

In The Spotlight with: Judge James L. Kimbler, retired Judge from the Medina County Common Pleas Court

By Kate Feeks

Judge James L. Kimbler will be on the show *Law Talk* with host John Celebrezze to discuss his life after retiring and his new position as a private judge. This show will run throughout the month of May on Wadsworth Cable (WCTV) Public Access Channel 15, Brunswick Area Television (BAT) Public access Chanel 21, and Armstrong Cable Access Channel 37 in Medina County along with Clear Picture Channels 21 & 22 in Wooster and Massillon.

Judge James Kimbler retired from the Medina County Common Pleas Court on January 1, 2015, after serving 18 years as a common pleas court judge. Prior to serving on the common pleas court Judge Kimbler served as judge of the Wadsworth Municipal Court for over 10 years. Since his retirement, Kimbler has founded Northcoast ADR Services, a company which specializes in alternative dispute resolution including mediation, arbitration, and private judging.

A 1967 graduate of Cloverleaf Senior High School, Judge Kimbler went on to graduate from Ohio University and the Case Western Reserve School of Law. Judge Kimbler resides in Seville, Ohio with his wife, Joyce, who was recently elected Medina County Common Pleas Court Judge.

A private judge is a retired judge who has registered with the Ohio Supreme Court. Once the appropriate forms are filed with the clerks of courts in the specific counties, a private judge is clear to hear cases. Litigants hire private judges "...who are authorized by (Ohio)Revised Code Section 2701.10 a statute that has been around since 1984. There are currently about 19 retired judges who have registered with the Ohio Supreme Court that serve as private judges." explained Kimbler.

Kimbler became interested in private judging after coming across a website named Judicial Alternatives of Ohio. "I was thinking what does that mean? So I went to the site and learned a retired judge named Donald Cox managed this site. He provided information about private judging and I became very interested in what I was learning. As far as I know, I am the first judge registered to be a private judge in Medina County, Lorain County, Wayne County, Ashland County and Summit County", Kimbler said.

Private judges are normally used in divorce and dissolution cases. The benefit of hiring a private judge is quickness, discretion, and convenience. All parties to a lawsuit discuss among themselves if they would prefer a private judge. A referral or submission is then filed in order to have a private judge referred to a case. "There are certain limitations to using a private judge. A private judge cannot do a jury trial and technically a private judge cannot do criminal cases

because the prosecuting attorney's office would most likely not allow a private judge", Kimbler noted.

To learn more about private judging, watch for the interview with retired Judge James L. Kimbler and Mr. Celebrezze throughout the month of May on *Law Talk*.