

## 'Dr. Death' back in show business

**Former prosecutor**  
Patrick Peters returns  
to DJ'ing, music videos.

By JOE LAMBE  
Staff Writer

Say it isn't so: That can't be the man they called Dr. Death.

Patrick W. Peters breezed into his interview at a jazz bar wearing reptilian boots, a leather coat and a red and blue tie with big, white stars.

He's in the DJ and music video business now and no longer is Jackson County's ace trial prosecutor in murder and death penalty cases.

Peters was a prosecutor on six of the nine death penalty cases to come out of Jackson County since the death penalty was reinstated in the 1970s.

Maybe show business and trial work aren't all that different.

"So many attorneys forget that you're putting on a show for the jury," Peters said.

Peters, a lifelong Democrat, ran on the Republican ticket against Prosecutor Claire McCaskill in November. It was a squeaky clean campaign in which the two



**Patrick W. Peters**  
... new line of work

candidates debated issues and praised each other.

Peters had almost no campaign money but captured more than 40 percent of the vote in a Democratic county.

Last month Peters left the assistant prosecutor job he held for seven years. He saw what the long hours and the intensity of

murder trials did to his mentor and trial partner Pat Hall, an assistant prosecutor who died of a heart attack last year at age 41.

"Pat Hall's dying made me realize a job you love can kill you," Peters said. "The two most enjoyable things I've done are DJ'ing and trying death penalty cases, and DJ'ing is a lot less stressful."

In past years, Peters, 38, owned a disc jockey and sound business, and now he wants to expand on the concept.

"I want to have the first national network of dance entertainment services," he said.

Top 40 hits, video and sound packages operated by independent contractors — that's his plan. He won't tell the details.

As for the law, Peters said he may do some work for McCaskill. He would someday like to train criminal trial lawyers in the fine art of "the great game."

"It's difficult for the public to understand that, but it is a game," Peters said. "It's a system of justice that works overall but doesn't provide just ends in every case."

"I wore long hair to help combat the perception that prosecutors are persecutors," Pe-

ters said. He also joked and clowned while picking jurors out of the jury pool.

At so many trials, he was the jurors' friend and indignant guardian of society alongside Hall, a no-frills, Joe Friday kind of prosecutor.

"Pat Hall would never admit it," Peters said, "but he loved the theater — he loved that part of it."

Hall used a rare raised eyebrow and subtle sarcasm to cut the defense. Peters once jumped about and did the act of a nightclub comedian to make a point before jurors.

Peters said he was effective because he was genuinely indignant about the murderers he prosecuted.

"For me, a statement needed to be made that this conduct was unacceptable, that civilized society just says, 'Oh no, bucko.'"

His advice to prosecutors: "Be prepared, know the law and use your own style."

Oh, and don't expect any lasting glory.

"You're only as good as your last case," Peters said.