

Medina County Common Pleas Court

PROBATE AND JUVENILE DIVISIONS

93 PUBLIC SQUARE, ROOM 104, MEDINA, OHIO 44256

Kevin W. Dunn
Judge

MEDIA RELEASE

August 13, 2015

Changes to Supreme Court Rule of Superintendence 66 Require Mandatory Training for Guardians

Two local guardians visit Judge Dunn to present their certificates from the six-hour fundamentals training, the first guardians in Medina County to complete the requirement



Guardians Lena Zeleznik and Sharon Anderson holding their required training certificates with Judge Kevin Dunn

MEDINA – Revisions to Supreme Court Rules of Superintendence 66.01 to 66.09 govern certain criteria that must be met in all of Ohio's 88 counties for the establishment of guardianships. Changes to this rule, which took effect July 1, 2015, are meant to raise guardianship standards and ensure the best interests of wards are safeguarded.

Previously, Probate Courts were left to develop their own rules and procedures, but after several newspaper articles raised concerns about a lack of uniformity and enforcement, the Supreme Court developed changes to better protect incompetent adults and their property. Part of Rule 66 dictates that potential guardians are required to successfully

complete, at a minimum, a six-hour fundamental guardianship training course provided by the Supreme Court or, with the prior approval of the appointing court, another entity. Guardians must then complete three hours of yearly continuing guardianship training thereafter, unless exempted.

Although Medina County Probate Court has continually provided guardianship training sessions, Judge Dunn has decided that his Court will support the Supreme Court's changes to Rule 66 and will send appointed guardians to trainings as needed.

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“Our court has had a long standing practice of providing guardianship training which provides assistance and education to guardians enabling them to make the best decisions possible for those they care for,” Judge Dunn said. “I believe that our court has been proactive in its approach to education and guardianship training, sharing and accomplishing these same goals for many years.”

In July, two of Medina County’s guardians turned in their certificates of completion for the required six-hour guardian fundamentals training, the first two in the county to complete the requirement.

“It was definitely a lot of information to take in,” said Sharon Anderson, who has co-guardianship of her sister, Donna. “But surprisingly, it went by quickly and was not as overwhelming as I thought it would be. I left there feeling like I know what I need to know, and anything I don’t understand or have questions about, I know what resources I can turn to for help.”

Anderson, who is co-guardian of her sister along with their mother, Lena Zeleznik, said the two were initially intimidated by the thought of filing for guardianship of Donna, who is now 56 and was diagnosed with a developmental disability at birth.

“I would ask, ‘Why do I need guardianship? She is my daughter,’” Zeleznik said. “But she is getting older and so am I, so I have to take precautions and do what is best for her.”

Anderson said that thanks to a thick packet provided at the fundamentals guardianship training she attended in Strongsville, she and Zeleznik know which forms need to be completed to maintain compliance, the procedure for guardianship, as well as their responsibilities as guardians. Anderson said that they were also notified of the 211 phone number, a helpline that provides quick and easy access to information about health and human services.

“It is important that we always do what is best for her as our ward, not just what we feel is in her best interest as our daughter or sister,” Anderson said. “But for now, she is in great health. She is smart, strong, and loving. She just wants to go, go, go and doesn’t like to sit at home.”

The Medina County Probate Court will partner with the Medina County Bar Association to offer a local broadcast of the fundamental guardianship training at the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center for laypersons on October 29 and for professionals on October 30, 2015. The Probate Court will also offer another broadcast of the training session December 17 and 18, 2015. Guardians may sign up to attend these trainings through the judicial college at www.JudicialAcademy.ohio.gov and may find additional information at www.MedinaProbate.org.