Granholm appoints Menezes (BSBA ’73) to 18th Probate Court, Michigan
By David Moe

SPECIAL TO THE CADILLAC NEWS

HERSEY - Governor Jennifer Granholm has announced the appointment of Hersey-based attorney Marco Menezes to fill the unexpired term of 18th Probate Court Judge LaVail Hull, who recently retired.

The 18th Probate Court District includes both Osceola and Mecosta counties. Menezes was selected from a field of seven area attorneys seeking the position.

Menezes, 60, holds a bachelor’s degree in business from the University of Florida (1973) and a law degree from the Thomas Cooley Law School (1990). He passed the state bar exam in 1991 and has been practicing ever since.

Plans call for him to be sworn in Jan. 29 by Osceola County Clerk Karen Bluhm. "In the meantime, I’ll be winding down my private practice," he said.

Until he officially takes the helm, matters coming before the court will be handled by district and circuit judges serving the two-county area.

"If there are any conflicts, they will be handled by a visiting judge," Menezes said.

Menezes’ 18-year career as an attorney has seen him working in both the public and private sectors.

For 10 years he served as Wexford County’s chief assistant prosecutor. But he’s also worked on the other side.

"In the past, I prosecuted individuals for child abuse and neglect," he said. "In recent years, I’ve defended those wrongly accused."

Menezes’ career has taken him into the field of municipal law, as well. Until new counsel can be found, he serves as attorney for the townships of Haring, Cherry Grove, and Selma in Wexford County; Sherman, Sylvan, LeRoy, and Cedar townships in Osceola County; and the villages of Buckley and LeRoy.

In addition to his legal expertise, Menezes also brings a strong administrative background to the bench. He was affiliated with the management of MOARC in Paris up through the late 1980s before law school, then returned and served as the organization’s executive director from 2001 through 2004.

He also has been involved in two environmental watchdog groups in the Hersey area, one known as Citizens for the Rational Use of Forests, the second simply known as
"With both organizations, we saw potential problems and found ourselves thrust into an oversight role," he said. "In fact, it was learning about the permitting processes that renewed my interest in going to law school."

The new judge was highly complimentary of the job performed by his predecessor. "Judge Hull served for almost 30 years and has put his stamp on the courtroom. He did a tremendous service for the community and the profession. Now, I’m going to pick up the torch."

Menezes and his wife, Kathy, live near Hersey. They have two married daughters, Sunshine and Maggie.

Does he plan to run for the seat in November?

"Definitely," he said. "I see this as being the culmination of my career."

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