

Transitions

By Keith A. Birkes

I am 62 years old, and I have indicated to the Board of Governors of The Missouri Bar that I would like to retire at the end of the year in 2012. This presumes they would like to keep me that long; but, assuming that works out, giving the Board several years to select the next executive director of The Missouri Bar is, I think, a good thing.

The 28,000 members of The Missouri Bar have many different needs and circumstances when it comes to retirement or transitioning from their current professional situation to whatever comes next. State judges have a mandatory age 70 requirement. Lawyers working for corporations, government and other public entities all approach “retirement” in ways that meet the needs of their employers and their own individual circumstances. Practicing lawyers transition in various ways. This issue of *Precedent* addresses an issue that I know is on the minds of the baby boomer generation and the next generation as well.

Personally, I have been very fortunate to spend most of my professional career as executive director of The Missouri Bar. That position allows me to be involved in all aspects of the legal profession and to work with our profession’s most qualified practitioners. I know virtually every member of The Missouri Bar has had very rewarding aspects of their professional career; however, at times we all want or need to transition to something different. In my instance, retirement means setting a date, allowing The Missouri Bar to select another executive director, and then getting out of the way so that new person can do what I have been so privileged to do for my career. This is a more abrupt change than many of you will want or need to consider, and that is a very attractive aspect of practicing law.

If a gradual transition meets your needs, that is probably the most common and comfortable model for practicing lawyers.

Whatever the transition you might be facing toward the end of your career in law, I believe it

can be one of the most rewarding and enriching times in our lives. I am looking forward to a variety of types of volunteer work, including the pro bono representation of indigent clients, and I know there are numerous boards and organizations that would like to have the experience of a lawyer/administrator. I also have purely personal interests I would like to pursue, and I know all of you share similar interests that can, and should, be very fulfilling.

I hope this issue of *Precedent* will allow you to begin reflecting on all of the options that lie before you. We, as lawyers, are very, very fortunate with the opportunities we have during every chapter of our lives. I expect the last couple of chapters to be among the best.



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