perhaps best known for prosecuting Edward Edwards, a former drifter accused in 2009 of killing a teenage couple in 1980. She didn't immediately return telephone messages this morning, but told the Daily Times in December she would not deal with campaign matters during her Jefferson County DA workday.

Happ's run sets up a three-way Democratic primary for attorney general. Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne and state Rep. Jon Richards of Milwaukee have already declared their candidacies.

Waukesha County District Attorney Brad Schimel is the only Republican in the race so far. Incumbent Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen, a Republican, has decided not to seek re-election.

Happ was elected DA in Jefferson County in 2008, beating out challenger Peter Tempelis. Happ replaced District Attorney David Wambach, who took a position in the office of Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen. Wambach currently serves as a Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge in Branch III.

Happ was born and raised in Jefferson and studied for a time in Moscow, Russia. She graduated from Jefferson High School in 1990 and received undergraduate degrees in journalism and Russian from University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Happ graduated from UW-Madison in December of 1994 in the top 7 percent of her class. After graduation, she continued to work for another year as the editor of the biannual magazine Wisconsin Meetings and Incentives.

She entered law school at UW-Madison in the fall of 1995 and graduated in May of 1998. During law school, Happ worked as a live-in supervisor for two developmentally disabled women and served on the Wisconsin Law Review for two years.

Prior to graduation, she clerked for Jefferson County Circuit Court judges, moving on to Monogue & Witt, S.C., until 2004.

Happ started her own law firm in downtown Jefferson in 2005, where she has practiced criminal litigation and accepted court appointments to serve as guardian ad litem for children in CHIPS (Children In Need of Protection and Services) cases, juvenile proceedings, child abuse injunction cases and guardianship proceedings.

Happ's civic and professional affiliations have included the Wisconsin Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Wisconsin State Bar Association, the Jefferson County Bar Association, Tomorrow's Hope, the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, Jefferson Jaycees and St. Coletta of Wisconsin.