

Youthful judge earns kudos

George Davis, 32, expedites docket of Boyd District Court with vigor

By **LYNNE AUSTIN**
The Herald-Dispatch

ASHLAND — Efficient, fair and firm are three words local officials use to describe Boyd County's youngest judge.

George Davis, 32, said he's fascinated with law and politics, so the decision to campaign for the district judge slot in 1997 was an easy one.

"There's nothing in your life that's not affected by some form of government or law," he said. "I thought it would be a good way to serve the public."

But the members of the public appearing in Davis' court aren't always pleased with his decisions, especially if they are the accused, Boyd County Attorney Phillip Hedrick said. "He's a fair judge, but very firm," Hedrick said.

A Greenup County man appearing before Davis last month found the judge would not waver in a decision to raise his bond.

John Spinda of Raceland, who was charged with attempted murder after allegedly shooting an elderly female acquaintance, wanted his bond reduced. But instead of lowering the amount from \$400,000, Davis raised it to \$500,000 cash.

"Considering the seriousness of the charges, I believe it is appropriate," he said during the arraignment.

Capt. Tom Kelley, acting chief for the Ashland Police Department, said Davis may be firm, but he watches out for those appearing in his courtroom.

"He's walking a thin line and doing a good job at it," Kelley said. "He's fair to the police officers and at the same time watching out for the rights of those appearing before his court."

Hedrick said Davis has



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Boyd County District Judge George Davis listens to lawyers during a court session Friday.

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found the key to keeping things moving in the district court. That's important considering the 7,000 to 8,000 cases that pass through the district court each year, he said.

Created in 1978, Kentucky's district courts, similar to municipal courts in Ohio and magistrate courts in West Virginia, handle cases such as traffic violations and misdemeanor and juvenile cases.

"He's brought some long overdue efficiency to the court," Hedrick said. "I don't know if he set out to speed up the docket, but he has. It's important to get people into and out of court, especially when they don't have a history of appearing before the court."

It also helps local law enforcement officials who appear in court, often on their own time, Kelley said.

Davis file

Name: George Davis
Age: 32
Occupation: Boyd County District Judge
Family: Wife, Natalie
Hometown: Ashland

Davis, a native of the Ashland area, said he enjoys his job and is happy he had the opportunity to return to live close to his parents, especially since his mother has Parkinson's disease.

A 1985 graduate of Paul G. Blazer High School, Davis studied political science at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. He graduated from the University of Louisville School of Law in 1992, but not before tucking some more knowledge under his belt while working in the attorney general's office in Frankfort.

Davis returned to the Ashland area after graduation, opened a downtown private practice and became well-

known in the community as he joined various civic groups. He was named the city attorney for Catlettsburg.

"I really enjoyed that time," he said. "I worked with a group of people that were really forward thinking and they had a lot of catching up to do."

His wife, Natalie, 27, isn't surprised Davis has been successful in his new role. As his campaign manager, she said she assured voters he would work hard and be efficient.

"The qualities that make him a wonderful husband make him an excellent judge," she said. "He's honest, dependable, hard working and energetic."

Davis had to give up some of his previous commitments, including his practice, when he became judge, but he said it's all been worthwhile.

"I've committed my life to public service. I like to help people," he said. "We'll see what other avenues open up."