

# Judge Joseph Klein

Drawn to the bench by an increasing desire to do more in service to others, Joe Klein embraces his new position as Hennepin County District Court judge with excitement and passion. Public service has always been a significant part of Klein's life. As Gov. Tim Pawlenty noted in his announcement appointing Klein as judge on July 14, 2009, "Joe has a sharp intellect. His passion for public service and helping others, as reflected by his volunteer work in the community, will help him in his new job." Judge Klein has long been guided and inspired by Sir Winston Churchill's notion that you make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give. Klein carries this sentiment with him as he takes on this new role.

Klein's journey began back in high school when he expressed an interest in becoming a lawyer. This interest was encouraged and supported by his family. After high school, Klein attended Rochester Community College (RCC) where he earned his associate of arts degree. While a student at RCC, he was a member of the student senate, chairman of the Lecture and Seminar Committee, a choir section leader, freshman



## Education

- 1986 J.D., University of Minnesota Law School
- 1982 B.A., University of Minnesota
- 1979 A.A., Rochester Community College

## Employment

- 2006-2009 Attorney, Law Office of Andrew P. Sherwood
- 2005-2006 Contract Attorney, Universal Underwriter's Group
- 2004-2005 Attorney, Zurich North American Insurance
- 2000-2003 Quality Assurance Supervisor, Medical Evaluations, Inc.,
- 1987-2000 Attorney and Shareholder, Moss & Barnett

intramural sport activities. He also served as a resident advisor and later a senior resident advisor at Frontier Hall. Interestingly, his daughter started at the university last fall and, following in her father's footsteps, is living in Frontier Hall.

After receiving his bachelor of arts degree in 1982, and still being driven by a desire to become a lawyer, Klein attended law school at the University of Minnesota and received his JD in 1986. During law school, he worked two jobs while attending classes and continued to be involved in various intramural sports, referred to as "Law League" sports. He was also involved in a number of church activities at the Newman Center Catholic Church, including singing in the choir and serving as a lector at Sunday services.

Kline began his practice of law in 1987 at the law firm of Moss and Barnett in

camp counselor, and he was active in several intramural sports.

After graduating from RCC in 1979, Klein attended the University of Minnesota where he majored in political science. While there, Klein was involved in several

Minneapolis. He later became a shareholder in the firm. As he reflects on his experience, he treasures the fact that he learned the practice of law from "a good bunch of folks." According to Klein, there are several positive personal qualities you can have as a lawyer, but the foundation is integrity. He practiced

with a number of people who showed him integrity. As a young attorney he had an opportunity to try cases early on in his career and “simply loved it.” He describes

**[T]here are several positive personal qualities you can have as a lawyer, but the foundation is integrity.**

being in the courtroom as one of the most professionally fulfilling experiences, both then and now.

Klein left Moss and Barnett in 2000 to be a quality assurance supervisor at Medical Evaluations, Inc., also located in Minneapolis. Medical Evaluations provides independent medical examinations for personal injury cases. There Klein was able to view a case through the lens of those providing litigation support. He was as a liaison between doctors and lawyers as he managed the quality assurance department. This experience provided Klein with a unique perspective and appreciation for the many aspects involved in litigation. Additionally, he again observed the importance of integrity and professional reputation throughout the litigation process.

Ready for a new challenge, Klein returned to the practice of law as an attorney with Zurich North American Insurance from 2004 to 2005. He then pursued a position as a contract attorney with Universal Underwriter’s Group in Edina from 2005 to 2006. From 2006 to his present appointment as Hennepin County District Court Judge, Klein worked as an attorney with the Law Office of Andrew P. Sherwood, in Roseville, where he served as house counsel for Progressive Group of Insurance Companies.

In addition to a wealth of civil experience Klein brings to his new role, a commitment to public service and a sincere reverence for the work judges do. Klein’s community involvements include serving as a volunteer judge for the University of Minnesota Law School

Moot Court, a volunteer attorney coach for Edina Middle School’s mock trial program, a volunteer for Loaves and Fishes, as well as a volunteer coach for Hopkins youth football, basketball, baseball, and girls’ softball. Klein is a member and active participant at Faith Presbyterian Church.

Klein and his wife, Holly Pike, and their two teenage children often volunteer together. Klein delights in standing back and seeing his children engage in serv-


ing others and then observing the impact the service experience has on them. Holly works at Hennepin County Medical Center as a pediatric nurse practitioner. She interacts with a variety of people, as will the judge in his new role. Klein is excited and challenged by the opportunity to be a judge because his new position combines two things he has found personally rewarding throughout his life: public service and the practice of law in the courtroom setting.

Understanding the significance of his role as a judge, Klein sees himself as “on the front line,” meaning that he will oftentimes be the face of the law to those who appear before him. Klein acknowledges that a judge is sometimes the first and only person individuals see and equate with justice. To him, being a good judge is about allowing people the chance to be heard and ensuring that they understand the process. Additionally, finding a balance between treating everyone with respect and moving things along in the courtroom is something Klein sees as a challenge, but accepts as a goal.

For fun, Klein and his son both practice Tae Kwon Do. They have been taking classes together for about six years, and each has a second-degree black belt. Klein watched his son for a year or two and then, at the urging of his son, decided to participate in the class himself. After having a coaching relationship with his son for several years, Klein appreciates this special activity because “there’s something neat about being a student right along with him.”

Judge Klein recommends doing something outside of oneself every day. He encourages

us to see the value in every moment, to challenge ourselves to be better than we are, and to recognize that everybody crosses our path for a reason, be it to give us something or for us to give that person something. He stresses the importance of reading, reflection, and carrying quotes from those who have come before us as we journey forward.

Joseph Klein truly brings with him a passion for public service, a commitment to justice, and an increasing desire to do more. His appreciation for the law, the courtroom, the legal process, and—above all—the human person communicates his commitment to his new position as judge with the Hennepin County District Court. 



**Rebecca Vandenberg  
Contributing Author**

Ms. Vandenberg has served as Family Court Referee David Piper’s law clerk since December 2008.