

Judge Randal R. Arp Retiring July 2, 2019

Judge Randal R. Arp will retire on July 2, 2019, marking the end of 19+ years of service on the circuit court bench. In December 1999 Judge Arp was appointed by Governor Jim Geringer to replace retiring Judge Gerald Connolly as the County Court Judge for Goshen County. (The county court system was replaced with the circuit court system in July 2000.) For the past two decades, Judge Arp and his wife Pat have patiently endured a commuter marriage. Their living arrangement enabled the judge, a Torrington native, to live in Goshen County—one of the four counties within the judicial district he served—while his wife maintained a residence in the Capital City. The road between Cheyenne and Torrington will no longer be blamed for the majority of the tread wear on their family vehicles.

In his youth, Judge Arp contemplated many different career plans. He didn't become interested in pursuing a career in law until he worked with two attorneys in Gillette who were involved in a human services program. Judge Arp graduated from law school at the University of Wyoming in 1980, after which he became an Assistant Attorney General for a short period of time. In 1981 he became first an associate and later a partner in the Morgan and Brorby law firm in Gillette. In 1991 Judge Arp became bar and disciplinary counsel for the Wyoming State Bar from the spring of that year through the end of 1999, when he took the bench.

Judge Arp served on the domestic violence benchbook advisory committee through two volumes (initial and rewrite) authored by Professor Dona Playton; he served on the Permanent Rules Advisory Committee-Criminal Division from January 2001 until replaced in mid-2019, as well as the Bond Committee for a similar length of time; he also served as the judicial representative on the state Adoption Intermediary Commission since late spring 2017. Judge Arp handled district court casework in the Eighth Judicial District by assignment, and for a period of time, was also assigned to handle a number of domestic relations cases in the Laramie County District Court. He has been a member of the Torrington Rotary Club since May 2000, and he served as President of Rotary Club 1147, District 5440, for the 2005-2006 year.

Throughout Judge Arp's time as a jurist, he exhibited an extraordinary worth ethic and a very systematic and analytical approach to the law. He has credited his exceptional clerks and his fellow circuit court judges with much of the satisfaction he derived from his time on the bench. Sonia Loya, the judge's Chief Clerk, commented, "It has been an honor and privilege to have worked with Judge Arp these last 19 years. He entrusted me with the position of Chief Clerk for the Circuit Court of Goshen County for which I will be eternally grateful. Under his tutelage, I learned not only Wyoming law and the definition of my job but also the qualities needed to be a true jurist, which are honesty, fairness, objectivity, knowledge and respect for all. He has been a no-nonsense judge who was always well prepared for his day on the bench, taking the time to hear each and every defendant from all walks of life. I will miss his authenticity, dedication, and mostly his humor. Judge Arp's commitment and fidelity to the bench is admirable and his service to the State of Wyoming has been exemplary. I feel truly blessed to say Judge Arp was my mentor and a friend."

In discussing the upcoming retirement, Chief Justice Davis remarked, "Judge Arp has served the people of the State of Wyoming and the Eighth Judicial District with diligence, honor and integrity. He is one of those judges who is the most prepared person in the courtroom, and who is possessed not only of a good judgment and encyclopedic knowledge of the law, but also of compassion and understanding for the more unfortunate citizens who find themselves in our court system. He will be missed, but he leaves a legacy that will continue to benefit the citizens, the bar, and his fellow judges."

Governor Mark Gordon appointed Nathaniel Hibben to fill the vacancy created by Judge Arp's retirement. Mr. Hibben is currently in private practice in Torrington.

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TORRINGTON TELEGRAM

‘I have had that moment’

Judge Arp to retire after nearly two decades on the bench.

By Tom Milstead, Torrington Telegram
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Posted on April 5, 2019

TORRINGTON, Wyo. – After nearly 20 years on the bench – and just as much time driving back and forth between the three courts in the Eighth Judicial Circuit in Torrington, Lusk and Wheatland – Judge Randal Arp has decided to call it a career. “Any number of friends and associates who are retired told me that ‘one day you will wake up and know it is time.’ That may sound trite, but it is accurate,” he said. “Everyone has different factors that impact the decision as well as the timing, but ultimately each person ends up in that wake-up mode at some point. I have had that moment.”

The search for his replacement began last week, but it will be a tall order to replace Arp – a Torrington native, born and raised in Goshen County, who took pride in the isolation and problem-solving that makes up one of the most elite professions in the world. It was the problem solving that made Arp consider becoming a judge in the first place, and that passion hasn’t left. “I was drawn to the problem-solving, or resolving, part of the law,” he said. “The fact that the very things that make any occupation tough are the very same things that make the operation interesting and rewarding. Nearly every day brings something new to consider.”

Arp took his [judicial oath of office on December 27, 1999]. Since that time, Arp said he has enjoyed the profession. “I work with some outstanding and talented clerks, as well as fellow judges,” he said. “The concept of synergy – the whole being greater than the sum of the parts – has not been lost upon me. I will miss that interaction when I retire. I can say in nearly all instances I enjoy the parties and attorneys who bring disputes and issues to the court for resolution.” But through all of that time, Arp has been the man in the robe who has to make the decisions. That responsibility carries a heavy weight. “The very same aspect that makes it challenging also makes it rewarding,” he said. “There is an isolation or solitude, if you will, that is free of opinions and allows one to consider all sides of an issue before applying the law to that situation. It is the manner of being alone without being lonely.” That responsibility requires Arp to be constantly plugged in and connected to the happenings in his courts. One of the biggest changes to life after the bench will be getting used to unplugging, he said. “That will be a strange sensation,” he said. “It will be nice not to be wired all of the time. It will be a big change for me.”

Arp said he would like to stay active in his retirement, but is looking forward most to spending more time with his wife. He said he’ll miss the people he works with – but he won’t miss the drives. “The best thing will be not driving every week,” he said. “Some friends and acquaintances tell me they are busier in retirement than they were in their former jobs. Others look for things to fill the days. I do want to stay physically and mentally active.” Arp said he and his wife have spent the last 20 years maintaining residences in different towns so he could live in his judicial district and she could keep her job. The best thing about retirement for Arp will be to put that distance in the past. “Our time together has been limited chiefly to those weekends when a work conflict has not arisen. For most of that time, my wife was the commuter so I could be present in Goshen County and the Eighth Judicial District. That has been a huge sacrifice on her part that I don’t wish to take for granted.”