



### Milwaukee judge creates portraits display

Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Charles F. Kahn Jr., well known for his high aptitude for technology, recently completed a project to create and display portraits of each of Milwaukee's chief judges in the Chief Judge's Conference Room on the sixth floor of the Milwaukee County Courthouse. The portraits were hung during a ceremony on Aug. 1, honoring former Chief Judge Michael P. Sullivan and welcoming current Chief Judge Kitty K. Brennan.



Judge Charles F. Kahn

Kahn handled every piece of the project, from taking the photographs to cutting the mats and arranging the display.

"Judge Sullivan asked me to do it," he said. "There was no budget to hire a professional, so he needed someone who was gullible and had access to a camera."

In reality, Sullivan knew Kahn as a skilled amateur photographer who, in 2001, worked with Assistant Family Court Commissioner Joe Frinzi to create a group photo of Milwaukee's 47 judges. That gig led to requests for similar shots of Milwaukee's court commissioners and the Waukesha County judges.

This latest project grew from an informal discussion more than a year ago about how to honor the legacy of Milwaukee's chief judges. Since court reorganization, seven judges have served as chief in District One: Michael T. Sullivan (1978-79), Victor Manian (1979-86), Michael J. Barron (1986-90), Patrick T. Sheedy (1990-98), Michael J. Skwierawski (1998-2003), Michael P. Sullivan (2003-05), and Kitty K. Brennan (2005-).

Kahn used a medium format camera to take the photos so that the images could be enlarged without loss of clarity, and then scanned the images at high resolution to create a digital file for Photoshop clean-up and printing.

"Because I'm an amateur, the project turned out to be time consuming," he said. "I had to run dozens of

lousy proofs before getting acceptable results."

Making the photographs uniform was a major challenge. Each had to be cropped to show the same amount of head and shoulders, and each required a background consistent with the others. When the photos were done to his satisfaction, Kahn began the framing process. Each of the chief judges chipped in to help cover the cost of the

materials.

"There is a small frame supply shop in the Bay View area of Milwaukee that carries classic wood frames at bargain prices where I bought seven similar frames," he said. "Then I used special museum glass that produces no glare and no loss of vibrancy. I cut mat board to allow a wider border on the bottom than the top leaving room for a gold foil label made with an inkjet printer."

The finished products honor the service of the seven individuals who have faced the rigors of managing Wisconsin's largest circuit and have stood up to exceptional challenges in the process. "It was an honor to work on the project," said Kahn. "Some of these judges have retired, but there on the wall they continue to inspire us with us with their wisdom." ■



The chief judges of District One (left to right): Michael T. Sullivan (1978-79), Victor Manian (1979-86), Michael J. Barron (1986-90), Patrick T. Sheedy (1990-98), Michael J. Skwierawski (1998-2003), Michael P. Sullivan (2003-05), and Kitty K. Brennan (2005-).