



July 25, 2022
For immediate release

Experience makes Finke ideal for Veterans Court role

When the judge heading the Third Judicial District's Veterans Court was looking for a prosecutor on the program's team, John Fossum had the answer.

Fossum, the Rice County attorney, tapped Robin Finke, the newest assistant Rice County attorney.

This isn't a case of the new guy drawing the short straw. Finke served eight years as an Army Reservist, previously worked as the public defender on the Veterans Court team and as a member of the Faribault Elks, actively supports area servicemembers and veterans.

Finke grew up in central Minnesota, graduated from Alexandria High School and Bemidji State University, and got his law degree from Hamline University.

He began his career working for Legal Aid in northern Minnesota, and since then he's done a little bit of everything.

He served several terms as Swift County attorney, then moved to private practice, working for about a year in Faribault and for five years with Grundhoefer & Ludescher in Northfield. At the same time, he served as a public defender, working with clients in Rice County, which led him to his first stint on the Veterans Court team.

"I was very honored to have John (Fossum) think of me for that role. I like to help our veterans whenever I can."

The Third Judicial District Veterans Court is one of several treatment court programs backed by the Minnesota Judicial Branch. It serves low-level offenders throughout the 11 counties in the district who are veterans, and uses intense supervision, treatment and regular group meetings with other participants to help vets get their lives back on track.

As the team's prosecutor, Finke will not only support and help guide participating vets, but recommend consequences for those who violate established program rules and conditions imposed by the judge.

Finke says his military background helps him appreciate veterans' unique needs and circumstances.

"That experience helps me understand the role of the military and what someone goes through being in the military, the military demeanor and mindset," he said. "It gave me a great appreciation for our veterans and what they go through."



Robin Finke, left, Rice County Sheriff Jesse Thomas and Ben Babcock smile during Friday's Veterans Court graduation ceremony. (Rice County photo)



Finke

As a member of the Elks, he's worked with the Faribault club to assist local veterans, and active servicemembers and their families. Finke has also been involved in the club's sponsorship of a building at the Minnesota Veterans Home that serves vets dealing with mental health issues.

"It's really very rewarding," he said.

Fossum says that Finke's experience makes him a perfect fit for the Veterans Court position.

"This office is lucky to have an attorney with prosecution and defense experience, who is also a veteran to fill the role of Veterans Court prosecutor. Mr. Finke will do an excellent job in that role and is eager to support the work of the Third Judicial District Veterans Court," he said.

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MEET ROBIN

Family: Wife, Lisa; Children, Jonathan, 16, and Calleigh, 13

Hobbies: Finke enjoys heading to the range for target practice

Community involvement: Member of the Faribault Elks, Cannon River STEM School board member

Guilty pleasure: Chocolate. "Anything that's got chocolate on it."