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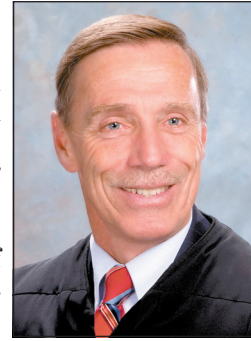
Amherst judge retires after 24 years on bench

by **KATIE SKOOG**
Reporter

1999 and started in January 2000.

Geoffrey Klein has retired from his position as a judge for the Amherst Town Court after 24 years of service. His last day on the bench was Dec. 21, 2023.

A core value he brought to the people before him with respect and fairness, he said. Klein estimated he handled between 3,000 to 4,000 cases



Klein

per year. Klein said he is honored to have served the Town of Amherst and thanked the residents for their support over the years. One of his favorite parts of his role and what he will miss is working with his staff, the Amherst Police Department and the Erie County Bar Association.

One of the most memorable cases he dealt with, but did not preside over, was *Cartagena v.*

Lamanna, where East Amherst mother Candace Cartagena was found guilty of killing her 8-year-old daughter. When the Amherst Police were trying to get

warrants, Klein would put them under oath and discuss whether they had enough evidence or not. Through their talks, they realized they did have enough evidence for a warrant.

When Klein was 2 years old, he moved with his family from Batavia to Amherst. After graduating from what was then known as Williamsville Central High School, he joined the United States Marine Corps.

COVID-19 was a challenging time for both the courts and Klein, which he called his least favorite time of his career. Sentencing people to jail was also difficult during this time, since they didn't want people staying there due to the pandemic.

After returning from the Marine Corps after two years, Klein attended the University at Buffalo for his undergraduate studies.

"I think it was difficult because you didn't really get to see the person in front of you [in court]," Klein said. "A lot of times, everything was by Zoom. You could read a lot from somebody by looking at them and most of the time, you could see them on Zoom, but it was just a picture of them. You couldn't see their body language clearly."

"I actually kind of broke off my undergraduate for a little bit of time, then I joined the state police," he said. "I was probably five years removed from school before I went back and finished my undergraduate program. Then, I took the LSATs and went to law school at UB also."

While attending law school, Klein kept working as a state trooper, a job he said he "really loved," and continued for about six to seven years after being admitted to the Bar Association. Upon leaving that job, he began working as an attorney.

As for Klein's retirement plans, he would like to spend more time with his grandchildren and family. He will miss the day-to-day "camaraderie" with his colleagues and expressed appreciation to the people of Amherst.

"When I went back to law school, I had the ambition and had time to build my resume to become a judge," Klein said.

"It was an honor to be able to serve the town and I thank the residents of the Town of Amherst for believing in me for 24 years," he said.

He was elected as an Amherst Town Court Judge in

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Main Street corridor project launched

The Town of Amherst will kick off its Main Street Corridor Planning Project at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23 with a Hands-On Design Workshop to collect public input that will help create the vision that will guide future improvements. The event will be held at Daemen University, 4380 Main St., Amherst, in the Yurtchuk Student Center in the Social Room.

This specific planning project will study the town's Main Street corridor between Bailey Avenue and I-290.

As part of this initial step in launching the Main Street Corridor Planning Project, Open Studio Hours will be held from noon to 2 p.m. on both Wednesday, Jan. 24 and Thursday, Jan. 25 at the Harlem Road Community Center, Rooms 2 and 3. Beginning at noon, planning team representatives from Dover, Kohl & Partners and Creighton Manning Engineering will share brief presentations on the topics of Placemaking, Street Design and Livable Engineering.

To visit the project page on the town's website go to www.amherst.ny.us, follow the Town's newsfeed, Track Us, for information. Questions? Email rppaccio@amherst.ny.us or call 716-631-7071.