

**SIXTEENTH CIRCUIT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI
APPLICATION FOR CIRCUIT JUDGE**

- 1. State your full name.**

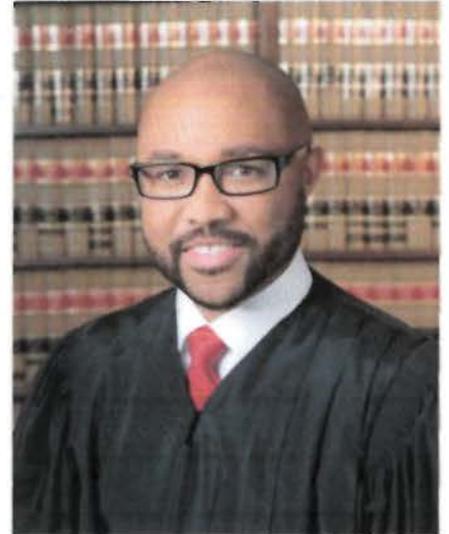
Mark Anthony Styles, Jr.

- 2. State your date and location of birth.**

July 22, 1978
Kansas City, Missouri

- 3. State your present occupation, place of work, and job title.**

Judicial Officer
Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division
Deputy Commissioner



- 4. Provide the following information concerning your eligibility for the office of Circuit Judge:**

- (a) Are you at least twenty-five years of age? **YES**
- (b) Are you licensed to practice law in Missouri? **YES**
- (c) Are you a citizen of the United States? **YES**
- (d) Are you a resident of Jackson County? **YES**

- 5. State whether you are able, with or without a reasonable accommodation, to perform the essential functions of a Circuit Judge, including the ability to preside over trials, conduct legal research and analysis, attend court anywhere in the State of Missouri, communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing, and expeditiously decide issues coming before the court.**

Absolutely.

- 6. State the year of your admission to the Missouri Bar and whether your license is and always has been in good standing. If not, please explain.**

I was admitted to the Missouri Bar April 20, 2005. My license is currently and has always been in good standing.

7. **List any other states, courts, or agencies in which you have been licensed as an attorney, and state whether your license is and always has been in good standing.**

Not applicable

8. **Provide the following information for all colleges or universities, other than law schools, you have attended:**

(a) Name and location of institution

University of Missouri – Columbia (Mizzou)
Columbia, Missouri 65211

(b) Dates attended and degrees received

August 1996 – May 2001
Bachelor of Science in Finance with an emphasis in Banking

(c) Significant activities, achievements, honors, and awards

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
Clue Into Mizzou Mentor
Minority Business School Ambassador
INROADS, Inc.
Intramural 3-on-3 Basketball Champion
Intramural Flag Football Champion (Dorms)

9. **Provide the following information for all law schools you have attended:**

(a) Name and location of law school

Thurgood Marshall School of Law – Texas Southern University
3100 Cleburne Street
Houston, Texas 77004

(b) Dates attended and degrees received

August 2001 – May 2004
Juris Doctorate

(c) Significant activities, achievements, honors, and awards

Dean's List for 2002 and 2003
Moot Court Semifinalist
Mock Trial Competitor

10. **State whether you have ever been suspended or expelled as a student from any school or educational institution. If so, please explain.**

Not Applicable

11. **List, in chronological order, all non-legal and legal employment you have held post-high school. Include the name and location of each employer, job title, dates of employment, and reason for termination of employment.**

Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

1 Memorial Drive
Kansas City, Missouri 64108

Intern Analyst

June 1996 – August 2000

Reason for Termination of Employment: Made decision to go to law school.

Dillard's

8800 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, Missouri 64114

Sales Associate

May 2001 – August 2001

Reason for Termination of Employment: Moved to Houston, Texas to attend law school.

Mestemaker & Straub, P.L.L.C.

3100 Timmons Lane, Suite 445
Houston, Texas 77027

Legal Intern

March 2003 – August 2003

Reason for Termination of Employment: Obtained research assistant position with the Dean of the Thurgood Marshall School of Law.

Dean John C. Brittain
3100 Cleburne Street
Houston, Texas 77004

Research Assistant

August 2003 – April 2004

Reason for Termination of Employment: Graduated from law school and moved back to Kansas City, Missouri.

Shook, Hardy & Bacon, LLP
2555 Grand Boulevard
Kansas City, Missouri 64108

Contract Attorney

June 2005 – September 2006

Reason for Termination of Employment: Obtained Staff Attorney position at the Jackson County Public Administrator's Office

Jackson County Public Administrator's Office
415 E. 12th Street, 4th Floor
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Staff Attorney

September 2006 – June 2009

Reason for Termination of Employment: Obtained Associate Attorney position at the Hardwick Law Firm, LLC

Hardwick Law Firm, LLC
1125 Grand Boulevard, Suite 1200
Kansas City, Missouri 646106

Senior Associate Attorney

June 2009 -- October 2014

Reason for Termination of Employment: Appointed to Deputy Probate Commissioner for Jackson County, Missouri.

Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division
415 E. 12th Street, 9th Floor
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Deputy Commissioner

October 2014 – Present

Reason for Termination of Employment: Not Applicable

- 12. Describe the nature and extent of your experience as a practicing attorney in the trial and appellate courts, and explain how such experience demonstrates the quality of your legal work.**

While in private practice, I had the wonderful privilege of being appointed to serve as guardian ad litem, conservator ad litem, and administrator ad litem in multiple probate estates. Serving in these capacities for the Probate Court was a very inspiring and rewarding experience.

As a court appointed guardian ad litem in a contested minor guardianships, I was able to work with families to achieve agreeable results. When the parties were not able to agree, pushing towards and accomplishing a goal that was in the best interests of the minor through the Court system made serving as a guardian ad litem a joy instead of a job.

As a court appointed conservator ad litem, assisting fiduciaries and their counsel in cleaning up estates (when possible) to get them back on the right track has also been very satisfying. Occasionally fiduciaries make mistakes, and assisting these same fiduciaries in correcting their mistakes, leaves them with a renewed sense of purpose and focus making my efforts feel that much more worthwhile.

As a court appointed administrator ad litem, I often worked closely with other attorneys, building professional relationships with them and making reasonable efforts to reach common goals for their clients.

I see serving as Probate Judge as a position of providing service to attorneys, their clients and to the public in many ways. I believe my work as a guardian ad litem, conservator ad litem and administrator ad litem has greatly prepared me to continue to provide these services and assistance.

In private practice, I also served as a Court appointed attorney in the Family Court, Juvenile Division. This work had a significant impact on my legal career as it kept me grounded and not think too highly of myself in my position as an attorney. Typically in these appointments, I would be the only attorney the minors and families would ever have contact with. That fact made me work harder on their case to ensure their experience with our legal system was a positive one.

13. **Provide a representative list of at least ten cases in which you served as the primary attorney at trial or an administrative hearing. The list should include the style of each case, court or administrative agency, identification of your client, and the nature and date of disposition.**

In Re Estate of William H. Kyles

Case Number 11P9-PR01031

Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division

Client – Shirley George

Fiduciary Discharged and Estate closed on January 2, 2014.

Cheryl Shepherd v. Sophie Perkins, et al

Case Number 12P9-PR01045-01

Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division

Client – Zoey Belcher, Minor

Judgment entered awarding custody to family member June 20, 2013.

Sharon Jacobs v. April D. Granger, et al

Case Number 12P9-PR01044-01

Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division

Client: Ty’Oka Burris, Minor

Judgment entered awarding custody to maternal grandmother October 30, 2014.

In the Interest of Dayton A. Bolek

Case Number 1116-JU000465

Jackson County Circuit Court – Family Court Division

Client: Jessica A. Bolek, natural mother

Judgment entered releasing minor from jurisdiction of Children’s Division and into the custody of the natural mother January 28, 2013.

In Re the Estate of Katelyn Donaldson

Case Number 14P9-PR00253

Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division

Client: Katelyn Donaldson

Judgment entered finding respondent totally incapacitated and totally disabled and appointing co-guardians and co-conservators.

In Re the Estate of Candace Jordan

Case Number 14P9-PR00284

Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division

Client: Candace Jordan

Judgment entered dismissing petition for guardianship and conservatorship.

Parade Park Homes, Inc. v. Mary Flucas
Case Number 1116-CV00762
Jackson County Circuit Court
Client: Parade Park Homes, Inc.
Judgment entered for rent and possession.

In Re the Estate of Mary Tigner
Case Number 14P9-PR00091
Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division
Client: Mary Tigner
Judgment entered finding respondent totally incapacitated and totally disabled and appointing guardian and conservator.

Teemon Harwick v. Edna Perry
Case Number 1116-CV22582
Jackson County Circuit Court
Client: Teemon Hardwick
Judgment entered for plaintiff.

In Re the Estate of Hulda Peterson
Case Number 13P8-PR00290
Jackson County Circuit Court – Probate Division
Client: Louis Peterson
Judgement entered appointing emergency guardian ad litem and conservator ad litem.

14. **If you have appellate experience, provide a representative list of cases in which you served as the primary attorney on appeal. The list should include the style of each case, appellate court or administrative agency, identification of your client, and the nature and date of disposition.**

Not applicable

15. **If you are serving or have served in a judicial capacity, describe the nature and extent of your judicial responsibilities, the types of dockets handled, and any special expertise developed.**

I currently have the privilege of serving as the Deputy Commissioner for the Probate Court of Jackson County. Judge Kathleen Forsyth made this appointment in October 2014. As Deputy Commissioner, I am responsible for handling the mental health dockets, guardianship and conservatorship dockets, and our miscellaneous probate docket. This responsibility is shared with the Judge and the Commissioner of the Probate Court.

Our mental health dockets consist of involuntary civil commitments in which I preside over a full evidentiary trial in which a decision needs to be made, from the bench, as to whether a respondent has a mental illness and as result of that mental illness, they present

a danger to themselves or others. These hearings can range from fifteen minute bench trials to multi day jury trials (if a jury trial is requested, the matter is heard before the Probate Judge). On average they last about 45 minutes and the vast majority of them are bench trials.

The guardianship and conservatorship dockets are hearings that seek the appointment of a fiduciary for a person that is alleged to be incapacitated and/or disabled. We have guardianship and conservatorship hearings for both adults and minors. The majority of the hearings on the guardianship and conservatorship docket are uncontested (even though they remain adversarial proceedings), but when they are contested, the trial will typically last a full week.

Presiding over the miscellaneous probate docket gives me the opportunity to handle a wide variety of probate actions. The guardianship and decedent estates in the Probate Court are subject to a plethora of legal actions that need attention, direction, guidance and supervision of the Deputy Probate Commissioner. These actions range from seeking Court approval to sell real property in an estate, to suing individuals based on allegations of breach of fiduciary duty, to restoring individual's rights that were in the past, adjudicated to be totally incapacitated and totally disabled (my favorite). The bulk of the work for the Deputy Commissioner comes from the ongoing supervision of all the active estates in Jackson County which totals over 6,300.

- 16. If you are serving or have served in a judicial capacity, provide a representative list of at least ten cases over which you have presided to completion. The list should include the style of each case and the nature and date of disposition.**

Alfred L. Durbin, et al, v. Dan C. Sturdevant

11P8-PR00055

Heirs of an estate sued the Personal Representative alleging that the final settlement and proposed order of distribution were not correct.

Judgment entered March 23, 2015 overruling and denying all objections of the heirs.

Joseph T. Spinello v. Ian Joel, et al

14P8-PR00485

Heir sought Court approval to admit a lost will of the decedent. Other heirs challenged the admission of the lost will.

Judgment entered June 11, 2015 denying the petition to admit the lost will.

Aaron A. Ward v. Elois Walker

14P8-PR00867

Petitioner requested termination of another family member's durable power of attorney and to become the guardian and conservator for his brother. Competing petition for guardianship and conservatorship filed by another family member.

Judgment entered June 2, 2015 granting one petition and denying the other based on a finding of which family member would be more appropriate, as defined by law.

Research Medical Center v. Jackson County Public Administrator

13P8-PR00378

Claim was filed in a decedent estate, and the personal representative moved to dismiss the claim.

Judgment entered April 19, 2016 ruling that the filing of the claim was the unauthorized practice of law.

In the Matter of Jonah Johnson

16MHK189420-16

Petition for Additional Detention and Treatment. The petition alleged that the respondent was mentally ill and presented a likelihood of serious harm to self or others.

Judgment entered July 13, 2015 granting petition.

In the Matter of Calvin Harris

12P8-MH00094-09

Petition for Additional Detention and Treatment. The petition alleged that the respondent was mentally ill and presented a likelihood of serious harm to self or others.

Judgment entered July 29, 2015 granting petition.

In the Matter of Diane Nepomuceno

15P8-MH00640-02

Petition for Additional Detention and Treatment. The petition alleged that the respondent was mentally ill and presented a likelihood of serious harm to self or others.

Judgment entered November 18, 2015 denying the petition and ordering the release of the respondent.

Lori M. Hooper, et al v. Phillip K. Hooper, et al

11P9-PR00600

Contested Petition for Termination of Guardianship for a Minor.

Judgment entered August 31, 2015 finding that the natural parents were now fit, able and willing to serve as the natural guardians for the minor.

Justin D. Cook-Lockhart v. Latoya D. Williams, et al

15P8-PR00197

Petition for Appointment of Guardian for a Minor

Judgment entered March 19, 2015 granting petition.

Mitchell A. Bray, Jr. v. Jackson County Public Administrator

16PRK188975

Petition for Restoration

Judgment entered restoring all rights of the ward and terminating the guardianship and conservatorship.

17. **If you do not have significant experience in litigation or in a judicial capacity, describe any other legal experience or accomplishments in the legal profession that may qualify you to serve in the office of Circuit Judge.**

In addition to my experience described above in litigation and in a judicial capacity, I would like to take the opportunity to provide additional legal experience I have obtained that would support my qualifications in the office of Probate Judge.

Serving as the Probate Judge for Jackson County requires a significant amount of attention to detail, especially when it comes to the supervision of estates. At the Hardwick Law Firm, some of my responsibilities included drafting primary financing documents consisting of official statements, purchase contracts, escrow agreements, and continuing disclosure documents for corporate entities and municipalities. The attention to detail required in drafting these documents is immense, and this skillset has served me well as Deputy Commissioner and will continue to serve me if selected to the position of Probate Judge.

18. List all bar associations and law-related organizations of which you are or have been a member, with any offices held and dates of membership.

Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association

- Probate and Estate Planning Committee (2011 – 2014)
 - Served as treasurer, vice-chair and chair (each were one year appointments and I currently serve as the chair which will end this calendar year)
 - As treasurer, I was responsible for organizing the “Views from the Bench” CLE and assisting with other committee meetings/CLEs
 - As vice-chair I was responsible for moderating several CLEs, organizing the “Reverse Mortgages and Current Trends” CLE, and assisting with other committee meetings/CLEs
 - As chair, I was responsible for creating the meeting/CLE schedule for the year, organizing the meetings/CLEs for the year and moderating all CLEs

- Diversity Education Committee (2010-2011)
 - Served as vice president for one year
 - As vice president, I was responsible for creating, organizing, and preparing CLEs for the Education Committee
 - Served on the executive board for one year
 - As a member of the executive board, I was responsible for assisting with the organization of the Heartland Diversity Legal Job Fair and creating future goals and direction for the newly created section

- Family and the Law Section (2014)
 - Probate and Estate Planning Member-at-Large

- Robert T. Ross Trial Academy (2012-2013)
 - Attended vigorous one-year course for enhancing trial skills

- Leadership Academy (2007-2009)
 - 2007-2008 Academy Graduate
 - Served on the Steering Committee for 2008-2009
 - As a member of the Steering Committee, I was responsible for organizing the academy and securing speakers/locations

Jackson County Bar Association (2006 – 2008)

- Treasurer
 - As treasurer, I was responsible for creating the annual budget
- Directory Committee
 - As a member of the Directory Committee, I was responsible for reaching out to all members and creating an updated directory of all attorneys in JCBA
- MLK Competition Chair
 - As Chair, I was responsible for all phases of putting together a written and oral competition for high school seniors as a way to obtain scholarships for college; I served in this position for two years
- Annual Banquet Committee
 - As a member of the Annual Banquet Committee, I assisted in the planning and organization of the JCBA Annual Banquet; I served in this position for two years

19. List any published articles or books you have authored and any significant programs or events for which you served as a primary speaker.

AUTHOR

- Competing Petitions – Minor Guardianships (2011)
 - Missouri Bar/Missouri Judicial Conference Annual Meeting
- Case Law Update – Probate and Estate Planning (2013)
 - KCMBA Family Law Section CLE

SPEAKER

- Representing Clients/Client Families in Crisis (2011)
 - Missouri Bar/Missouri Judicial Conference Annual Meeting
- The Probate Process, Wills, Trusts and More (2011)
 - Kansas City Radio Station 1590 KPRT AM
- Estate Planning 101 – Getting Your House in Order (2011)
 - Community Event for Senior Citizens at a local church
- Community Economic Empowerment Fair (2012)
 - Community Event during a local convention

Basics of Estate Planning (2012)

- Community Event for recent retirees at a local church

Seniors Making a Difference (2013)

- Community Event for Senior Citizens at a local community center

Personal Financial Education and Empowerment Ministry (2012 – 2013)

- Recurring class at a local church

Case Law Update – Probate and Estate Planning (2013)

- Third Annual Family and Law Section CLE

How to Prepare for Your Death (2013)

- Kansas City Channel Fox 4 News

Probate Practice (2015)

- Presentation to Attorneys belonging to the Eastern Jackson County Bar Association

Third Party Custody vs. Guardianship: Which is Right for You?

- Panel discussion on the difference between filing a guardianship and a third party custody action for a minor

Jackson County Probate Policies and Procedures (2015)

- Presentation to Attorneys in the Kansas City metro area

Stepping Up and Stepping Out (2014, 2015)

- Presentation to new attorneys on the basics of probate and estate planning

Closing the Estate (2016)

- Presentation to probate Attorneys re: probate administration

Probate Law: Legislative and Case Law Update (2015, 2016)

- Presentation to Kansas City area Attorneys re: new case law and legislative changes to the probate code

Probate Practice and Update (2016)

- Presentation to Attorney belonging to the Jackson County Bar Association

MODERATOR

Estate Planning Opportunities with the New Missouri Decanting Statute and the New Missouri Qualified Spousal Trust Statute (2012)

- KCMBA Probate and Estate Planning CLE

Probate and Estate Planning E-Filing Tips and Case Law/Legislative Update (2013)

- KCMBA Probate and Estate Planning CLE

Adult and Minor Guardianships and the Power of Attorney (2013)

- KCMBA Probate and Estate Planning CLE

Ethical Violations Captured on Film (2013)

- KCMBA Probate and Estate Planning Committee Meeting

Views From the Bench (2011)

- KCMBA Probate and Estate Planning CLE

Practical Perspectives: Persuading the Judiciary (2010)

- Diversity Section CLE

Trust Drafting – Incorporating the Essentials and More (2013)

- KCMBA Probate and Estate Planning CLE

Reverse Mortgages and Current Trends (2013)

- KCMBA Probate and Estate Planning CLE

- 20. Do you now or have you ever held any elective or appointive public office or position? If so, please explain.**

As the current Deputy Commissioner for the Probate Division of Jackson County, I was appointed in October 2014 by the current Judge of the Probate Division, Kathleen A. Forsyth.

- 21. Provide the branches and dates of any military service or other public service not otherwise covered in this application. If discharged from the military, state whether the discharge was other than honorable.**

Not Applicable

22. **Describe your community and volunteer service activities, including any organizations (outside the legal profession) with which you are affiliated and any offices held.**

New Generation Christian Center

- Serve as Deacon
- Teach Sunday School for ages 6 – 13
- Drive Church van to pick up members that do not have or cannot afford transportation to attend Church services
- Clean the Church weekly

Seniors Making a Difference

- Provide regular seminars to senior citizens in the Kansas City metropolitan area on topics ranging from estate planning, elder law and probate

Personal Financial Education Seminar

- Present basic estate planning information to members of the St. James United Methodist Church as part of recurring seminar

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Mental Health Training

- Instruct law enforcement officers from various police departments in the State of Missouri on mental health law and involuntary civil commitments

Civic Education Committee

- Presentations to middle school students re: constitutional rights on school campus grounds

23. **List any significant honors or awards you have received that otherwise have not been covered in this application.**

No additional honors or awards not previously covered.

24. **Are you delinquent in the payment of any federal, state, county or city taxes? If so, please explain.**

No

25. **Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony or received a suspended imposition of sentence in any federal, state, or military court? If so, please explain and provide the style of the case (including case number), the court, the date of the conviction, and the sentence or fine imposed.**

No

26. Have you ever been held in contempt of court? If so, please explain.

No

27. Have you ever been sued by a client or been a party to any litigation, other than as a guardian ad litem, plaintiff ad litem, or defendant ad litem? If so, please explain and provide the style of each case, the court, your role as plaintiff or defendant, and the nature and date of disposition.

Yes, I have been a party to litigation other than as guardian ad litem, plaintiff ad litem or defendant ad litem.

Case Number 0916-FC06668

Petition for a Minor Name Change

Re: My wife and I jointly filed a petition to have our son's last name changed. An order was entered on August 27, 2009 granting the joint petition.

28. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for breach of ethics or professional conduct by a court or by any bar association or committee thereof? If so, please explain.

No

29. If you are or were a member of the judiciary of the State of Missouri, please state:

(a) Whether an order of reprimand, removal, retirement, suspension or other disciplinary action has ever been entered against you by the Supreme Court of Missouri for breach of the Code of Judicial Conduct or the Canons of Judicial Conduct? If so, explain the details of such breach and the date, nature, and duration of the discipline imposed.

No

(b) Whether a reprimand or admonishment has ever been entered against you by the Commission on Retirement, Removal and Discipline for any of the causes specified in Rule 12.07 of the Supreme Court Rules Governing the Judiciary. If so, explain the details of such cause and the date and nature of the discipline imposed.

No

(c) Whether, to your knowledge, you are the subject of a complaint that is currently under investigation by the Commission on Retirement, Removal and Discipline. If so, explain that nature of such complaint and the status of the investigation.

No

31. Provide any additional information that you consider relevant to your qualifications for the office of Circuit Judge.

I was born with a passion for people. It is something that is just ingrained in me. The most important qualification of a Probate Judge is being a public servant. Someone once told me that probate work isn't just about managing estates for individuals. It's about working with families and individuals that are in crisis. In the vast majority of our estates, we are dealing with a family or an individual that just lost a loved one or that is dealing with someone with diminished capacity and/or health issues. The repercussions that occur after either one of these events is what leads to probate.

My passion for people provides me with the tools necessary to be able to relate to the litigants that appear before me. My goal as Deputy Commissioner has always been to do my absolute best in making sure all litigants have the opportunity to be heard, so that when they walk away from my Court, win or lose, they leave with the impression that our Court system does indeed work and that it is fair in its treatment to everyone.

32. List the names and contact information (title, mailing address, telephone, and email address) of the five persons whom you have requested to provide letters of reference regarding your character and judicial qualifications. Do not list as a reference any judge who currently sits in the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit.

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