

# Circuit Chief Judge Title Won by Shook

Kathryn J. Lawlor Shook, the first woman to serve as a Circuit Court judge in Maryland, achieved another first this week as the seniority rule made her the first woman to become chief judge of a judicial circuit in Maryland.

Appointed to the county Circuit Court in 1955 and elected to a 15-year term the next year, she had been administrative judge of the local court for two years before being replaced earlier this year.

Her new appointment as chief judge of the sixth judicial circuit, which includes Frederick and Montgomery counties, is automatic. Following the Sept. 1 retirement of Judge Patrick M. Schnauffer of Frederick, Judge Shook went to the top on the basis of seniority.

While the title goes to Judge Shook, the power remains where it was---with the circuit's administrative judge, Robert Clapp of Frederick, the man who won the top spot in Montgomery in April.

Judge Clapp has the power to name the administrative judges in the two counties and to run the judicial system here. Judge Shook has the honor of having circuit processes issued in her name.

While she had voiced "conscientious scruples against capital punishment" in 1965 and been described by one local editor as "incisive, sharp and quick-ruling," Judge Shook has also drawn some bad blood here.

"Judge Shook never did

develop the capacity to handle things smoothly. If there was an arbitrary way of going about something, a way of raising other people's hackles, she would find it," was one lawyer's bitter appraisal.

During her years on the bench, she has irritated a number of county officials by expanding her office space, asking for higher salaries, appointing her son-in-law to a court office, asking for sharp increases in the court budget, taking extended vacations, creating a county probation setup when the state already had one and assigning cases in a manner that reportedly irritated some county jurists.

Judge Shook, however, was credited by many with substantially decreasing the county court docket during her service as the county's administrative judge before Judge Clapp appointed Judge Joseph M. Mathias to take her place.

Judge Shook, who brings the chief judgeship back to Montgomery after it had spent 12 years in Frederick, previously practiced law in Silver Spring and served on the County Council and in the state legislature.

Born in Massachusetts and raised in California, she attended American University in Washington. She is believed nearing retirement.