

Howe Tapped for Court Post

Becomes First Female County Administrative Judge in Md.

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Baltimore County Circuit Judge Bar-

bara Kerr Howe took over yesterday as the county's administrative judge, the first woman in the state to be tapped for that position in the circuit courts, state officials said.

Howe, who has served on the county's circuit court bench since 1988, will replace Judge J. William Hinkel as the head administrative judge. Hinkel will continue to serve on the bench as a trial judge.

"It's an administrative position with a great deal of respect, and I'm looking forward to it," Howe said yesterday.

Howe, 53, is a Baltimore native and a 1969 graduate of the University of Maryland Law School. She was a zoning hearing examiner in Harford County from 1974 until 1985, when she was appointed to the Baltimore County District Court.

The judge said she was unaware that she would be the first female to become county administrative judge until Maryland Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert C. Murphy told her earlier this week. "It's very exciting for me," she said.

Case assignment

In addition to her work on the bench, Howe will now be responsible for assign-

ing cases and handling the daily operations of the court, according to Third Circuit Administrative Judge Edward A. DeWaters Jr., who selected Howe with Murphy's approval.

"Judge Hinkel has done an excellent job, and all of us on the bench are sorry that he's giving up his administrative duties," said DeWaters, who oversees the circuit courts in Baltimore and Harford counties. "But we certainly understand. He's done it for a year and a half and it's a big job."

Howe had expressed an interest in the administrative activities of the court, DeWaters said. "She's a highly capable individual, and I think she's a good person to handle those duties."

Hinkel could not be reached yesterday to comment on his reasons for giving up his administrative duties.

Murphy, who described Hinkel as "a magnificent administrative judge," said yesterday that the decision to step aside most likely grew from a desire to spend more time on the bench.

"He's also a great trial judge and wants to be doing more of it," Murphy said yesterday. "Barbara will have big shoes to fill, but she's a very vigorous, very strong-minded, very hard-working

person. She has real strong administrative skills and the respect of not just lawyers but also judges across the state."



Barbara Kerr Howe

Barbara Kerr Howe becomes the first woman to serve as an administrative judge for a county's circuit courts, according to state officials.

