

"Venters Resigns"

Cont. from Front

judge submitted a one-sentence notice of his intent to resign to Gov. Paul Patton and Chief Justice Joseph Lambert last week.

Gov. Patton will now be responsible for appointing Venters' successor.

Venters said he plans to take a few weeks off this summer, and then re-enter a private practice in Somerset. Venters' wife, Jane Adams Venters, practices in the Adams and Venters law office. Venters said he will practice independently, but will "be associated" with his wife's family's practice.

"For the past two years, I have pondered my career and my future, wrestling with the question of how long I could, or should, continue my tenure as Circuit Judge," Venters said.

"For about the last six months, I have been thinking that if I'm ever going to do it, this is the time."

Venters said the answer to his question came in the same way many answers to legal questions came to him — "like a tap on the shoulder and a voice from within."

Venters said he felt it was time to "move on to different challenges and responsibilities" — and time for someone with a "fresh outlook and new enthusiasm" to take over his duties. "It's time to hitch up a fresh mule to pull this plow," he said.

In 1975, Venters was hired by then-Commonwealth's Attorney Harold "Hal" Rogers as a part time assistant.

"He gave me my first job out of law school. I appreciate his confidence in me," Judge Venters said.

For three and a half years, Venters worked part time as the assistant Commonwealth's Attorney and part time in a civil practice.

In 1978, the two judgeships in the local district court system were held by Walter Maguire and Calvin Aker. When Aker was elected to serve on the state's Supreme Court, Venters filled his position in the district judgeship. "Nobody wanted that job," Venters said, "I thought I'd try it for a while. It seemed like it would be an interesting thing to do."

In January of 1979, he began his district judgeship, having been appointed by then-Governor Julian Carroll.

In 1983, Venters filed to run for the circuit judgeship. His campaign efforts paid off, and he was elected to the position in January of 1984. He ran unopposed in 1991 and 1999.

The circuit court system has grown from two to three judgeships since Venters joined, and the local district now covers Pulaski, Lincoln and Rockcastle counties. Lincoln was added to the district in the last few years.

"Much has changed in the three county area since I began my service on the bench, and much, too, has changed within the circuit court," Venters said.

Aside from the expanded coverage area, Venters said the creation of one of the first Family Courts in Kentucky has had a dramatic impact on the system.

Former Rockcastle attorney Debra Lambert was elected the first Family Court Circuit Judge for Rockcastle, Pulaski and Lincoln Counties.

The great population growth and economic growth of this circuit over the past two decades has generated significant increases in both the quantity and the complexity of cases in the circuit court," he said.

"Serving as Circuit Judge has been a tremendous honor and privilege. I believe it is the most rewarding and gratifying job a lawyer could ever have," Venters said.

"I am proud to have been a part of the Kentucky judicial system, which has long been recognized to be one of the finest in the country. I am proud of the association I have had with my fellow circuit judges across the state and over the years. This camaraderie will be sorely missed."

Venters said he was thankful to his family and friends "who have endured the burdens and inconveniences associated with his work, but have received none of the credit or acclaim they deserve."

He also thanks the circuit court clerks and deputy clerks, court bailiffs, the staff of the court system, members of the Bar, and lawyers.

"I am also thankful to, and ever mindful of, all the folks whose confidence and trust enabled me to run for circuit judge, and whose tireless efforts so many years ago got me elected," Venters said.

"Many of them were 'old time' local politicians from another era, who have passed on. I remember them all with gratitude and affection. "I am thankful to Circuit Judge William T. Cain, who for the past ten years has served my fellow circuit

judge, and whose presence and counsel has been of great value," Venters continued.

Judge Cain said he hated to learn of Venters' resignation. "I have enjoyed and loved serving with him," Cain said. "I'm going to miss him greatly." Cain said Venters was "a very easy-going and understanding judge."

Venters was also quick to mention his appreciation for his secretary of nearly 20 years, Shirley Whitson.

"Her diligence has made every day of work much easier for me. She is known to members of the legal community as 'Judge Shirley,' and she has earned that nickname for a good reason. ... I could not have functioned as a judge without her help, and my successor's wisest decision would be to insist that she remain in her position," he said.

Venters said he is looking forward to returning to private practice. "I didn't practice law long enough to get burned out," he said.

As for his legacy as a circuit judge — "I hope to be remembered for the good decisions that I made, and for going for the ones that were not so good," he said.

The Kentucky Judicial Nominating Committee will submit three names to the Governor, who are interested in the job and the Governor will make the final decision on who will replace Judge Venters.

The chairman of the nominating committee is Chief Justice Lambert. Whomever replaces Judge Venters will serve until the general election in November, when he or she will have to run for the office.

The general election is November 4th.

Editors Note: Much of the information in this story was taken from a story in the Commonwealth-Journal.

"Brodhead Fire"

Cont. from Front

ing was heavily damaged by the fire. Brodhead City Fire Chief Tim Albright said that eight fire departments responded to the 1:30 a.m. fire.

At least 75 firefighters were on the scene. Local professional photographer Doug Brock, whose business is located in the building next to the one which caught fire, had nothing but praise for the firefighters who responded.

"They did a great job containing the fire and saving my building," Brock said.

Brock's building did sustain some smoke and water damage, but not a lot. He has also been very busy cleaning up what mess the fire caused.

McKinney said that he had recently spent about \$40,000 remodeling the building and that he had a little insurance on his buildings, but not nearly enough to cover his losses.

"We are plugging along and I do appreciate the hard work of my family and employees," he said.

McKinney, Brock, Albright and Mt. Vernon Fire Chief Gary Hansel all praised the Stanford Fire Department for their work on the fire.

"If they had not gotten there when they did with their ladder truck, Brodhead would have lost one complete side of main street," Hansel said.

Besides firefighters from Mt. Vernon, Brodhead City, Brodhead Rural and Stanford, firefighters from Livingston, Brindlee Ridge and Crab Orchard responded to the fire.



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"Officer Hurt"

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Phillips pulled across the eastbound end of the highway just east of Cedar Creek Lake to stop Drury. Drury didn't stop, though, and struck Phillip's cruiser in the left rear. Hill dodged the cruiser, passing Phillips in the westbound lane.

Phillips said the impact apparently caused the fuel pump to shut down because his car died. He got out of the car, inspected the damage and got back in to restart the vehicle and move it off the road.

The car wouldn't start, however. The attempt to restart it caused the head lights and flashing blue lights to go out and not come back on.

Phillips said a passing driver who had stopped when he set up the road block was preparing to move her car into the road with the lights flashing to warn oncoming cars that his cruiser was disabled.

Before she could move into position, however a second Stanford officer, McDaniel, came along and plowed into Phillip's darkened vehicle.

McDaniel had just passed another car and came back into the eastbound lane, where Phillips was sitting and watching the Stanford cruiser come at him.

"I saw Kenny coming," Phillips said. "When I saw he was cutting back into his lane, it was scary," he said.

The impact sheared the open driver's door from its hinges. The free flying door struck Phillips, who was in the driver's seat and caused injuries to his leg and chest. McDaniel was not hurt.

Phillips said he was just reaching out to close the door when he saw McDaniel coming at him and pulled his arm back inside the cruiser. "It would have taken my arm with the door," he said.

While the cruisers were wrecking, Hill continued his pursuit of Drury through Crab Orchard and back along KY 1770 toward the upper end of Cedar Creek Lake.

Drury lost control of the stolen Jeep, which had a tire flattened in the collision with the Crab Orchard cruiser and ran off the road, striking two trees.

He was arrested and charged with assault, wanton endangerment, improper passing disregarding a stop sign, driving under the influence, auto theft, driving on a suspended license, fleeing the police, reckless driving and not wearing a seat belt.

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