



Supreme Court's Per Curiam Decision Sparks Debate Over Dismissing Petitions

In "Per Curiam Decision Sparks Debate Over Dismissing Petitions" (WisBar Court Review, June 2, 2023), Jeff M. Brown wrote that two Wisconsin Supreme Court justices used a recent per curiam decision to engage in a debate over the supreme court's practice of dismissing petitions as improvidently granted.

The decision came after the parties had submitted briefs and had oral argument before the supreme court.

In the article, Brown discussed the underlying case, its path to the supreme court, and the justices' concurrences, dissents, and reasoning. In her dissent, Justice A.W. Bradley argued that the supreme court should have explained to the parties and the public why it was dismissing the petition as having been improvidently granted, given the time and money the parties had spent litigating the case before the supreme court.

A reader posted a comment:

Reader: Having your case dismissed after oral argument at the Wisconsin Supreme Court is frustrating. I would know. It happened to me. See *State ex rel. Labine v. Puckett*, 2004 WI 25, 270 Wis. 2d 57, 676 N.W.2d 424.

By the time a case has been fully briefed and argued, the concept of the review being "improvidently granted" should be limited to only the most extreme cases where no relief of any kind is possible. In my case, the supreme court did issue a nine-paragraph decision. The court opined the case was not ready for a full decision: it said something, and that alone was valuable.

Any time a case is at our state supreme court, it should end with a decision that explains something. Even just one thing, no matter how small, is better than nothing.

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Practicing in Rural Wisconsin

In "Demystifying Law Practice in Greater Wisconsin" (*Wisconsin Lawyer*, May 2023), Paige Juel introduced a series of articles on rural practice. Over the coming months, several attorneys will share the facts and their experiences to help correct assumptions and demystify the professional and personal realities of practicing in rural Wisconsin.

In this piece, Juel drew on State Bar of Wisconsin membership records and state census data to compare ratios of lawyers and nonlawyers in rural areas. She wrote, "11,782 attorneys currently live in Wisconsin, and only 4,110 live in any county other than Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Dane. While more than two-thirds of Wisconsin residents live outside these three counties, less than one-quarter of Wisconsin attorneys do."

A reader posted a comment:

Reader: I live in northern Dodge County. While we have farmland, we are also less than an hour from Madison, less than an hour from Milwaukee/Waukesha, and an hour from the Fox River Valley. The cost of living and opening a practice is dramatically less than for our urban neighbors.

You've likely heard of our DA problems. But the number of attorneys working here in private practice has also dropped significantly over the past 15 years. Most of the attorneys that are left are approaching retirement in the next 10 years. If Dodge County can't attract new lawyers – or even not-so-new lawyers – the rest of our rural counties don't hold much hope.

I don't think it's completely a lifestyle issue. How many of our law students educated in Wisconsin, stay in Wisconsin? How many of our law students are Wisconsin residents? Are those Wisconsin ties enough for people to want to practice in rural Wisconsin?

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Solving the Mystery of Missing Indigenous Women

In "Task Force Addresses Alarming Rate of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women" (*InsideTrack*, May 3, 2023), Jeff M. Brown wrote that since 2020, a Wisconsin Department of Justice task force has been working to address a criminal justice and public health crisis – the alarming number of missing or murdered Indigenous women and girls among the state's American Indian population. A report issued in 2018 by the Urban Indian Health Institute illustrates the extent of the crisis.

A reader posted a comment:

Reader: Thank you for covering this vital story. Please keep this in the forefront and continue coverage and updates. Is there more that Wisconsin attorneys can do to support and motivate the task force, work with their county law enforcement, and get more involved regarding this issue?

Excellent interview with Attorney Zawieja. She is one of the very best!

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