

Judge Susan Block

Susan Block returned to the practice of law after retiring as a Circuit Judge in 2004, with 25 years of judicial service. In her last judicial assignment she was appointed to serve as the Administrative Judge of the Family Court with the authority to manage the policies and practices of this division, while maintaining a full caseload of abuse, neglect, delinquency and adoption matters.

Recipient of the Andrew Jackson Higgins Award for Excellence in Juvenile Justice, her work in the area of family law and child advocacy has been recognized locally and internationally. Currently, she focuses her practice in family law matters, including divorce, modifications, juvenile, guardianships, school law, juvenile law, adoptions, paternity matters, grandparents' visitation requests, and domestic partnership conflicts.

The unique combination of having been on both sides of the bench makes Judge Block an invaluable resource to her clients and her colleagues. Since becoming an active trial lawyer, she has quickly built a reputation as a compassionate and zealous advocate for her clients, taking on the most complex cases and thinking "out of the box" for creative solutions and impressive results.

Judge Block has received numerous local awards for her work in child advocacy, prevention of domestic violence, and innovative programming for the Family Court. They include the St. Louis Bar Foundation Award, Missouri Coalition for Domestic Violence-St. Louis Region Person of the Year Award, Public Citizen of the Year award given by the National Association of Social Workers Missouri Chapter, Metropolitan St. Louis YWCA Racial Justice Award, CASA Community Award, World of Children Award, National Council of Jewish Women-St. Louis Section Founder's Award and was honored by the Missouri Supreme Court for her outstanding service to the St. Louis County Circuit Court.

An innovator and visionary, she was a founding member of the Washington University Project for Children and Youth, 2002-2005, and served on the first Board of Directors for the National Truancy Prevention Association and Lawyers for Equality. Judge Block was appointed by the Missouri Supreme Court to its Committee on Racial and Ethnic Fairness, juvenile sub-committee, with a special focus on referrals to the court and alternative to detention and commitments to the Department of Youth Services.

Well published, Judge Block authors the "Bench to Bar" monthly column for the St. Louis Lawyer magazine published by the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis. Recently, she co-authored "Grandparent Visitation Rights: History, Constitutionality, and Practice," in the April 2009 St. Louis Bar Journal. Following her presentation at the First International Conference on Domestic Violence in Rome, Italy, she wrote "Domestic Violence: A Problem Concealed. A Civil Response to Domestic Violence in the United States," California Western School of Law, Journal of Law, 1997. She has been a contributing writer for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on Family Law Issues from 1997-2003, authoring "In Search of Safety Coordination Efforts."

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Judge Block's teaching experience ranges from law school instruction to international forums. She has been an Adjunct Professor of Law at Washington University, St. Louis University and Emory University Schools of Law, specializing in pre-trial practice, trial practice, and trial technique courses. She has been sent abroad by the United States Department of State to instruct and advise countries on domestic violence laws and procedures, including the countries of Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Macedonia, and Russia. Locally she has given presentations on family law to the United States Arbitration and Mediation, Inc., the American Jewish Congress, and the Midwest School of Paralegal Studies. She was a veteran faculty member of the Missouri Judicial College and the National Judicial College. In addition, she provided private tutoring for law graduates preparing to take the Missouri Bar Examination in all areas of the law.

Judge Block's community involvement ranges from having served on the boards of Food Outreach, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Caring for Kids, the Missouri Children's Service Commission, the National Association of Women Judges and the St. Louis County Domestic Violence Council. Most recently, Governor Jay Nixon appointed her to serve on the board of the Missouri Children's Trust Fund, which seeks to prevent child abuse and educate the community on this important issue.

Judge Block is a graduate of Penn State University and the St. Louis University School of Law. She was also a participant in the John F Kennedy School of Government for Senior Executives in Local Government. She is the mother of four children and the grandmother of four. Her colleagues view her as a lawyer's lawyer and often seek out her advice in dealing with the Family Court.