



Press Release

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Rebecca Lake Wood Becomes KCMBA's New President

On December 4, 2008, Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association (KCMBA) held its 124th Annual Meeting and Luncheon. Close to a thousand attendees witnessed the passing of the President's Gavel from Gregory M. Bentz to Rebecca Lake Wood—the 2009 KCMBA President.

Rebecca Lake Wood earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Missouri at Kansas City in 1981 and a J.D. from UMKC School of Law in 1983. Since February of 2000, she has served as the Public Administrator for Jackson County Missouri addressing the legal, financial and personal care needs of approximately 1,200 clients. She is a regional representative on the Missouri Partners in Crisis Commission and advocates for the development and funding of programs to assist persons with disabilities. Previously, she was a member in the firm of Kapke, Willerth & Wood L.L.C. Wood is a past president of the Eastern Jackson County Bar Association. She was a member at large of the KCMBA Board of Directors from 2000 to 2004 and served as the chair of KCMBA's Probate and Member Benefits Committees. Wood and her husband Lindsay have two children – Alex and Josh.

Joining KCMBA as a young lawyer just out of law school, Wood worked for a group that included George Kapke, a long-time supporter and member of the KCMBA Board of Directors. After concluding seven years of service for the Eastern Jackson County Bar Association, Wood applied to be a member-at-large on the KCMBA Board. She has worked on numerous committees and presented at many KCMBA sponsored CLE's. She has also chaired the Member Benefits Committee and the Probate and Estate Committee. Recently, Wood served as the Chair of the Bench-Bar & Boardroom Committee for 2008.

It has been more than a decade since KCMBA had a woman at the helm of its organization. “We

have never been led by a government lawyer or a probate attorney. In this respect, my service will signify a major shift in how KCMBA represents its members. For decades KCMBA has been thought of as a 'trial lawyers' organization. In spite of significant increases in programming and activities for attorneys in corporate, in-house, family and other practice areas, the perception lingers. As President, I hope to serve as a regular reminder that KCMBA is not just a 'trial lawyers club,' but rather, that it is an organization made up of attorneys of all colors and genders, employed in a variety of enterprises and with a diversity of interests who come together to do good in their community. For that reason, I am honored to have been chosen to represent KCMBA. In doing so, I will serve as the face of the future of KCMBA within our professional community.”

Wood has outlined several goals and objectives that she plans on working toward as President of the KCMBA for 2009. “I believe that those of us who are called to be lawyers do so with the sober understanding that, as participants in the third branch of government, we stand as protectors of the ideal of 'equal justice for all.' For more than two hundred years, lawyers and judges have helped to shape this ideal. As members of KCMBA, we have the opportunity to combine our efforts with others to ensure that all those within our borders receive the full protection of the law. As President of KCMBA I will develop a cohesive system of pro bono service to provide legal representation to those who are too poor to afford legal counsel in cases involving the denial of shelter, sustenance and safety. I will ask that every lawyer give back to the community by offering their time and energy to give every person a real opportunity at equal justice. I will work with other organizations like Legal Aid of Western Missouri, CASA and The Innocence Project to provide a single entry system for lawyers to contribute their considerable talents and resources towards making 'equal justice for all' a reality.

Photo available upon request.

The Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association serves approximately 5,000 members in the nine-county Kansas City metro area: Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and Cass, Clay, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri. The mission of this Association is to serve our members and our community by promoting justice, professional excellence and respect for the law.