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Tribute to Chief Justice Michael Wolff

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TRIBUTE TO CHIEF JUSTICE MICHAEL WOLFF

THE HONORABLE RICHARD B. TEITELMAN*

Over the last few years, I have had the privilege of working closely with Judge Wolff on the Missouri Supreme Court. Whether the case centers on an arcane procedural issue or the most fundamental individual rights, Judge Wolff's breadth of experience and scholarship enables him to distill the issues and reach sound results. His contributions to Missouri jurisprudence are significant.

One of the many noteworthy examples of Judge Wolff's jurisprudence is his excellent opinion in *State v. Seibert*.¹ At issue in *Seibert* was whether, as Judge Wolff stated, "a law enforcement officer's intentional violation of *Miranda v. Arizona* in obtaining a statement requires suppression of a second statement, secured after a *Miranda* warning was given, where the second statement was based on the first."² As in any case requiring a court to reconcile the tension between individual rights and law enforcement authority, the *Seibert* case required Judge Wolff to assess compelling arguments on both sides. He did so brilliantly, holding that it was error to admit the defendant's confession, as the interrogation procedures employed constituted an "end-run" around *Miranda*.³ The United States Supreme Court took the case and agreed with Judge Wolff.⁴ For an appellate judge, a more esteemed tribute is difficult to come by.

Judge Wolff's legal contributions extend well beyond his judicial opinions. Early in his career, Judge Wolff served as Director of Black Hills Legal Services. As Director, Judge Wolff fought to provide the disadvantaged with equal access to the justice system. There is perhaps no better way for a lawyer to distinguish himself than by serving those who are most vulnerable and most in need of legal counsel. In addition to his public service, Judge Wolff also served as a distinguished faculty member at the Saint Louis University School of Law. During his time on the faculty, Judge Wolff instilled in the next generation of attorneys both the analytical skills and the sense of justice that

* Judge, Missouri Supreme Court.

1. 93 S.W.3d 700 (Mo. 2002).
2. *Id.* at 701 (internal citations omitted).
3. *Id.* at 707.
4. *Missouri v. Seibert*, 524 U.S. 600 (2004).

will enable them to serve our legal system and the public for years to come. His students would do well to emulate their professor's accomplishments.

Mike, congratulations on becoming Chief Justice. There is no doubt you will continue on in the best traditions of your predecessors.