



Georgia courts Journal

A Publication of the Judicial Council of Georgia

Stephens County Historic Courthouse

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Georgia Courts Journal

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Court of Appeals Marks New Year with New Chief Judge

The Honorable M. Yvette Miller took the oath of office to become Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia on January 6, 2009.

Chief Judge Miller becomes the first African-American woman to lead the Court.

Justices of the Supreme Court, judges of the Court of Appeals, friends and family of Judge Miller attended the ceremony in the House Chambers.

Presiding Judge Gary B. Andrews administered the oath of office. Speakers at the event included Chief Judge Anne Elizabeth

Barnes, Court of Appeals; Judge Frank M. Hull, Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals; Judge Beverly Martin, US District Court, Northern

former Governor Roy E. Barnes; former Attorney General Michael Bowers; Attorney General Thurbert Baker. Ms. Jovita Moore, WSB-TV

news, served as master of ceremonies. The invocation was delivered by Bishop Eddie Long of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church and the benediction was given by Rev. Marvin Moss, Judge Miller's pastor at Cascade United Methodist Church

Chief Judge Miller was appointed to the Court of Appeals in 1999 by Gov. Roy Barnes. Prior to that time she served as State Court Judge of

Fulton County. Judge Miller is a native of Macon, Georgia. ☞



Presiding Judge Gary B. Andrews, left, administers the oath of office to Judge M. Yvette Miller as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia.

District of Georgia; Judge Brenda Cole, State Court of Fulton County;

Doyle Begins First Term



Judge Sara L. Doyle, elected as the seventy-first judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia, was sworn-in at the Capitol on December 18, 2008. Governor Sonny Perdue administers the oath of office as Doyle's mother-in-law looks on.

Board of Court Reporting Vacancies

The Board of Court Reporting is currently seeking nominees for four vacant seats. Three certified court reporters and one state court judge will be appointed for the term of office beginning August 1, 2009.

Prospective applicants must have at least five years of experience in court reporting or law. Please submit a letter of interest and resume to:

Aquaria R. Smith, Program Manager
Board of Court Reporting
244 Washington St., S.W., Suite 300
Atlanta, Georgia 30334 ☞

People, Places, & Events

In Memoriam

☛ **Judge Michael Leeper** of Stone Mountain died September 26, 2008. Judge Leeper served the Municipal Court of Stone Mountain.

☛ **Senior Magistrate Judge Hal Morris** of Augusta died January 23, 2008.

☛ **Mr. Curtis “Buddy” Rogers** of Soperton died March 7, 2009. Mr. Rogers served as superior court clerk of Treutlen County since his election in 1983. He was selected as the 8th Judicial District of Georgia’s Clerk of the Year in 2009.

☛ **Senior Judge C. Cloud Morgan** of Macon died March 15, 2009. Judge Morgan was elected superior court judge of the Macon Judicial Circuit in 1966; he retired in 1990. Judge Morgan served in the US Navy during World War II. He was a 1948 graduate of Mercer Law School.

☛ **Judge Quillian L. Bryant** of Louisville died March 25, 2009. Judge Bryant served as probate judge of Jefferson County from 1960 until his death. He served in the U.S. Air Force; he earned a law degree from the University of Georgia.

Transitions

☛ **Judge Orinda D. Evans, Judge Jack T. Camp, and Judge Clarence Cooper** of the US District Court, Northern District of Georgia have taken senior status.

Judge Hugh Lawson of the US District Court, Middle District of Georgia, has also taken senior status. These vacancies are filled by presidential appointment.

☛ **Mr. George Nolan**, Executive Director of the Georgia Courts Automation Commission, retired on February 27, 2009, after 25 years of service with the state.

☛ **Mr. John A. “Tripp” Fitzner**, 6th District Court Administrator, resigned from his position on December 31, 2008 to become Chief Assistant District Attorney for the Middle Judicial Circuit. **Mr. Bob Nadekow** has taken the position of District Court Administrator in the 6th District.

☛ **Mr. Tom Gunnels**, 10th District Court Administrator, resigned from his position on February 28, 2009, to become the Circuit Court Administrator for the Augusta Judicial Circuit.

Robert L. Doss, Jr. (1946 — 2008) Former AOC Director

☛ **Mr. Robert L. Doss, Jr.**, former director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, died October 15, 2008 following a lengthy illness. During his years as head of the Georgia AOC, 1975 -1998, Mr. Doss was well-known nationally for his work with the Conference of State Court Administrators. He served as president of COSCA in 1986 and was recognized by the National Center for State Courts with its Distinguished Service Award in 1992. In 2005, Mr. Doss was honored for his service to the Georgia courts with the William Herndon Award.



Mr. Robert L. Doss, Jr.

Mr. Doss was a graduate of Georgia State University earning a Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice Systems and Urban Affairs. He was a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management and served on its Advisory Council. He is survived by his wife, Ms. Gail Doss of Powder Springs, and two adult children, Mr. Robert L. Doss, III and Ms. Sarah Doss.

People, Places, & Events cont.

Honors and Awards

♣ **Judge Ben Studdard**, State

Court of Henry County, received the **Ogden**

Doremus Award presented by the Council of State Court Judges on October 16, 2008. Judge Studdard has

served on the Henry County bench since 1998; he is a past president of the Council of State Court Judges.



Judge Ben Studdard

♣ **Judge Tim Pape**, Juvenile Court



Judge Tim Pape

of Floyd County, received the inaugural **Aaron Cohn Award** presented by the Council of Juvenile Court Judges at its fall conference in October 2008.

Judge Pape was appointed to the Floyd County bench in 1982.

♣ **Senior Judge Roy M. Lilly** was honored on January 29, 2009, at an unveiling of his portrait in the Thomas County Courthouse. Judge Lilly, a 1939 Mercer Law School graduate, served as Superior Court Judge in the Southern Judicial Circuit from 1979 until he took senior status in 1994.

Chief Judge Harry Jay Altman, Senior Judge Arthur McLane, and Judge James Hardy were on hand

with stories about Judge Lilly who turns 90 in May. The portrait will hang in the new Thomas County Judicial Center which is under construction.

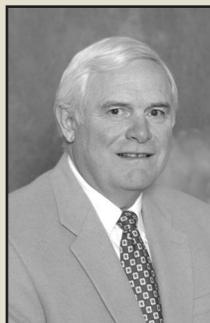
♣ **Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears** received the eighth Charles L. Weltner Freedom of Information Award on February 28, 2009. The Weltner Award honors a Georgian who has done significant work for freedom of information. Former Chief Justice Norman Fletcher received the award in 2005.

♣ **The Tenth Annual Chief Justice Robert Benham Award** recipients were honored on March 10, 2009, in Atlanta. The Benham Awards for Community Service were established in 1998 to highlight the spirit of volunteerism in the legal community.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was awarded posthumously to Judge Griffin E. Bell, former federal appellate judge and former US Attorney General. The award was accepted by Judge Bell's son and grandson.

Trial Judges Recognized:

Judge James E. Hardy, Southern Judicial Circuit, recognized for the community programs including the Terrific Kids Program,



Judge James E. Hardy

Baskets for Shut-Ins, Thomas County Head Start, the South Georgia Intelligence Network, and the Children's Advocacy Center.

Judge Johnny N. Panos, State Court of DeKalb County, recognized for his work with Project Achievement, a group that provides sentencing alternatives to youthful offenders.



Judge Johnny N. Panos

Appointments

♣ On February 4, 2009, Gov. Sonny Perdue swore-in **Judge Wade Padgett** (see below) Superior Court, Augusta Judicial Circuit. Judge Padgett served as Chief Magistrate of Columbia County prior to being appointed to the Superior Court bench.



Judge Wade Padgett is sworn-in as his wife holds the Bible.

♣ Gov. Sonny Perdue announced the appointment of **Judge Jay Roth** to the State Court of Fulton County on March 4, 2009.

State of Judiciary Address: 2009

Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears delivered her final State of the Judiciary address on February 4, 2009, before a joint session of the Georgia General Assembly. The Chief Justice warned that the current fiscal crisis strains a judicial system which operates on less than one percent of the total state budget.

Chief Justice Sears noted that even in good economic times the work the courts do is difficult given the volume and complexity of legal issues brought into Georgia's courts. "Administering justice is a function only government can fulfill," Chief Justice Sears stressed. She voiced concern over states taking drastic steps such as cutting back on the number of jury trials or leaving judgeships vacant. Regardless of economic climate, she believes the work of Georgia's courts must continue; neglecting this fundamental obligation

of government is a breach of trust with its citizens.

In facing the troubles ahead, Chief Justice Sears applauded the

exceptional people who have dedicated years of hard – and at times heartbreaking – work to make Georgia's judicial system the very best in the nation."



Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears, center, delivered her final State of the Judiciary address on February 4, 2009. House Speaker Glenn Richardson, left, and Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle welcomed her to a joint session of the General Assembly in the House Chambers.

state's appellate and trial courts that "work hard to ensure that all people have access to justice."

Farewell Reflections

Chief Justice Sears, who will retire on June 30, reflected on her 26 years of judicial service as a traffic court judge, superior court judge, and Justice of the Supreme Court. "I have had the privilege of working with

Juvenile and Family Court Judges cited the work of Georgia's drug courts as a model for the nation.

• The Supreme Court Commission on Children, Marriage, and Family Law co-hosted a national summit on marriage. ❧

Highlights of Sears Tenure

• Supreme Court of Georgia named most productive state supreme court in the nation by the University of Chicago Law School.

• In 2008, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and National Council of

Historic Tenure Ends June 30

When Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears was appointed to the Supreme Court bench in 1992, she became the first woman and youngest individual ever on the state's highest court. To retain her seat, she faced

the voters of Georgia that same year defeating her opponent in a state-wide election. In winning election to the full six-year term, she became the first woman to prevail in a Georgia election contest for state office.

In 2005 she succeeded Norman

Fletcher as Chief Justice to become the first African-American woman to attain such a post in any of the fifty states. Though her term as chief justice is ending, Chief Justice Sears' status as a groundbreaking jurist and Citizen of the World is not. ❧

Supreme Court Sponsors Teen Summit

Rapper T.I. Encourages Education, Smart Decisions

On Friday, February 20, 2009, the Supreme Court of Georgia co-hosted a unique summit for Georgia teens. “Play by the Rules” featured presentation by rapper T.I. and former DeKalb District Attorney Mr. J. Tom Morgan. High school students from Atlanta, Columbus, and Savannah heard practical information to steer them down a positive path and help keep them out of the courtroom.

Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears welcomed the group to the Supreme Court courtroom and introduced the speakers.

Ignorance is No Defense

Mr. J. Tom Morgan spoke from his experience as the DeKalb County District Attorney for 12 years and his current practice as a defense attorney.

In an hour-long presentation based largely on the contents of his book, “Ignorance is No Defense: A Teenager’s Guide to Georgia Law,” Mr. Morgan illustrated some of the risky scenarios involving sex, alcohol, and drugs teens might likely face.

Georgia law concerning juvenile crime is often confusing, yet there is no clause or loophole that says just because a teen doesn’t know he’s committing a crime that he’s absolved of responsibility.



Clockwise: A student asks a question. Rapper T.I. urged students to work hard and value education. Mr. J. Tom Morgan advised the group on laws which affect them.

Play by the Rules

At the age of 13, a child can be prosecuted as an adult if charged with a felony that is one of the seven deadly sins. At the age of 16, a child prosecuted for shoplifting is prosecuted in juvenile court while her 17-year-old friend is prosecuted in superior court when convicted results in a criminal record.

Your Environment Does Not Define You

Grammy Award-winning rapper and Atlanta resident T.I. spoke as a part of a community service requirement. Last year, the rapper pled to federal firearms charges.

The rapper, whose real name is Clifford Harris, urged the teenagers to view education as a means of advancement. Hard work can open doors that otherwise would be closed to them; their current circumstances can motivate them to move forward.

“Your environment does not define you,” he told the students.

At the end of the program, Mr. Morgan and T.I. answered a wide range of questions from the students. Each participant received a copy of “Ignorance is no Defense: A Teenager’s Guide to Georgia Law.”

In the News

The *Augusta Chronicle* reported that construction on a \$67 million judicial center for **Richmond County** began in December. (12/18/08)

A LIFE IN THE LAW:

The *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* profiled **Judge Aaron Cohn**, Juvenile Court of Muscogee County, who is the subject of the book “Judge Aaron Cohn: Memories of a First Generation American”.

COURT GUIDES MENTALLY ILL TO BETTER MANAGE LIFE: An article in the *Athens Banner Herald* spotlighted the Clarke County Treatment and Accountability Court run by **Judge David Sweat**, Superior Court, Western Judicial Circuit. (12/18/08)

The *Rockdale Citizen* reported on alternative sentencing in Rockdale County’s Juvenile Court. From November 26, 2008 until January 9, 2009, **Judge William Schneider** gave juveniles sentenced to community service the option of donating 25 cans of food rather than complete five hours of community service. (12/13/08)

The *Cherokee Tribune* ran a feature story on **Chief Magistrate Judge James Drane’s** goal of implementing an electronic warrant system for Cherokee County by the end of 2009. (12/26/08)

Another article highlighted the technology efforts of **Superior Court Clerk Patty Baker** who has implemented an on-line case tracking system. (02/01/09)

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING(S): An article in the *Marietta Daily Journal* highlighted **Judge M. Yvette Miller’s** assumption of the role of Chief Judge of the **Court of Appeals**. (12/30/08)

The *Valdosta Daily Times* profiled **Judge Chase Daughtrey**, Probate Court of Cook County. At the age of 26, Judge Daughtrey is the youngest Probate Court judge in the state. (01/11/09)

COUNTY MAGISTRATE'S HERITAGE A BADGE (AND KILT) OF HONOR: The *Athens Banner-Herald* profiled **Judge Harry Rice**, Chief Magistrate of Madison County, and his wife; both are avid Scots enthusiasts. (02/24/09)

JUDGE: BUDGET CUTS FORCING CHANGES:

The *Brunswick News* published a story showing how budget cuts in the state budget are straining the court system. The **Brunswick Judicial Circuit** has issued a freeze on civil case trials, except in domestic cases, freeing judges to process criminal cases more quickly. (02/13/09)

The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* ran an article on the **State Court of Clayton County’s** quest to add a fifth judge this legislative session. (03/01/09)

The *Marietta Daily Journal* (02/23/09) and the *Augusta Chronicle* (03/01/09) profiled **Senior US District Judge Anthony Alaimo**, the subject of a the book: “The Sicilian Judge: Anthony Alaimo, an American Hero.”

JUDGE RECOUNTS FULTON COURTHOUSE RAMPAGE

CASE: The *Marietta Daily Journal* profiled **Judge James Bodiford’s** role in the Brian Nichols trial. (03/07/09)

FULTON JUDGE FOLLOWS UNLIKELY PATH TO BENCH:

Judge Alford Dempsey, Superior Court of Fulton County, was profiled in the *Fulton County Daily Report*. (3/23/09) ☞

Stephens County Courthouse Restoration



The splendor of the early twentieth century was on display at the re-dedication ceremony for the Stephens County Courthouse on November 23, 2008.

A standing-room only crowd in the second-floor courtroom (at right) joined Senior Judge Robert Struble, local Stephens County dignitaries, and former Georgia Governor and US Senator Zell Miller for the ceremony. ❧

FY 08 Annual
Report Now
Available Online



The *FY 08 Annual Report of the Georgia Courts* has been published to the AOC website and is available at www.georgiacourts.org/aoc/publications.php

Composite CY 07 totals for the appellate and trial courts are presented alongside the CY 06 totals for comparison.

Detailed caseload reports for the trial courts are available in the *FY 08 Annual Report — Supplemental* found on the website in the archives section of the Publications page. ❧

Senior Judge Appointments

The following judges have been appointed to serve as senior judges by the Governor:

Superior Court

Judge Robert W. Adamson
Judge Kenneth B. Followill
Judge Loring A. Gray, Jr.
Judge Donald B. Howe, Jr.

Judge Gary C. McCorvey
Judge H. Arthur McLane
Judge J. Richard Porter, III
Judge F. Larry Salmon
Judge Lindsay A. Tise, Jr.
Judge James R. Tuten, Jr.
Judge Phillip R. West
Judge Duncan Wheale
Judge Anne Workman

State Court

Judge Jesse Copelan

Juvenile Court

Judge James E. McDonald, Jr.

Probate Court

Judge Kipling L. McVay
Judge Jackie O. Driskell

The next meeting of the
Judicial Council of Georgia

is scheduled for
Wednesday, July 22, 2009
State Bar of Georgia • Atlanta, GA
1:30 p.m.

People, Places cont.

Drug, DUI and Mental Health Court Conference

The **2009 Drug, DUI, and Mental Health Court Conference** will be held May 26 - 28, 2009, at the Westin Buckhead in Atlanta. The program focus will be best practices in use in the drug court, substance abuse and mental health fields in the country. For more information on registration visit www.georgiacourts.org/courts/accountability/conference.php ❧

November/December 2008 Election Results

Court of Appeals

Judge Sara L. Doyle

Superior Courts (by circuit)

Judge Kimberly Esmond Adams

Atlanta

Judge Anthony Harrison, *Brunswick*

Judge Gil McBride, *Chattahoochee*

Judge T. Christopher Hughes,

Cordele

Judge Denise Marshall, *Dougherty*

Judge Beau McClain, *Douglas*

Judge Karen E. Beyers, *Gwinnett*

Judge Brian House, *Lookout Mtn.*

Judge Jeffery S. Malcom, *Northern*

Judge Sarah Wall, *Oconee*

Judge Currie Mingledorff, *Piedmont*

Judge John E. Niedrach, *Rome*

Judge J. Kevin Chason, *South Georgia*

Judge James G. Tunison, *Southern*

Judge Tangela Barrie, *Stone Mountain*

Judge Melanie B. Cross, *Tifton*

State Courts (by county)

Judge Kenneth E. Futch, Jr., *Bacon*

Probate Courts (by county)

Judge Margie O'Brien, *Atkinson*

Judge David Hobby, *Ben Hill*

Judge James McGlaun, *Chattahoochee*

Judge Keith Wood, *Cherokee*

Judge Kelli Wolk, *Cobb*

Judge Chase Daughtrey, *Cook*

Judge Beth Mosley, *Effingham*

Judge Ann Jackson, *Fayette*

Judge Richie Parker, *Gordon*

Judge Sue Bottoms, *Habersham*

Judge Cody Cross, *Madison*

Judge Heather Stuart, *Marion*

Judge Teresa Jennings, *McIntosh*

Judge Huey Davis, *Pierce*

Judge Amy Bagwell, *Seminole*

Judge John Terry, *Talbot*

Judge Dianne Renfroe, *Taylor*

Judge Betty Johnson, *Telfair*

Judge Larry Threlkeld, *Toombs*

Judge David Rogers, *Towns*

Judge Tammy Thornton, *Wayne*

Judge Sheri Blevins, *Whitfield*

Judge Thomas Charping, *Wilkes*

Magistrate Courts (by county)

Judge Romelle L. Green, Jr., *Ben Hill*

Judge Sterling Wimberly, *Burke*

Judge Jennifer Lewis, *Camden*

Judge Steven R. Wagner,

Chattahoochee

Judge Karleen S. O'Berry, *Clinch*

Judge Charles Wayne Ellis, *Cook*

Judge Steve Ingram, *Crisp*

Judge Lisa Thurmond, *Dawson*

Judge Walker H. Bramblett, *Forsyth*

Judge Denise Dallas, *Glascok*

Judge Brandon C. Heath, *Haralson*

Judge Brenda Jennings, *Heard*

Judge Matthew Waters, *Johnson*

Judge Judy B. Mullis, *Lanier*

Judge Stephen Hyles, *Muscogee*

Judge Amy Bagwell, *Seminole*

Judge John Raymond Terry, *Talbot*

Judge David Rogers, *Towns*

Judge Janice Thigpen, *Warren*

Judge Julianne E. James, *Webster*

Judge Haynes Henton Townsend,

Whitfield

Judge Tony Strenth, *Worth*

Superior Court Clerks (by county)

Regina McIntyre, *Barrow*

Betty Lynn Johnson, *Ben Hill*

Shawna Hughes, *Berrien*

Cindy Crews, *Brantley*

Teresa P. Tucker, *Bulloch*

Alan Lee, *Carroll*

Cecila Willis, *Decatur*

Kathy Hendrix, *Evans*

Barbara Penson, *Floyd*

Greg G. Allen, *Forsyth*

Debbie Kines, *Grady*

Charles Baker, *Hall*

Becky Robinson, *Haralson*

Frankie Gray, *Hart*

Deborah Clark, *Lanier*

Jackie Dalton, *Laurens*

Sara Clark, *Lee*

Amanda Doss, *Lincoln*

Rita Harkins, *Lumpkin*

Gail Johnson, *Miller*

Connie Reed, *Murray*

Kelli Smith, *Oglethorpe*

Sheila H. Perry, *Putnam*

Ruth Wilson, *Rockdale*

Tim Quick, *Stephens*

Janice Bryant, *Terrell*

Mary Lee Green, *Turner*

Judy Odom, *Union*

Teresa Harper, *Upson*

Carter Brown, *Walker*

Carol A. Bragg, *Wheeler*

Melica Kendrick, *Whitfield* ☞



Need to Contact the AOC?

404-656-5171 • Atlanta office

478-471-5315 • Macon office

www.georgiacourts.org

Courthouse Spotlight



McDuffie County

County Seat: Thomson

Built: 1872, additions in 1934

Judicial Circuit: Toombs

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