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FEATURED

Williamson County Judge Michael Binkley to retire in September, one year after his re-election to bench

By Matt Masters

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Judge Michael Binkley addresses supporters at Franklin's Puckett's Grocery and Restaurant during a re-election campaign kick-off event for himself and fellow sitting circuit court Judges James Woodruff and Deanna Johnson.

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Williamson County Circuit Judge Michael W. Binkley will retire in September despite having been re-elected to the bench just shy of one year ago.

Binkley, 72, is set to retire on Sept. 29, after serving 11 years on the bench and a 35-year career as a trial lawyer in private practice.

When asked why he would retire after campaigning for and winning re-election to the eight-year term in 2022, Binkley responded, "Why not?" adding that he has other things that he wants to do with his life.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed being a trial judge for the last 11 years," Binkley told The News. "I have really enjoyed serving the judiciary as well as serving the citizens of Williamson County. I have been honored to hold this position, and I've really enjoyed it. Going forward, I look forward to opportunities in my life, inside the law and, mostly, outside of the law."

In 2021, Binkley told voters and supporters that the role of judge "gives me the opportunity to do the right thing each and every time, and it's worked for me, and that's exactly what I intend to continue to do."

Binkley's time on the bench has not been without controversy after he was caught in a prostitution sting in 2010, two years before he became judge. Fallout from that incident has played out in the courts and through ethics complaints.

Binkley has also been the subject of the "Investigate Michael W. Binkley Circuit Court Judge" Facebook page, which was created in 2017.

According to the Tennessee State Courts, applications to fill the judicial vacancy will be accepted until July 26, and on Aug. 31, the Trial Court Vacancy Commission will hold a public meeting in Franklin to discuss the vacancy and applicants.

A replacement will then be appointed by Gov. Bill Lee. The appointee will serve until the next general election, when voters will elect a replacement.

Qualified applicants must be licensed attorneys who are at least 30 years old who have been residents of the state for five years and are residents of the 21st Judicial District.

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