



OFFICE OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY ATTORNEY

PETER J. ORPUT COUNTY ATTORNEY

Press Release

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Washington County Board appoints Kevin Magnuson as County Attorney

STILLWATER, MN – The Washington County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to appoint Kevin Magnuson as the Washington County Attorney during this morning's board meeting.

The appointment follows the death of former Washington County Attorney Pete Orput, who passed away on April 3rd at the age of 66. Orput previously announced his plans to retire once his term ended at the end of the year and had publicly endorsed Magnuson as his replacement.

"Pete put a lot of trust in me to lead the office and carry on his legacy. That is something I take very seriously," said Magnuson. "I'm committed to pursuing justice with the same passion Pete had, and doing the right thing the right way," he added.

When a vacancy occurs in the office of an elected county official, state law sanctions the county board to fill the position by appointment. Per state statute, First Assistant County Attorney Brent Wartner has been performing all duties and functions of the office since Orput's death.

"Kevin's appointment as county attorney will ensure the continuation of the strong and thoughtful leadership established by Pete," said Wartner. "We are grateful to the County Board for recognizing Kevin as the best person to carry the office forward."

Magnuson grew up in Lake Elmo and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wheaton College in 1990. He spent time studying at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and bicycling through Europe before serving as an officer in the U.S. Army stationed in Germany.

After his service, Magnuson studied at Philipps-Universität Marburg in Germany and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium where he earned his master's degree in philosophy. After studying law at the University of Leuven, he graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1999. He went on to clerk at the Directorate General for Competition of the European Commission in Brussels before returning to the Twin Cities. Magnuson practiced civil litigation and criminal defense law for 20 years and has handled cases at every level of the state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

Magnuson joined the Washington County Attorney's Office in 2019 and provides legal counsel to the County Board, Office of Administration, and department leadership on a variety of matters, including transit, attorney ethics, redistricting and, until recently, election law. He also prosecutes fraud and vulnerable adult cases.

Magnuson lives in his childhood home in Lake Elmo with his wife and two children. He will take the oath of office at the Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting on June 14th, 2022.

A [celebration of life for Pete Orput](#) will take place Wednesday from 4-8 p.m. at La Pointe Events in Somerset, Wisconsin.

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