

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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You Will Decide Judges' Fate

JEFFERSON CITY — After voting on the candidates and issues November 4th, you will see a list of judges on your ballot. Most circuit and appeals court judges will be up for retention this year. In addition, you will see a question asking if you wish to keep a Missouri Supreme Court judge on the job. Judge Patricia Breckenridge is nonpartisan, as are all Missouri Supreme Court justices. After a Supreme Court justice has served for a year, his or her name then goes onto the next general election ballot and must receive a majority of votes to be retained. This is included in the state's method of choosing judges.

The [Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan](#), also called the Missouri Plan, was placed on the ballot and passed by voters in 1940. At first, the nonpartisan plan applied to the Supreme Court, court of appeals, and certain courts in St. Louis and Jackson County. Since then, the plan has been expanded to Clay, Platte, and St. Louis counties. All of those changes took effect in the 1970s.

Under the Missouri Plan, the [Appellate Judicial Commission](#) chooses a list of candidates to replace a Supreme Court justice. This panel is made up of three lawyers, three citizens, and the state's chief justice — who serves as chair. The Appellate Judicial Commission then reviews applications of those who apply for the job and then turn those names over to the governor, who then has 60 days to make a selection. If he does not choose anyone, the commission will then make the selection.

[The Federalist Society](#) took the lead last year on finding more fair alternatives to the Missouri Plan. There are other groups who also would like to see the nonpartisan court plan changed or even done away with. For instance, Bill Placke — who leads the St. Louis chapter of the Federalist Society — says he would prefer a ten-member commission that then would give the governor a

panel of five people to choose from.

Judge Breckenridge was approved by the governor last year. You can see her entire [bio](#) online, but here is part of it:

Dates of judicial service:

- Appointed to Supreme Court in September 2007.
- Previously served as a judge on the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District, from 1990 to 2007; retained in the general elections in November 1992 and 2004. Served as its chief judge from 1998 to 2000.
- Appointed and later elected as an Associate Judge in Vernon County, 28th Judicial Circuit, in 1982; re-elected in 1986 and 1990.
- Assistant Municipal Judge, City of Nevada, Missouri, 1979-1982.

Education:

- Juris Doctorate, University of Missouri-Columbia.
- Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1975.
- University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1972.
- Educated in the Nevada, Missouri, public school district.

Prior Employment

- Partner in law firm of Russell, Brown, Bickel and Breckenridge, 1980-1982.
- Associate in law firm of Russell, Brown and Bickel, 1978-1980.

This will be an important election. Some people say it is the most important election in history. To me, all elections are important and it is essential to vote every time. I hope to see you at the polls on November 4th.

As always, if you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at 1-877-291-5584.

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