



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Chief Judge David Murkowski of Probate Court Recognized in Statewide Publication**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – Chief Judge David M. Murkowski of Kent County Probate Court is highlighted in a recent report issued by the Michigan Supreme Court. The report, "[Success Stories: How Probate Courts Work to Protect the People of Michigan](#)," features Judge Murkowski and five other probate court judges from around the state, examining the problem of mental illness in the criminal justice system and a history of probate courts in Michigan.

Judge Murkowski shares a story of success involving a man severely injured in a car accident. The man had a history of suffering from mental illness, substance use, and was estranged from his family. Judge Murkowski assigned the man a public guardian from the Kent County Public Guardianship Program. In two years, the guardian helped the man secure medical and mental health treatment, turn his life around and find him housing. When Judge Murkowski terminated the guardianship, the man had also reunited with his family and credited the public guardian and the court for his successes. "We see individuals every day who are incapacitated, vulnerable, exploited, and mentally ill, or simply need some help," Judge Murkowski said in the report. "To be able to provide a path to self-reliance, or safety, or stability is most rewarding to me."

"Within our judicial branch, it is imperative that we have in place an effective system for resolving a variety of deeply-sensitive legal matters, such as the probate of estates, the supervision of trusts, the administration of guardianships and conservatorships, and addressing the treatment of persons with mental illness," Justice Kurtis T. Wilder stated at a news conference in Midland announcing the report. "Michigan's probate courts have a lengthy and honored history of providing that very system and protecting vulnerable people all across Michigan."

Judge David M. Murkowski graduated cum laude from Marquette University and attended Western Michigan University's Thomas M. Cooley Law School, where he was an honor roll graduate in 1983. Judge Murkowski was appointed to the probate court in 2006. The Michigan Supreme Court appointed Judge Murkowski to serve as the Chief Judge of the Kent County Probate Court commencing January 1, 2008. In 2017 Judge Murkowski was elected President of the Michigan Probate Judges Association (MPJA) and serves as a member of the Judicial Council of the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Michigan. He also serves on the Diversion Legislation Subcommittee of Governor Snyder's Mental Health Diversion Task Force. He previously served six years as a council member of the Probate and Estate Planning Section of the State Bar of Michigan and as a member of the Executive Committee of the Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council. In 2014, Judge Murkowski was the recipient of the Judicial Contributions in Law and Aging Award by Elder Law of Michigan and was elected as a Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation. In 2015 he was selected as a Leader in the Law by Michigan Lawyers Weekly.

More information can be found in this [news release from the Michigan Supreme Court Office](#) on the report.

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