



**STATE OF MISSOURI
38TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
CHRISTIAN COUNTY
LAURA JOHNSON, PRESIDING CIRCUIT JUDGE
110 WEST ELM, ROOM 205
OZARK, MISSOURI 65721
PHONE: 417-582-5162
FACSIMILE: 417-581-0091**

**Cindy Childress
Secretary**

**Terri Auerbach
Court Reporter**

August 6, 2026

Governor Mike Kehoe
Office of the Missouri Governor
Jefferson City, Missouri

Chief Justice Brent Powell
Supreme Court of Missouri
Jefferson City, Missouri

Re: Notification of Retirement

Dear Governor Kehoe and Chief Justice Powell:

Please accept this letter as notification of my retirement as a Circuit Judge of the 38th Judicial Circuit in Christian County, Missouri. My anticipated last date of service is January 1, 2027.

I was elected in 2014 to finish the six-year term vacated by Judge Mark Orr when he passed away in office. I was re-elected to two consecutive six-year terms of office in 2018 and 2024. Because I am retiring mid-term, a vacancy will exist in Division 1 of the 38th Circuit effective January 1, 2027 that will need to be filled by appointment. I hope that this announcement will provide sufficient time to select my successor before the end of the year, as Christian County is widely considered to be one of the busiest judicial circuits in Missouri.

It has been a distinct honor to serve the citizens of Christian County and the State of Missouri. During my tenure, I have been privileged to be selected as President of the Circuit Judges' Association and as a member of the Commission on Retirement, Removal and Discipline of Judges, the State Records Committee and the Trial Judge Education Committee.

I plan to continue my service to the State as a Senior Judge, to assist where needed. I am willing to facilitate the process of filling my position in any way possible and will assist my successor in transitioning to the circuit court.

My sincere thanks to you and your leadership, to our hard-working court staff, and to my colleagues in the judiciary who have helped make this such an amazing and unforgettable journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Laura Johnson", with a stylized, flowing script.

Laura Johnson

Presiding Circuit Judge, 38th Circuit

Cc: Lowell Pearson, General Counsel to Governor Mike Kehoe
Betsy Ledgerwood, Clerk of Missouri Supreme Court
Crista Hogan, Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association
Patty Shilling, Christian County Bar Association
Lynn Morris, Christian County Presiding Commissioner