Sebelius chooses Kittel as district judge

Peggy Carr Kittel won’t have far to move for her new job.

Kittel, currently a judge pro tem in Douglas County, was appointed district court judge by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius on Monday.

Kittel, of Lawrence, will replace Stephen Six, whom Sebelius appointed state attorney general in January after a sex scandal caused the resignation of Paul Morrison.

“Peggy brings over 25 years of legal experience to this position and has served as a dedicated public servant for the majority of her career,” Sebelius said.

“During that time she has proven to be a respected leader within the legal community. I am confident Peggy will serve the citizens of the 7th District with fairness and integrity,” Sebelius added.

As judge pro tem since 2001, Kittel has overseen juvenile offender proceedings, criminal appearances and enforcement of child support and parenting time orders.

Prior to her service as judge pro tem, Kittel was the assistant district attorney in Douglas County for six years and assistant district attorney in Wyandotte County for six years.

Kittel also worked in private practice and for the Lawrence law firm Allen, Cooley & Allen, now known as Gilliland & Hayes. She received her law degree and a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Kansas University.

Kittel and her husband, Rick, have a son, Jim, 13.

Kittel was selected from three nominees. The other two were Trevor C. Wohlford, executive director and chief legal counsel for the State Board of Tax Appeals; and Justice B. King, managing partner of the Topeka law firm of Fisher, Patterson, Sayler & Smith.

The district judge position pays $117,109 per year; the pro tem job was 80 percent of full time and paid $50,935 annually, according to county officials.
Exports, security services, health care ride out trouble

BY TED BELL | CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Every cloud has a silver lining, so even an economic recession must have some winners.

"There are businesses that can prosper during downturns, and we’re fortunate to have many of those kinds of businesses here in the Midwest," said Wally Meyer, director of Entrepreneurship Programs for the University of Kansas School of Business.

Some of those lemon-ade-from-lemons ventures are obvious. Others are not.

The old standbys include: precious metals, discount box stores and restaurants, repair shops, renovation contracting, liquor and pawnshops.

Randell Moore of Blue Chip Economic Indicators pointed to Cash America International Inc. as an example of one such company. The Fort Worth-based company reported $929 million in 2007 revenue, up 34 percent from 2006. The company, which also offers payday loans, has seven outlets in Kansas City, two in Independence and another in Raytown.

Other old reliables for slow times include professionals, such as lawyers and accountants, to help squeeze everything you can out of what you have. There’s also local and regional tourism spots — such as Worlds of Fun and Branson — that normally are hurt by the appetite for world or national travel during high times but are great alternatives for penny-pinching vacationers in slower times.

Industries that are situated to fare well during the current economic downturn include health care, exports and security.

"Health care has accounted for almost all of the nonfarm employment growth over the past six years," Moore said.

Whitey Kuhn, president and CEO of Kansas City advertising agency Kuhn & Wittenborn, said, "Health care and insurance are two areas most people recognize as being critical."

Moore said a 40 percent drop in the value of the dollar during the past six years has helped boost exports.

"If you’re an exporter, that’s made your product 40 percent cheaper, that’s more competitive abroad," he said.

The most obvious Midwest exporter is the farmer, already riding high on the demand for the area’s growing staples of corn, wheat and soybeans. Drought and demand in other parts of the world can bring smiles and black ink to Kansas City-area growers, not to mention area farmers, equipment manufacturers, seed growers and fertilizer businesses.

Moore said that no matter how dismal the U.S. manufacturing scene may seem compared with several decades ago, we still produce billions in capital and high-tech goods.

Businesses that specialize in defense and security also fare well during hard economic times. Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth have a combined economic impact of more than $2 billion annually.

"We have used up so much military equipment in Iraq and Afghanistan: tanks, trucks and just plain ammo," Moore said. "There will be a huge price to pay just to replenish our stocks."

University of Missouri-Kansas City economist L. Randall Wray points to not only the manufacture of hardware but also to the Bush administration’s appetite for contracting out services once performed by GIs or the Defense Department.

Private security companies stand to do well when unemployment rises, Wray said.

"When unemployment goes up, crime goes up," he said. "I don't know if that means more hiring of police officers, but purchases of private security services and security devices should go up."

Shrewd executives and investors
should be just as focused on the recovery, economists said.
"I think the real question is not how you make money in a down market but how you preserve the business," KU's Meyer said.

He said that to accomplish this, business owners must remember the basic criteria for a well-managed company: return on assets, stable growth, longevity in management.

Economists agree that the effort to stimulate lending could offer a great opportunity for all businesses to capitalize, even expand their inventories, products and payrolls. But there are also calls for caution.

"Lenders are holding so much (bad) paper that even with everything the Fed is doing, they may be reluctant to lend, and they still are tightening lending," Moore said.

Advertising executive Kuhn said that history shows that those who grasp the opportunity to expand during downturns can be handsomely rewarded, especially those serving consumers.

"There are a lot of businesses in our own area that have the opportunity to increase their market share if they would be willing to bite the bullet," he said.

Kuhn said the current economic worries have not shown up on his books.

"I sense people are concerned, but it's not near as bad now as it was (during past downturns). We haven't seen people panic like they did after 9/11."

Ted Bell | Bell is a freelance writer in the Kansas City area.
Bloch School faces a big test
Departures could limit fund raising, put future direction in question

BY STEVE VOCKRODT | STAFF WRITER

The loss of two top administrators from the University of Missouri-Kansas City's business school will result in a transition period that could extend for more than a year, university officials and those close to the school said.

Homer Erekson said March 26 that he was stepping down as dean of the Henry W. Bloch School of Business and Public Administration to take a similar position at Texas Christian University. Days later, news emerged that Karyl Leggio, associate dean for academic programs and leader of the school's executive MBA program, had accepted a new job as dean of Loyola College of Maryland's business school.

UMKC Provost Gail Hackett said that the university hopes to announce Erekson's successor by Jan. 1 but that it could go the entire 2008-09 school year with an interim dean at the helm.

"You always have to deal with turnover, and it's not typical to have these two key positions at the same time, but these things do happen," she said. "But I don't think we will have major disruptions."

Nevertheless, the departures of longtime administrators — Erekson had been dean for six years; Leggio has been at UMKC for eight years — could affect fund-raising efforts and create questions about the future direction of the school and key programs.
BLOCH: School's improvements also bring job offers

FROM PAGE 1

The Bloch school gained attention during Erekson's tenure, with the school and the executive MBA programs ranked highly by various national publications.

It also attracted attention for its formation of the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, a doctoral program aimed at training future entrepreneurs.

Bloch school namesake Henry Bloch said the departures of Erekson and Leggio aren't a sign of trouble. The recruitment of Bloch school administrators by other institutions can be seen as a compliment, he said.

"You can't regret things like that," Bloch said. "It's not that they're quitting or went sideways or downwards from UMKC."

The timing of Erekson's and Leggio's announcements also has a lot to do with university recruiting cycles, Bloch and others said.

Erekson heads back to TCU, where he received an undergraduate degree. As dean of the university's Neeley School of Business, he'll succeed Dan Short, with whom he worked at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, before Erekson came to UMKC.

Leggio had been looking for an opportunity to advance. She sought to become dean of the business school at the University of Northern Colorado in October, according to a cover letter written on UMKC letterhead posted on UNC's Web site.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed working with our current dean, Homer Erekson," Leggio wrote in an e-mail to the Kansas City Business Journal. "Since a business school only needs one dean and Bloch had one, I began to explore alternative dean positions elsewhere."

One possible ill effect of Erekson's departure is a short-term dip in fund raising.

William Fuerst, dean of the University of Kansas School of Business, said downturns in donations typically follow when a business school dean goes out the door until donors become comfortable with the successor.

"Fund raising is, in large part, about relationship development," Fuerst said. "A fund-raiser can't just swoop in and wow the audience and suddenly have checks flowing their way."

Drue Jennings, a Shughart Thomson & Kilroy PC lawyer who serves on the Bloch School Endowment Board, said Erekson was successful in developing relationships with potential donors.

Jennings said the bigger issue with Erekson's departure is whether state aid to higher education in coming years will be enough to help schools like UMKC retain talented professors and administrators.

"Neither Kansas nor the state of Missouri adequately address the needs of higher education," Jennings said.

Leggio echoed Jennings' sentiments and added what she thought her and Erekson's successors should look forward to.

"The next dean and associate dean need to be market-focused, work on partnering with the business community, work on finalizing funding for the IEI and continue to advance our programs in the rankings and in the eyes of Bloch's constituents," she wrote. "This should keep our successors quite busy."

The Bloch school announced April 2 that it had appointed David Renz to another top administrative position. Renz, who had been executive director of the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership at UMKC, was named as chairman of the Bloch school's department of public affairs.

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Final Four worth a million to KU

BY FRED MANN
The Wichita Eagle

In the NCAA basketball tournament, the more you win, the more you earn, and the University of Kansas stands to make close to $1 million in its run to the Final Four.

Throw in the school's Orange Bowl appearance in January and you're starting to talk real money.

Add intangibles such as potential increases in future donations, student enrollment, merchandising and alumni support, and it's impossible to calculate the benefit the school will derive from its twin sporting achievements.

"I don't think anybody knows really how much it's worth. Not right now anyway," said Jim Marchiony, KU associate athletics director for external relations.

It doesn't happen often. Kansas is only the fourth school to go to a BCS bowl in football and reach the Final Four in basketball in the same year. The others were Ohio State in 1999 and 2007, Wisconsin in 2000 and Florida last year.

County: Sedgwick
was accompanied by the ring of a cash register.

Under the NCAA's revenue-sharing plan, the money a team earns from the tournament is determined by the number of games it plays. Each game is considered a unit. Making it to the Final Four earned Kansas five units — one for each of the four games it played to get this far, and another for Saturday's semifinal game against North Carolina.

Five is the maximum number of units a school can earn. Teams don't get a sixth unit for reaching the national championship game.

The NCAA didn't want to put extra value on the title and put more pressure on a player to hit a game-winning free throw, said Bob Burda, assistant Big 12 Conference commissioner.

The money comes from the NCAA's Basketball Fund, created when the organization signed an 11-year, $6 billion contract with CBS for the broadcasting rights to the tournament. The contract went into effect in 2003.

This year, the value of each unit is expected to be between $185,000 and $200,000, Burda said, meaning Kansas could earn close to $1 million.

The Big 12 also gets credit for KU's units. Those units are pooled with units earned by other Big 12 teams that made the tournament this year. The units generate additional money that will be paid out to the 12 teams over a rolling six-year period.

This year, six Big 12 teams made the tournament and earned 16 units that will be added to the pot.

So Kansas will get the money it earned from its five units this year, then share a 12th of the value of the combined units for the next six years.

The conference has been one of the leaders among the 31 Division I conferences that
University of Kansas debate team member Christopher Stone, son of Douglas and Gloria Stone of Derby, placed second at the Cross Examination Debate Association, March 21-24. Stone also placed fourth as an individual speaker, Brett Bricker, son of Gary and Norma Bricker of Wichita, placed eighth. Ronnie Press, son of Arthur and Judith Press of Wichita, and Bricker were named to the Academic All-American debate team. Dylan Quigley, son of Tim Quigley and Trix Niernberger of Wichita, was named to the All-American debate team.

Other team members included Joel Kasten, son of Roger and Leah Kasten, and Mathew Petersen, son of Laura Petersen-Miller and Virgil Miller, all of Wichita. Bricker and Stone are two of four students to represent KU at the National Debate Tournament at California State University-Fullerton.