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Severing Venue and Personal Jurisdiction In Missouri

*State ex rel. DePaul Health Center v. Mummert*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concepts of venue and jurisdiction carry independent and severable meanings. "Venue" means the place where a case is to be tried, while "jurisdiction" speaks to the power of the court to hear and determine a case. In Missouri, a "unique melding" of the concepts developed. A line of cases commingling venue and personal jurisdiction yielded strange and often unduly harsh results. In *State ex rel. DePaul Health Center v. Mummert*, the Missouri Supreme Court attempted to sever venue and jurisdiction, and finally restore some common sense and predictability to sixty plus years of confusion.

II. FACTS AND HOLDING

A medical malpractice suit filed in the Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis named DePaul Health Center ("DePaul") as a codefendant. The cause of action accrued in St. Louis County and all named defendants, including

1. 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).
3. *Oney*, 747 S.W.2d at 140.
5. *See, e.g.*, the line of cases overruled by *State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert*, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994): Yates v. Casteel, 49 S.W.2d 68 (Mo. 1932); Hankins v. Smarr, 137 S.W.2d 499 (Mo. 1940); *State ex rel. Minihan v. Aronson*, 165 S.W.2d 404 (Mo. 1942); *State ex rel. O'Keefe v. Brown*, 235 S.W.2d 304 (Mo. 1951); *State ex rel. Bartlett v. McQueen*, 238 S.W.2d 393 (Mo. 1951); *State ex rel. Boll v. Weinstein*, 295 S.W.2d 62 (Mo. 1956); Sullenger v. Cooke Sales & Serv. Co., 646 S.W.2d 85 (Mo. 1983); *State ex rel. Wasson v. Schroeder*, 646 S.W.2d 105 (Mo. 1983); *State ex rel. Coca Cola Bottling Co. v. Gaertner*, 681 S.W.2d 445 (Mo. 1984); Oney v. Pattison, 747 S.W.2d 137 (Mo. 1988).
6. 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).
7. *Id. at 821.*
8. *Id.* The other codefendants were Dr. Joseph Hazen and Group Health Plan.

*Id.*
DePaul, resided in St. Louis County. The city court issued service of summons on all of the defendants in the county. Subsequently, DePaul entered a special appearance in the city court and moved to quash the service.

DePaul contended that, under Missouri Revised Statutes section 508.010, venue was improper in the malpractice action. After noting that filing within a proper venue is a prerequisite to valid service of process in Missouri, DePaul argued the city court should quash the service. Plaintiffs in the underlying action argued that venue was in fact proper, so the city court could not quash the service of summons. The trial court overruled DePaul’s motion, and DePaul brought a mandamus action to the Missouri Supreme Court.

The Missouri Supreme Court, although finding venue to be improper, refused to quash the service, holding that a valid summons may issue from a court in which venue is improper.
III. LEGAL BACKGROUND

Missouri courts derived the unique jurisdictional venue rule from a collusive reading of the Missouri service of summons and venue statutes. Before 1989, the service statute read, in part, that "[s]uits may be instituted in courts of record ... [b]y filing in the office of the clerk of the proper court." The Missouri general venue statute prescribed where parties could bring suits instituted by summons. When read together, courts interpreted "proper" in the service statute to mean proper venue, pursuant to Missouri Revised Statutes section 508.010. Such an interpretation links venue with personal jurisdiction in the following manner:

Personal jurisdiction, which follows from proper service of process on a defendant, is therefore dependent upon the court which issues the summons having authority to do so, ab initio, under the statute. A summons served on a defendant as the result of an action filed in a court in which venue is improper provides no jurisdiction over the defendant, because the court has no authority under the statute to issue the summons.

En route to making the above analysis the court in Oney v. Pattison did not precisely trace the development of the unique Missouri rule through Missouri's case law. In fact, the Oney analysis demonstrates only a partial connection with the case that truly catalyzed the link between jurisdiction and venue. This strange quirk in the law can be traced back to Yates v. Casteel. In Yates, the plaintiff filed a breach of contract action in Jasper County, where the defendant resided. The clerk of the Circuit Court of

20. Oney v. Pattison, 747 S.W.2d 137, 140 (Mo. 1988), overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994). Another less meritorious theory concerning the origin of this rule contends that the jurisdictional venue rule stems from cases in the late 1800's which misanalyzed the separate and distinct roles of venue and personal jurisdiction. See Dennis J. Tuchler, Discretionary Interlocutory Review in Missouri: Judicial Abuse of the Writ? 40 Mo. L. REV. 577, 599-605 (1975) (citing Lindell Real Estate Co. v. Lindell, 133 Mo. 386 (1895)).


23. See Oney, 747 S.W.2d at 141, for a thorough explanation of the word "proper" in the Missouri service of summons statute.

24. Id.

25. Id. at 140.

26. See Yates v. Casteel, 49 S.W.2d 68 (Mo. 1932), overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).

27. Id.

28. Id. at 69-70.
Jasper County issued a summons directed to "the sheriff of any county." Subsequently, the sheriff of the City of St. Louis found and served the defendant in the City of St. Louis. The defendant moved to quash the service of summons, arguing that the Circuit Court of Jasper County had no authority to issue a summons directed to the sheriff of any county outside of Jasper County.

The *Yates* court determined that Jasper County was, in fact, the proper venue, but quashed the service of summons. The court held that without statutory authorization, the appropriate court of venue had no power to issue or serve the summons outside the county of venue. Thus, the *Yates* court fused venue and service of summons in two ways: (1) it implicitly made *filing* within the proper venue a condition precedent to valid service of summons (the *Yates* filing requirement); and (2) it explicitly made the issuance and actual *service* of process within the county of venue a condition precedent to valid service of summons (the *Yates* service requirement).

Two subsequent Missouri Supreme Court cases correctly applied *Yates' second rule of law*. In *State ex rel. Minihan v. Aronson*, the plaintiff filed suit in the proper venue but served the defendant outside of that venue. Following *Yates*, the *Minihan* court quashed the service, holding that "in personam is confined to persons within the territorial jurisdiction of the court" and "it follows that service of process made beyond such limits is entirely ineffective to confer jurisdiction over the persons . . . on whom it is so made."

29. *Id.* at 69.
30. *Id.*
31. *Id.*
32. *Id.* at 70. In the case of a sole defendant residing in Missouri, venue is proper "in the county within which the defendant resides." *Mo. Rev. Stat.* § 508.010(1) (1994). Venue was appropriate in *Yates* because the sole defendant resided in Jasper County. *Yates*, 49 S.W.2d at 70.
33. *Yates*, 49 S.W.2d at 71.
34. *Id.* at 70-71. *Yates* read venue and service statutes together and determined they "must be held to contemplate and require the issuance of summons to, and service thereof in, Jasper county." *Id.* at 70.
35. *See id.* *Yates* did recognize that the legislature can satisfy the service requirement via a statutory allowance of service beyond the county of venue. *Id.*
36. 165 S.W.2d 404 (Mo. 1942), *overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert*, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).
37. *Id.* at 406.
38. *Id.* at 407 (citing Hankins v. Smarr, 137 S.W.2d 499 (Mo. 1940) *overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert*, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994)); *Yates*, 49 S.W.2d 68 (Mo. 1932)). After applying the *Yates' service requirement*, the *Minihan* court stated: "This is not an immutable rule, however, but any change in the
In *Hankins v. Smarr*, the Missouri Supreme Court correctly applied, but smudged the *Yates* principles in its analysis. In *Hankins*, the plaintiff, a resident of Boone County, filed suit in Boone County against two defendants, both residents of Gasconade County. By statute, venue in such an action can be proper in the plaintiff’s county of residence if "the defendant may be found" in that county. However, the plaintiff in *Hankins* did not "find" the defendants in Boone County, but found and served them in Gasconade County.

The court quashed the service pursuant to *Yates*, but its analysis did not distinguish the two distinct prerequisites to valid service of summons instituted by *Yates*. The *Hankins* court pointed out the impropriety of venue in Boone County at the time of service in applying *Yates*, but also professed that even if venue in Boone County were proper, it would quash the service because the plaintiff actually served the defendants outside of Boone County. Despite the court’s clear intention to base its decision on the *Yates* service requirement, a cursory reading of *Hankins* elevates the implied filing requirement of *Yates* and downplays the service requirement.

In *State ex rel. O’Keeffe v. Brown*, the Missouri Supreme Court rendered an unexplained decision regarding the fusion of venue and personal jurisdiction. The plaintiff in *O’Keeffe* filed a personal injury action in an improper venue. Without citing supporting authority, the Missouri Supreme Court stated matter-of-factly that because the plaintiff filed in an improper venue, the court failed to gain personal jurisdiction over the

rule depends upon valid legislative action." *Id.*

39. 137 S.W.2d 499 (Mo. 1940).
40. *Id.* at 500.
41. *Id.* at 500.
42. *Hankins*, 137 S.W.2d at 500.
43. *Id.* at 501.
44. See supra note 35 and accompanying text.
45. *Hankins*, 137 S.W.2d at 501. The defendants were not "found" in Boone County at the time of service of process, as required by Mo. Rev. Stat. § 508.010(1) (1994).
46. *Hankins*, 137 S.W.2d at 501.
47. See *id.* In fact, *Hankins* discussed the cruelty of a rule that precludes service of process outside of the county of venue, in that defendants could dodge personal jurisdiction by staying out of the county of venue. See *id.*
48. See *id.*
49. 235 S.W.2d 304 (Mo. 1951), overruled by *State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert*, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).
50. *Id.* at 307.
Whether the O'Keefe court derived its ruling from an interpretation of Hankins or applied the filing requirement of Yates, one point is for certain: O'Keefe squarely represents the proposition that filing in a proper venue is a condition precedent to personal jurisdiction.54

After O'Keefe, the venue-personal jurisdiction cases focused solely on the filing requirement of Yates,55 and blindly abandoned the service requirement.56 Just weeks after O'Keefe, the Missouri Supreme Court decided State ex rel. Bartlett v. McQueen.57 Bartlett cemented the rule that filing in the proper venue is a prerequisite to personal jurisdiction. In Bartlett, the plaintiff, a resident of Jackson County, filed suit in Jackson County against two defendants, both residents of Platte County.58 The plaintiff served one defendant in Jackson County and the other in Platte County.59 The defendants moved to quash the service, arguing that venue was improper in Jackson County, and, therefore, the Jackson County Court could not gain personal jurisdiction.60 The court held that, by statute, venue was proper for an action against the defendant served in Jackson County, so the court obtained personal jurisdiction over that defendant upon the service of summons in Jackson County.61 However, the court concurrently held venue was improper as to the defendant served in Platte County.62 Therefore, under Yates and O'Keefe, the service of summons was invalid because a prerequisite to valid service, serving in the proper venue, was not satisfied.63

Interestingly, Bartlett justified its decision by citing Yates and

51. Id.
52. See supra notes 45-50 and accompanying text.
53. See supra note 36 and accompanying text.
54. O'Keefe, 235 S.W.2d at 307. Again, this ruling contains no references to Yates or its progeny. In fact, the sole analysis in O'Keefe pertains to the propriety of venue. See id.
55. See supra note 36 and accompanying text.
56. See supra note 36 and accompanying text.
57. 238 S.W.2d 393 (Mo. 1951), overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).
58. Id. at 394.
59. Id.
60. Id.
61. Id. at 395. The court stated that pursuant to § 508.010(1), this defendant was "found" in the county of venue when served in Jackson County; therefore, venue was proper as to this defendant. Id.
62. Id.
63. Id. (citing Yates, 49 S.W.2d at 70; Hankins, 137 S.W.2d at 501; Minihan, 165 S.W.2d at 407; O'Keefe, 235 S.W.2d at 307).
O'Keefe. The genesis of the rule applied in Bartlett\(^6\) definitely can be traced to the forceful, but unsupported O'Keefe decision.\(^6\) Yates, though, dealt only implicitly with how the impropriety of venue relates to jurisdiction, but dealt explicitly with territorial boundaries of courts of proper venue.\(^7\)

For years after Bartlett, Missouri courts mechanically applied the rule that filing in the proper venue acts as a condition precedent to valid service of summons and ultimately personal jurisdiction.\(^6\) Finally, in 1988, the Missouri Supreme Court questioned the rule in Oney v. Pattison.\(^6\)

In Oney, the plaintiff filed suit in the east side of Jackson County instead of the west side\(^6\) where venue was proper.\(^7\) The court rigidly opined that because "Oney filed her action in the improper venue; the service accepted by Pattison issued from a court which had no authority to issue such summons," and therefore, the lower court failed to gain personal jurisdiction.\(^7\) Oney, however, recognized the harshness in deciding that this action could not be

64. Id.
65. Id.
66. See O'Keefe, 235 S.W.2d at 307.
67. See Yates, 49 S.W.2d at 70. For a more detailed analysis of this issue, see supra notes 28-35 and accompanying text.
68. See, e.g., several cases overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994): Boll v. Weinstein, 295 S.W.2d 62, 66 (Mo. 1956) (holding that "proper venue is necessary, before the service of process will confer jurisdiction over the person of a defendant," and that due to its jurisdictional nature, improper venue can only be waived by "some overt act constituting a general appearance."); Sullenger, 646 S.W.2d at 88 ("Missouri case law has provided a unique melding of venue and jurisdiction and by a long line of cases has held that proper venue is a condition precedent to valid service of process and jurisdiction."); Wasson v. Schroeder, 646 S.W.2d 105, 106 (Mo. 1983) ("[I]mproper venue is a fundamental defect; a court which acts when venue is not proper has acted in excess of its jurisdiction."); State ex rel. Coca Cola Bottling Co. v. Gaertner, 681 S.W.2d 445, 448 (Mo. 1984) ("[B]ecause venue was improper, the court acquired no jurisdiction over relator and was powerless to proceed.").
69. 747 S.W.2d 137 (Mo. 1988), overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).
70. Jackson County is divided into eastern and western portions for venue purposes. Mo. Rev. Stat. § 478.461 (1994).
71. Oney, 747 S.W.2d at 138.
72. Id. at 141.
transferred from one side of Jackson County to the other, and tried to make sense of the rule it applied.

Oney attempted to excavate the foundation of the rule it applied in Missouri case law, but failed to accurately unearth its roots; however, Oney did provide a logical statutory construction argument supporting its ruling. Oney reasoned since the Missouri service statute required the commencement of a lawsuit in the "proper" court, the Missouri legislature necessarily intended that filing in a proper venue act as a condition precedent to valid service of summons and consequently, personal jurisdiction. Oney then issued a challenge to the legislature to statutorily remedy this nonsensical rule.

The legislature responded. Shortly after Oney, the legislature enacted a statute permitting the transfer of cases within the two sections of Jackson County if the parties so agreed, or if a caseload imbalance necessitated such transfers. State ex rel. Edu-Dyne Systems, Inc. v. Trout held the new statute severed the venue-jurisdiction link within Jackson County. Thus,

73. Id. Oney stated that the "requirement that actions be dismissed for improper venue may be unduly harsh, may result—as in this case—in injustice, and may create unnecessary impediments to the expeditious and orderly resolution of controversies on the merits." Id.

74. Id. at 140-41.

75. Oney traced the rule back to Yates v. Casteel, 49 S.W.2d 68 (Mo. 1932), overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994). The Yates court specifically held that the appropriate court of venue had no power to issue or serve the summons outside of the county of venue. Nowhere in the Yates opinion did the supreme court explicitly state that filing in the proper venue is a prerequisite to valid service of summons. See Yates, 49 S.W.2d at 70. The Oney court's analysis simply is not as clear cut as it appears at first glance.

76. See Oney, 747 S.W.2d at 141.


78. See Oney, 747 S.W.2d at 141. For a more detailed analysis of this issue see supra notes 20-24 and accompanying text.

79. Oney, 747 S.W.2d at 141 ("Until such time as the legislature chooses to alter the language of Section 506.110, the ability of trial courts to transfer actions filed in the wrong venue to a proper venue in the interest of justice cannot be judicially imposed.").


81. 781 S.W.2d 84 (Mo. 1989), overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).

82. Id. at 86 ("The General Assembly is presumed familiar with the construction placed upon the original act, and the new statute must be construed in the light of the problem it seeks to remedy and of the usages, circumstances, and conditions existing at the time the change was made. . . . Thus, in enacting a new statute on the same
the legislature dealt the first significant blow to the rule. In 1989, the legislature unabashedly hammered the rule again. The legislature dropped the word "proper" from the service statute\textsuperscript{83} and affirmatively authorized the transfer of cases filed in an improper venue to a proper venue.\textsuperscript{84} Both the Southern District and Eastern District opined the 1989 statutory amendments and additions did away with the "unique melding"\textsuperscript{85} of jurisdiction and venue in Missouri.\textsuperscript{86}

The filing requirement articulated in *Yates* seemed destroyed almost immediately after the statutory changes of 1989, but the Missouri Supreme Court had not delivered its stamp of finality on the issue. The supreme court, in an action in mandamus, grappled with that very issue in *State ex rel. DePaul Health Center v. Mummert*.\textsuperscript{87}

\section*{IV. Instant Decision}

In *DePaul*, the Missouri Supreme Court placed great emphasis in its analysis of the fusion of venue and jurisdiction on *Oney v. Pattison*\textsuperscript{88} and the ordinary meanings of venue and jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{89} The general purpose of venue, the court stated, "is to provide a convenient, logical, and orderly forum for the resolution of disputes,"\textsuperscript{90} whereas personal jurisdiction simply cloaks a court with the authority to judge a defendant.\textsuperscript{91}

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\textsuperscript{83} MO. REV. STAT. § 506.110 (Supp. 1989).
\textsuperscript{84} MO. REV. STAT. § 476.410 (Supp. 1989).
\textsuperscript{85} Sullenger, 646 S.W.2d at 88.
\textsuperscript{86} See, e.g., Abney v. Niswonger, 823 S.W.2d 31, 33 (Mo. Ct. App. 1991), overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994) ("This statute was enacted to enable a circuit court to transfer an improperly venued action and reflects a clear legislative intent that cases are not to be dismissed when filed in the wrong county."); State *ex rel.* Missouri Highway and Transp. Comm’n v. Hedspeth, 788 S.W.2d 342, 344 (Mo. Ct. App. 1990), overruled by State *ex rel.* DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994) ("It thus appears that the General Assembly undertook to accept Oney’s invitation to enact legislation enabling a circuit court to transfer an action in which venue is improper to a circuit court where the action could have properly been brought.").
\textsuperscript{87} 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).
\textsuperscript{88} 747 S.W.2d 137 (Mo. 1988), overruled by State *ex rel.* DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994).
\textsuperscript{89} See *DePaul*, 870 S.W.2d at 821-22.
\textsuperscript{90} Id. (quoting State *ex rel.* Elson v. Koehr, 856 S.W.2d 57, 59 (Mo. 1993)).
\textsuperscript{91} Id. at 822.
\end{flushright}
While relying on *Oney*, the *DePaul* court attempted to pinpoint the source of the concepts' fusion in Missouri. The court reasoned that the word "proper" in the old Missouri service statute meant that "[a] summons served on a defendant as the result of an action filed in a court in which venue is improper provides no jurisdiction over the defendant." But, the legislature in 1989 dropped "proper" from the Missouri service statute, and authorized courts to transfer actions filed in an improper venue to a circuit court having proper venue.

After untangling the concepts of venue and jurisdiction the court briefly summarized its position:

Venue and personal jurisdiction address entirely different concerns, the coupling of which was the product of the use of the word "proper" in Section 506.110.1. By removing "proper" from Section 506.110.1(1), the legislature severed the two concepts.

The *DePaul* court held that valid service of summons can issue from a court of improper venue. Filing in a proper venue, therefore, no longer is a condition precedent to personal jurisdiction. "To the extent they hold otherwise," *DePaul* overruled a long line of cases.

**V. COMMENT**

The Missouri Supreme Court clearly believed the legislature, via the 1989 statutory changes and amendments, intended to completely sever all

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93. *DePaul*, 870 S.W.2d at 821 (citing *Oney*, 747 S.W.2d at 141). For a more thorough explication of *Oney*, see supra notes 20-24 and accompanying text.
94. *DePaul*, 820 S.W.2d at 821 (citing Mo. Rev. Stat. § 506.110.1(1) (Supp. 1989)).
95. *Id.* (citing Mo. Rev. Stat. § 476.410 (Supp. 1989)).
96. *Id.*
97. *Id.*
98. *Id.*
99. The line of cases overruled by State *ex rel.* DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994) includes: *Oney* v. Pattison, 747 S.W.2d 137 (Mo. 1988); State *ex rel.* Coca-Cola Bottling Co. v. Gaertner, 681 S.W.2d 445 (Mo. 1984); Sullenger v. Cooke Sales & Serv. Co., 646 S.W.2d 85 (Mo. 1983); State *ex rel.* Wasson v. Schroeder, 646 S.W.2d 105 (Mo. 1983); State *ex rel.* Bartlett v. Queen, 238 S.W.2d 393 (Mo. 1951); State *ex rel.* O'Keefe v. Brown, 235 S.W.2d 304 (Mo. 1951); State *ex rel.* Minihan v. Aronson, 165 S.W.2d 404 (Mo. 1942); Hankins v. Smarr, 137 S.W.2d 499 (Mo. 1940); Yates v. Casteel, 49 S.W.2d 68 (Mo. 1932).
connections between venue and personal jurisdiction. Accordingly, it attempted to carry out such legislative intent in DePaul. Although DePaul provides sound law in its attempt to sever venue and personal jurisdiction, its scope is underinclusive.

Historically, the link between venue and service of summons had a logical nexus. Courts' judgments only bound those who submitted to their judgments. In order to ensure that a party submitted to their judgments, courts issued writs of summons that authorized the seizure and arrest of persons and property pending judgment. Because of their coercive nature, courts' authority to issue such writs was territorially limited.

However, jurisdictional concepts evolved and the need to force a party's submission to authority dissipated. "Today, the connection between authority to bind by judgments and authority to arrest or seize is gone, but the formality of service of process as a kind of symbolic arrest remains." A summons today "symbolically arrests" by notifying its recipient of a given court's proceedings against her or him. Gone is the logical nexus between venue and power. Today, the concepts are independent and severable, and at long last the DePaul court attempted to update Missouri's position regarding this issue.

The court, however, in its haste to forge good law failed to identify and destroy all links between venue and personal jurisdiction. Yates v. Casteel catalyzed the awareness of the venue-personal jurisdiction connection, and identified not one, but two distinct links. First, a party must file a lawsuit in the proper venue for service of process to be valid. Second, even if venue is proper, for service to be valid, the defendant must actually be served.

101. See DePaul, 870 S.W.2d at 822 ("By removing 'proper' from Section 506.110.1(1), the legislature severed the two concepts.").
102. See Tuchler, supra note 20, at 600.
103. Tuchler, supra note 20, at 600.
104. Tuchler, supra note 20, at 600.
105. Tuchler, supra note 20, at 600.
106. Tuchler, supra note 20, at 600.
108. See DePaul, 870 S.W.2d at 821.
109. See Yates, 49 S.W.2d at 69-70.
110. Yates, 49 S.W.2d at 70. This is the filing requirement of Yates. See supra note 35 and accompanying text.
within the proper venue.\textsuperscript{111} Since \textit{Yates}, Missouri courts allowed the service requirement to slip into anonymity.\textsuperscript{112}

Not surprisingly, in \textit{DePaul} the Missouri Supreme Court ignored \textit{Yates}' service requirement when it specifically limited\textsuperscript{113} its holding that "[a] summons can now issue from a court in which venue is not proper."\textsuperscript{114} The holding clearly obliterated the filing requirement of \textit{Yates}, but does not directly affect the service requirement. \textit{DePaul} provides no explicit direction for future validity of service conflicts that will arise when summons is validly issued under \textit{DePaul}, but is actually served in an improper venue. Under the authority of \textit{Yates}' service requirement\textsuperscript{115} and a host of other cases sneaking the long lost service requirement into Missouri courts,\textsuperscript{116} such a connection would render service of process invalid.

Surely the supreme court did not intend to leave behind a single connection between venue and personal jurisdiction if "the legislature severed the two concepts."\textsuperscript{117} Such a result would clash with the spirit of \textit{DePaul}. Perhaps the \textit{DePaul} court indirectly and unintentionally overruled the service requirement articulated by \textit{Yates}.

The \textit{DePaul} court explicitly held a valid summons can issue from a court without proper venue. In making its ruling, the court necessarily recognized that a summons issued from an improper venue frequently would be served within that improper venue.\textsuperscript{118} In other words, the court had to assume, contrary to the service requirement of \textit{Yates},\textsuperscript{119} that valid service of process would sometimes occur outside of the proper venue. Because the \textit{DePaul}

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Yates}, 49 S.W.2d at 70. This is the service requirement of \textit{Yates}. See supra note 35 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{112} See, e.g., the following cases overruled by State ex rel. DePaul Health Ctr. v. Mummert, 870 S.W.2d 820 (Mo. 1994): State ex rel. Bartlett v. McQueen, 238 S.W.2d 393 (Mo. 1951); State ex rel. O'Keefe v. Brown, 235 S.W.2d 304 (Mo. 1951); State ex rel. Minihan v. Aronson, 165 S.W.2d 404 (Mo. 1942); Hankins v. Smarr, 137 S.W.2d 499 (Mo. 1940).

\textsuperscript{113} See \textit{DePaul}, 870 S.W.2d at 822 ("To the extent they hold otherwise . . .").

\textsuperscript{114} Id.

\textsuperscript{115} See \textit{Yates}, 49 S.W.2d at 70.

\textsuperscript{116} See, e.g., DeMarinis v. Smith, 449 S.W.2d 380, 382 (Mo. Ct. App. 1969); State ex rel. Mercantile Nat'l Bank v. Rooney, 402 S.W.2d 354, 357 (Mo. 1966); State ex rel. Public Serv. Comm'n v. Thompson, 379 S.W.2d 824, 826 (Mo. Ct. App. 1964); State ex rel. Kissing v. Allison, 328 S.W.2d 952, 958 (Mo. Ct. App. 1959); Aronson, 165 S.W.2d at 407; Hankins, 137 S.W.2d at 501.

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{DePaul}, 870 S.W.2d at 822.

\textsuperscript{118} After all, why would a court issue a summons without intending that it be served?

\textsuperscript{119} See \textit{Yates}, 49 S.W.2d at 70. For a more concise explanation of both requirements in \textit{Yates}, see supra notes 27-35 and accompanying text.
court intended to completely sever venue and jurisdiction, actual service of a defendant in a county other than the county of venue should not render the issuing court completely powerless.

Thus, the Missouri Supreme Court might have haphazardly accomplished its desired goal: the destruction of all territorial limitations venue placed upon personal jurisdiction.

VI. CONCLUSION

In State ex rel. DePaul Health Center v. Mummert, the Missouri Supreme Court attempted to completely sever venue and personal jurisdiction in holding that valid service of process can issue from an improper venue. Due to the underinclusive scope of the opinion, however, future litigation regarding the validity of a summons actually served outside of the proper venue likely will occur. In substance, the court rendered a wise and long overdue opinion. Unfortunately, the form of the opinion fails to precisely reflect its substance.

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