



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAGISTRATE JUDGE CROCKER TO RETIRE

Magistrate Judge Stephen L. Crocker has announced that he will retire from the federal bench effective early 2024, after 32 years of service to the United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin. Judge Crocker was appointed in 1992 at the age of 33 by the court's two district judges, Barbara B. Crabb and John C. Shabaz. He was reappointed three times thereafter, most recently by Judges James D. Peterson and William M. Conley.

As the Western District's only full-time magistrate judge, Crocker is the court's point person for all federal criminal pretrial proceedings, handling search and arrest warrants, detention hearings, and suppression motions. He also is assigned to and presides over a share of the civil jury trials and he manages the other judges' civil and prisoner lawsuits.

A Madison native, Judge Crocker graduated from West High School, Wesleyan University, and Northwestern University School of Law.

Judge Crocker began his legal career in 1983 as a law clerk for Judge Crabb. He turned down an offer to work on Wall Street when he was selected as a trial attorney in the Criminal Division Honors Program at the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington D.C. Crocker then was tapped to be an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Chicago where he prosecuted public corruption as part of the Special Prosecutions Division and prosecuted the Colombian cocaine cartels as part of the federal Drug Task Force. A brief stint as a litigator at Michael Best & Friedrich in Madison preceded Judge Crocker's selection for the federal bench.

Judge Crocker has also been active in the community. He has regularly lectured to lawyers and students on federal procedure, discovery, and motions practice. He's been a Red Cross CPR and Wilderness First Aid Instructor, an Assistant Scout Master at BSA Troop 2 (where he earned the rank of Eagle Scout when Gerald Ford was president), a homeless shelter meal server, a volunteer at the Henry Vilas Zoo, and a coach and competition judge for the Wisconsin Bar Association's high school mock trial program.

"Judge Crocker has served the court with impeccable integrity, extraordinary diligence, and a unique sense of humor for more than three decades," according to Chief Judge Peterson. "As anyone who has worked with or appeared before him knows, Judge Crocker is quite literally irreplaceable. But we'll have to begin taking applications this summer."

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