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LAKE COUNTY ASSOCIATE JUDGE RETIRES AFTER 22 YEARS OF SERVICE

Colleagues, friends, and family gathered to congratulate Judge Theodore S. Potkonjak on his 22 years of dedicated service to the people of Lake County from the bench. His impact on the community is immeasurable and has left a lasting impression. "Judge Potkonjak, we have known each other for a long time. I have had the privilege of trying cases with you and cases before you. You have been a model for many of us with your vigorous advocacy as an attorney and your equal administration of justice from the bench. You are truly going to be missed," said Chief Judge Daniel B. Shanes, echoing the sentiments from other speakers that included Associate Judges Patricia L. Cornell and Jacquelyn D. Melius, along with Circuit Judge Victoria A. Rossetti.

Judge Theodore S. Potkonjak was born and raised in Waukegan and graduated from Waukegan High School. He then attended MacMurray College, where he received his Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science before attending law school at the California Western School of Law. He was admitted to the Illinois State Bar in 1982 and began his career with the Lake County State's Attorney's Office until he entered private practice in 1987. In private practice, he served as an associate at the law firm Smoker and Starck before becoming a sole practitioner and serving as a Special Public Defender. Potkonjak also served as an Expulsion Hearing Officer for the Waukegan Community Unit School District #60.

On April 1, 2002, Judge Potkonjak took his oath of office and was appointed Associate Judge with the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit. As a judge, he presided over traffic court, DUI, criminal backup, bond court, criminal felony, criminal misdemeanor, small claims, arraignments, bond court, first appearance, and his current assignment detention hearings.

Judge Potkonjak shared personal reflections, saying, "When I started, I was told that being a judge is the greatest job in the world, and I found that to be very true. It is hard to believe 22 years have come and gone. To put it in perspective, I wanted to watch my swearing-in ceremony, but I don't have a VCR anymore; that is how long it has been. I am the luckiest man; I have my family, church, friends, and profession. And the profession has been very good to me. I am fortunate because getting a judgeship is something very few lawyers can obtain. When you leave the bench, you leave a part of yourself here and take part of the job with you." Judge Potkonjak concluded his remarks with, "I guess that's the ballgame," as he was often heard saying when closing his daily court call.

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