



Georgia courts Journal

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October 2011

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Judicial Council Recommends Judgeships

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Judicial Council Recommends Six Judgeships



Judicial Council of Georgia, August 26, 2011. Seated, from left: Judge Cynthia Wright; Judge Louisa Abbot; Judge Mary E. Staley; Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein; Presiding Justice George H. Carley; Judge Rashida Oliver; Judge Mary Kathryn Moss. Second row, from left: Judge Lawton E. Stephens; Judge A. Gregory Poole; Judge John C. Prigden; Judge Alan Harvey; Judge David Emerson; Judge David Darden; Chief Judge John J. Ellington; Judge Mark Anthony Scott; Judge Brenda Weaver. Third row, from left: Judge Frederick Mullis; Presiding Judge Herbert E. Phipps; Judge Ronnie Joe Lane; Judge Martha C. Christian; Judge Arch W. McGarity; Judge Larry B. Mims; Judge Mary Jo Buxton; Judge Todd A. Blackwell. Not pictured: Judge C. Andrew Fuller; Judge Deborah Edwards, Judge Mary T. Cranford.

Workload Assessment

The Judicial Council met twice during the summer months. On July 20, the Council met via teleconference to discuss the results of the 2011 Superior Court Time and Motion Study and new circuit clas-

sifications and judge-year values. Adoption of the recommendations of the Judicial Workload Assessment Committee as reported by Judge David Emerson made the new values effective for the judgeship studies under consideration at the August 26 meeting.

lowing requests in order of priority:

1. Bell-Forsyth (3rd judgeship)
2. Piedmont (4th judgeship)
3. Middle (3rd judgeship)
4. Oconee (3rd judgeship)
5. Western (4th judgeship)
6. Clayton (4th judgeship)

Other Business

- Adopted budget requests for the amended FY2012 budget and the FY2013 budget.
- Three new members of the Board of Court Reporting were appointed: Judge Richard Kent, State Court of Colquitt County, Ms. Cheryl Griffin, and Ms. Stacey Folds.
- Rep. Wendall Willard addressed the Council asking for support to amend the Council of Superior Court Judges Rules concerning Process Servers.

Cover Photo: (Left to right) Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein and Presiding Justice George H. Carley, Supreme Court of Georgia; Chief Judge John J. Ellington and Presiding Judge Herbert E. Phipps, Court of Appeals of Georgia.

Judgeship Recommendations

At its August 26 meeting in Atlanta, the Judicial Council considered recommendations for new superior court judgeships. After reviewing caseload data for the requesting circuits, the Council approved the fol-

Carol W. Hunstein
Chief Justice

Marla S. Moore
Director

Courts Journal Staff

Ashley G. Stollar
Outreach/Communications Specialist II

Maggie Reeves
Outreach/Communications Specialist I

Judicial Council cont.

- Rep. Rich Golick, Chief Justice Hunstein reported, is seeking Judicial Council support for a House Resolution to provide dedicated funding for the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council.

- Reports were made on the work of the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform, Recusal Rules Committee, Commission on Interpreters Rule Amendments, the Proposed Tax Court, and the appellate and trial court councils.

New Members

The Council welcomed the following new members:



AOC Staff and Presiding Judge Herbert E. Phipps (right) tally votes.

Judge David T. Emerson
(Superior Court, Douglas Judicial Circuit), President-Elect, Council of Superior Court Judges.

Judge David Darden (State Court of Cobb County), President-Elect, Council of State Court Judges.

Judge A. Gregory Poole (Juvenile Court of Gwinnett County),

President-Elect, Council of Juvenile Court Judges.

Judge Alan Harvey
(Magistrate Court of DeKalb County), President-Elect, Council of Magistrate Court Judges.

Judge Rashida Oliver
(Municipal Court of East Point), President, Council of Municipal Court Judges.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Judicial Council will be Friday, January 5, 2012, at 1:00 p.m. at the Loew's Hotel in Atlanta. ☞

From the Supreme Court...

Code of Judicial Conduct Revised

The Supreme Court of Georgia passed an order amending the Georgia Code of Judicial Conduct. The following terms have been added: aggregate, campaign committee, campaign contribution disclosure report, contribution, election cycle, financial disclosure statement, maximum allowable contribution and support. Also, Canons 3E. Disqualification and 3F. Remittal of Disqualification were amended. The full text of the Georgia Code of Judicial Conduct can be found at www.georgiacourts.gov. ☞

Supreme Court Visits Cobb County



The Supreme Court of Georgia made its first stop to Cobb County in its 166 year history on July 18, 2011. The Justices of the Supreme Court made the 20 mile trip from their Atlanta courtroom to hear two cases in the newly constructed Courthouse in Marietta, GA. Judges of Cobb County's Superior, State, Juvenile, Probate, and Magistrate courts were in attendance for the historic event.

2011 Superior Court Time and Motion Study

Data collection took place for the 2011 Superior Court Time and Motion Study during March 2011, with 147 of 205 superior court judges, representing 46 circuits, documenting time on printed or electronic forms. These 147 judges, along with nine magistrates designated to preside in superior court, submitted 1,562,117 minutes of case and administrative activity data to the AOC.

Superior court clerks in circuits with participating judges were asked to complete a summary report of dispositions for the month of March and submit it to the Council of Superior Court Clerks. The Council compiled data furnished by 126 clerks and forwarded a report totaling 32,742 criminal, general civil, and domestic relations dockets and defendants to the AOC. To ensure a valid calculation, the AOC removed the judge time recorded in

counties for which no disposition data was furnished, and disposition reports for circuits where not all judges recorded time were adjusted proportionally to the number of judges participating.

Based on demographic factors as well as the non-case related time data submitted by judges, circuits were reclassified from three categories into four and were assigned new judge-year values. ☞

2011 Time and Motion Study results presented to the Judicial Council on July 20, 2011.

Filing Type	Case Type	Current Values	Recommended Values	Change
		(2009)	(2011)	(2009-2011)
Criminal	Serious Felony	324.00	353.79	29.79
	Felony	45.71	49.30	3.59
	Misdemeanor	32.00	13.17	(18.83)
	Unified Appeal	7,200.00	7,200.00	-
	Probation Revocation	24.00	19.34	(4.66)
	Appeals/Review	16.36	54.58	38.22
	Contract/Account	11.06	15.80	4.74
General Civil	Dispossessory/Distress	30.22	27.02	(3.20)
	Forfeiture	N/A	66.75	Category Created
	Habeas Corpus	34.07	134.35	100.28
	Non-Domestic Contempt	15.50	76.57	61.07
	Other General Civil	15.18	38.01	22.83
	Post Judgment/Garnishment	2.07	3.31	1.24
	Real Property	N/A	154.20	Category Created
	Title to Land/Condemnation	22.37	N/A	Category Deleted
	Tort/Negligence	136.22	125.31	(10.91)
	Domestic Relations	Adoption	68.30	52.51
Child Support Enforcement		N/A	10.07	Category Created
Contempt		45.10	26.22	(18.88)
Divorce/Alimony		48.31	45.92	(2.39)
Family Violence		16.41	24.32	7.91
Legitimation		19.07	32.14	13.07
Modification		52.31	58.03	5.72
Non-CSE/Custody		N/A	187.67	Category Created
Other Domestic		45.10	11.67	(33.43)
Support/Custody		47.98	N/A	Category Deleted

The Single County Suburban Circuit Classification was created and new Judge-Year Values were computed for the 2011 study.

Circuit Classification	Judge-Year Values (2009)	Judge-Year Values (2011)
Urban	1,508	1,511
Single County Suburban	1,458	1,499
Multi-County Suburban	1,458	1,315
Rural	1,218	1,309

People, Places, & Events

In Memoriam

☛ **Judge Pat Hardaway** of Evans died July 15, 2011 after a brief battle with cancer. Judge Hardaway was elected as Judge of the Probate Court of Columbia County in 1980, a position she held until her death.

☛ **Former Judge David R. Elmore, Sr.** of Savannah died July 27, 2011.



Judge Elmore, a University of Georgia Law School graduate, was appointed to the

Recorders' Court of Chatham County in 1969 and the State Court of Chatham County in 1980. He retired in 1988. Judge Elmore served in the United States Army Air Corp during World War II.

☛ **US District Senior Judge G. Ernest Tidwell** of Atlanta died August 4, 2011. Judge Tidwell was appointed to a new seat on Georgia's Northern District by President Jimmy Carter in 1979, a position he held until he assumed senior status in 1999. Prior to his appointment to the Federal Bench, Judge Tidwell served on the Civil Court of Fulton County, 1968-1971, and on the Fulton County Superior Court, 1971-1979.

☛ **Senior Judge Anne Workman** of Decatur died September 2,



2011, after a brief battle with cancer. Judge Workman, an Emory Law School graduate, became the

first female judge in DeKalb County when she was appointed to the Magistrate Division of Recorder's Court. She was elected to the State Court in 1984 and served as the first female President of the Council of State Court Judges. In 1998 she was elected to the Superior Court bench; she assumed senior status in 2008.

☛ **Judge Tarey Schell** of Peachtree City died September 7, 2011. Judge Schell presided over the Griffin Judicial Circuit Felony Drug Court. From 1999-2008, he served as Juvenile Court Judge in the Griffin Judicial Circuit. Judge Schell, a graduate of the Georgia State University School of Law, served in the US Army for 26 years, retiring in 1984 with the rank of Lt. Colonel.

☛ **Mr. Norman L. Stone** of Ringgold died September 10, 2011. Mr. Stone became Superior Court Clerk of Catoosa County in 1966. Chief Deputy Clerk, **Ms. Fancy Moran** has been appointed to serve the remainder of his term.

Appointments

☛ On August 5, 2011, **Judge D. Todd Markle** was sworn-in by Gov.



Nathan Deal to serve on the Superior Court for the Atlanta Judicial Circuit. Judge Markle fills

the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Michael Johnson.

☛ **Judge Gregory V. Sapp** was sworn-in on August 5, 2011 by Gov.



Nathan Deal as judge of the State Court of Chatham County. Judge Sapp fills the vacancy created

by the retirement of Judge Ronald E. Ginsberg.

☛ **Judge Ken W. Smith** and **Judge Peter J. Rice** were appointed Senior Judges of the State Court on July 11, 2011 by Gov. Deal.

☛ **Judge Bruce E. Roberts** has been appointed to serve on the State Court of Walker County. Judge Roberts fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Donny Peppers.

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People, Places, & Events cont.

☛ **Mr. Greg Loughlin** has been named Executive Director of Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

Retirements

☛ **Judge Karlton Van Banke**, Juvenile Court of Clayton County, retired on June 30, 2011, assuming senior status.

☛ **Judge Rachel T. Lord**, Probate Court of Washington County, retired on June 20, 2011 after 22 years as Probate Judge.

☛ Two District Court Administrators retired over the summer. **Mr. John Cowart** retired after serving the 2nd District for 26 years. **Mr. Greg Jones**, 3rd DCA, retired after 10 years.

☛ **Mr. Robert Tawse**, Houston County Solicitor-General, retired on June 30, 2011. **Ms. Amy Smith** was appointed to fill the vacancy.

☛ **Judge Aaron Cohn**, Juvenile Court, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit, retired on September 30, 2011. Judge Cohn was appointed in 1965, claiming the title of longest

serving judge in the United States. He will take senior status upon his retirement.

Resignations

☛ **Judge Douglas Pullen**, Superior Court, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit, resigned his position on August 31, 2011.

Honors

☛ On September 24, 2011, **Judge James F. Bass**, Superior Court, Eastern Judicial Circuit, received the W.W. Law Legacy award by the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation's for his work with Georgia Legal Services prior to his judicial appointment.

Immigration and State Court Initiative

☛ **The Center for Public Policy Studies (CPPS)** has begun a study of immigration and its affect on state courts in Georgia. CPPS met with stakeholders September 7-8, 2011, to discuss the challenges and solutions associated with immigrants and immigration issues in the courts.

Criminal Justice Reform

☛ **The Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform** met on September 27, 2011, at the State Offices South at Tift College in Forsyth, GA. Topics that are being considered are evidence-based sentencing with risk assessments and reducing the sentence for misdemeanors to six months. ☞

From the Board of Court Reporting...

Membership

New members of the Board of Court Reporting were sworn-in on Friday, September 9. Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein, Supreme Court of Georgia, administered the oath of office to the new members.

Town Hall Meetings

The Board has begun its first in a series of "Town Hall" meetings to discuss matters of interest to court reporters,

judges, clerks, and court administrators. The first meeting was held in Atlanta on September 10.

Thirty participants interacted with members of the Board of Court

Reporting and staff during the two-hour meeting. Additional meetings are scheduled for October 1 in Savannah and November 3

in Tifton. Plans are underway for additional meetings.



Chief Justice Hunstein, left, and Board of Court Reporting members Ms. Stacey L. Folds, Ms. Cheryl Griffin, Judge Richard Kent, and Ms. Carol Glazier.

Chiefs and Court Administrators Examine New Media and the Courts at Atlanta Conference

The nation's Chief Justices and state court administrators spent four days in Atlanta discussing the changing media landscape and its impact on the administration of justice.

At the Conference of Chief Justices/Conference of State Court Administrators annual meeting July 31-August 3, the theme was "A World of Change: Courts and the Media in 2011."

Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein, Supreme Court of Georgia, opened the program by detailing how rapid changes in traditional news media, combined with the rise of social media like Facebook and Twitter pose both challenges and opportunities for courts.

"In the last decade, we have witnessed an evolution in our media with the advent of social media, the decline of print journalism, and the leaning of broadcast media toward entertainment and opinion," Chief Justice Hunstein said. "The revolution in technology has led to the ubiquitousness of news, and to citizens themselves playing the role of journalists with CNN and other networks using the video they shoot on

iPhones and other devices to bring us the first pictures of the earthquake in Haiti, the Virginia Tech massacre or the tsunami in Japan."

Echoing Chief Justice Hunstein's remarks, the opening plenary session featured a discussion moderated by

Texas Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson, titled "The New Media - What is It and Why Should We Care?" Chris Davey, treasurer of the Conference of Court Public Information Officers, answered by explaining that court leaders have always had to be knowledgeable and conversant in the current communication media because supporting trust and confidence in the

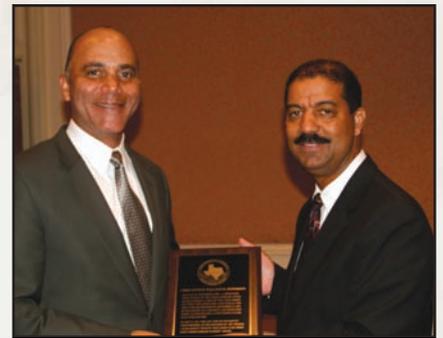
judicial system is a fundamental part of the judicial process, and the media are the main vehicle for fulfilling this mandate.

Throughout the conference attendees discussed the benefits and challenges new media has on courts.

In a closing speech to the justices and court administrators, Richard T. Griffiths, vice president and senior editorial director of CNN, said the changes in the media landscape pose "challenges for courts to figure out how to maintain credibility in an increasingly skeptical world."



Chief Justice Hunstein welcomed Chief Justices and State Court Administrators to the three day conference.



Outgoing CJP President Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson, Supreme Court of Texas, and Incoming CJP President Judge Eric T. Washington, District of Columbia Court of Appeals.



Mr. William Vickery, center, received the Lifetime Achievement in Court Administration Award from outgoing COSCA President, left, Ms. Lilia Judson, Indiana Director of State Court Administration, Mr. William C. Vickery, and incoming COSCA President Rosalyn Frierson, Director of South Carolina Court Administration.

The Conference of Court Justices elected Chief Judge Eric T. Washington, District of Columbia Court of Appeals, as its president. The Conference of State Court Administrators elected Ms. Rosalyn Frierson, Director of South Carolina Court Administration as its president. ✍

Parts of this article are reprinted with permission from Chris Davey, Director of Public Information, Supreme Court of Ohio.

NHTSA Report on Georgia DUI Courts

How effective are Georgia's DUI courts? According to a recent report published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration the evidence is in: Georgia's DUI Courts have "successfully encouraged lifestyle changes for the participating offenders and may be a viable alternative to traditional sanctioning."

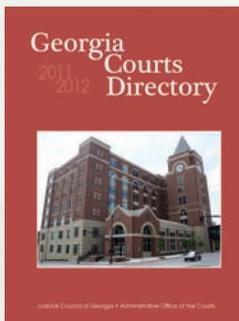
The study evaluated DUI Courts in Chatham, Clarke, and Hall counties reviewing data from 2003-2006. During that time, these courts experienced a 79% retention rate indicating that most participants remained in these programs and were motivated to complete it. Offenders who graduated from one of the DUI courts experienced a 9% recidivism rate; terminated offenders experienced a 26% recidivism rate. The report estimates that the DUI courts prevented between 47 and 112 repeat arrests.

Ten years after the first DUI court was created in Clarke County, there are eighteen DUI courts throughout the state.

Access the full report at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Research+&+Evaluation>

2011-2012 Georgia Courts Directory Now Available!

Your copy should be on your desk by now. Additional copies are \$30, plus shipping charges.



What the Judges Say:

Chief Judge Kent Lawrence, State Court of Clarke County: "The research validates the program success staff members have observed over the years working with high risk repeat impaired driving offenders. Accountability courts which adhere to the ten Guiding Principles model are much more likely to experience reduced recidivism, increased public safety for the community, higher retention rates, and be more cost effective. Simply stated, DUI Court pilot courts in Georgia have clearly demonstrated over a four year period that impaired driving court programs WORK!"



Chief Judge Charles Wynne, State Court of Hall County: "The

results of the NHTSA study of Georgia DUI Courts confirm that DUI Courts work. The success of DUI Courts, as well as Drug Courts and other similar programs, is not only measured in public safety benefits through a reduction in repeat offenses, but is demonstrated through countless examples of participants who have achieved sobriety and become productive citizens and families that have been restored from years of being broken as a result of addiction. These successes come as a result of hard work by a lot of dedicated team members, as well as hard work on the part of the participants themselves."



Chief Judge Greg Fowler, State Court of Chatham County: "DUI Drug courts require a huge investment of Judges' time, but the outcomes we see in clean and sober, happy, working, law abiding, taxpaying citizens is worth every second."

"Your Guide to the Georgia Courts" is Available!

Call 404-656-6783 for copies in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

17th Annual Domestic Violence Conference Held

The Georgia Commission on Family Violence held its 17th Annual Statewide Domestic Violence Conference in Atlanta on September 12-13, 2011. The Conference brought together 325 domestic violence practitioners, including judges, law enforcement, victim advocates, prosecutors, family violence intervention program providers, and others. The theme of the conference, "There's No One Solution: Integrating Prevention and Intervention Against Domestic Violence," connected many components of ending family violence in Georgia. Judge Nancy Bills, State Court of Rockdale County, praised the conference saying, "This year's conference surpassed all my expectations. The information provided by the speakers and presenters regarding prevention and intervention was exactly what was needed because it is only through the integration of prevention and intervention that family violence can be eradicated."

Two days of plenaries and breakout sessions covered a wide gamut of issues.

Judge Daphne Walker, Chief Magistrate of Clayton County and Chair of the Domestic Violence Court Task Force, presented a session outlining best practices for ensuring victim safety, offender accountability, and effective communication between the courts and key

stakeholders when handling domestic violence cases. Her session also centered on federal firearms restrictions, notification, and removal. Other sessions looked at immigration and domestic violence, probation supervision strategies, survivors with mental health issues, racism in



Judge Nancy Bills (center), State Court of Rockdale County, was awarded the Task Force Member of the Year Award by Judge Jeanette Little (right), State Court of Troup County. Also pictured is Mr. Bob Bray, Executive Director, Council of State Court Judges.

the domestic violence movement, technology safety for victims, and the fatality review process.

Judge Nancy Bills, State Court of Rockdale County, received the Task Force Member of the Year award from Judge Jeannette L. Little, State Court of Troup County. Mr. Bob Bray, Executive Director of the Council of State Court Judges, also praised the recipient. "Judge Bills is one of the hardest working state court judges in Georgia with a caseload that would support two full-time judges. Even so, she still finds time to operate an Accountability

Court, work with community groups, and be involved in many critical Council of State Court Judges committees – all to improve the quality of justice delivered to the citizens of her community and the State."

Also recognized at the awards luncheon were Ms. Shelley Senterfitt, **Gender Justice Award**; the Cherokee Domestic Violence Task Force, **Task Force of the Year**; and Ms. Angela Tuck, **Responsible Coverage Award**.

The Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) is a state agency that was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1992 to develop a comprehensive state plan for ending family violence in Georgia. GCFV

works throughout the state to help create and support task forces made up of citizen volunteers working to end domestic violence in their communities. In addition, GCFV provides training about domestic violence, monitors legislation and other policy impacting victims of domestic violence, certifies all of Georgia's Family Violence Intervention Programs, and co-coordinates the statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project. ❧

Newly Required Income Withholding Order Form to be Used In All Child Support Cases

In any child support case in which an income withholding order is applicable, the form of the order must follow as mandated by Sections 466 of the Social Security Act and state law (see OCGA § 19-6-31 et al.).

The mandate applies regardless if it is a private case or a Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) action. Sections 466(a)(1), (a)(8) and 466 (b)(6)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act require states to use the federally approved Income Withholding for Support with Child Support Order form initially issued on or after January 1, 1994. State statute (OCGA §19-6-32(b)) incorporates the federal requirement.

The Office of Management and

Budget released a revised “federal income withholding for support (IWO)” form on May 31, 2011. The revised Social Security Acts sets forth repercussions if the revised IWO is not used.

Training

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) held an Employer Symposium on Child Support in Atlanta on August 3-4, 2011. Judicial representatives, business practitioners, leading executives, payroll professionals, and state and federal child support program professionals, attend the symposium to identify short and long term solutions to topics of mutual concern

such as:

- Recent revisions to the Income Withholding for Support Order (IWO),
- Electronic business practices, including electronic income withholding orders (e-IWO), e-payments, and automating the National Medical Support Notice,
- Improving communications between stakeholders,
- Reporting and withholding form lump sum payments, and
- New business trends.

For more information including the form (OMB 0970-0154), instructions, and FAQs: www.acf.hhs.gov 

Directory Corrections

Superior Courts

Towaliga Judicial Circuit
Judge William A. Fears
wafearsjudge@gmail.com

Senior Judges

Add: Judge M. Russell Carlisle
1817 Wilkenson Crossing
Marietta, GA 30066
770-499-7774
russellcarlisle@att.net

State Courts

Chatooga County
Judge Sam Finster, Sr.
50 NW Congress Street
Summerville, GA 30747

Juvenile Courts

Enotah Judicial Circuit
Delete: David Turk

Add: Gerald Bruce
325 Riley Road, Room 223
Dahlonega, GA 30533
706-865-1880/F 866-935-7090

Special Courts

Recorder's Court of DeKalb County
Add: Judge Stanley Baum
4951 Lakeland Wood Court
Dunwoody, GA 30038
404-262-6272/F 846-9164

Judge Charles L. Webb
2900 Chamblee Tucker Road, Building 1
Atlanta, GA 30341
404-316-7551

Municipal Courts

Davisboro
Add: Judge Matthew Waters
8653 S. Marcus Street
Davisboro, GA 31096

Forsyth

Delete: Judge William M. Clifton

Add: Chief Judge J. Kristi Lovelace
PO Box 1447
Forsyth, GA 31029
478-994-5649/F 993-1002

Social Circle

Delete: Judge Rebecca P. Dally

Add: Judge Jeffery L. Foster
PO Box 710
Monroe, GA 30655
770-267-8988/F 267-8978

Summerville

Judge Sam Finster, Sr.
50 NW Congress Street
Summerville, GA 30747

Warner Robins

Add: Judge Pamela M. Spencer
2517 Moody Road
Warner Robins, GA 31005
478-329-0742

Juvenile Court Administrator

Chatham County
Add: Adam Kennedy

The AOC Portal: What Can It Do For You?

Have you heard of “the Portal”? Not some video game or gateway to outer space, the AOC Portal is the dynamic, user-friendly interface that the AOC’s Information Technology Division (IT) created to facilitate data exchange between our customers and the AOC. Envisioned by Mr. Jorge Basto, IT Division Director, the Portal is a tool that increases efficient and accurate communication among judges, clerks, and the AOC.

“We are a people business and the Portal is a tool to keep us more in tune with our customers,” said Mr. Basto. “We are gathering information already collected and stored by our agency, clerks, and judges and transforming it into a usable, electronic, 24/7 tool.” The Portal is one way for the AOC to become more customer focused. “Customer relationship management is not an option in the corporate world; it is essential. The Portal will help us better serve our judges and clerks,” said Mr. Basto.

Portal Beginnings

The Portal is still in its infancy. In 2010, the AOC Communications section began using the Portal to collect information from judges, clerks, court administrators, and other court personnel for use in updating the *Georgia Courts Directory*. Directory Verification Postcards were again used in conjunction with the Portal in 2011; however, in coming years, the AOC hopes to go digital with the entire verification process.



myaocportal.georgiacourts.gov

The Portal is not only used for the *Directory*. The Research section of the AOC is now encouraging clerks to submit their case counts to the AOC through the Portal. Mr. Basto discussed the benefits, “Instead of traveling across Georgia to count cases, Research staff now logs in to SSCIS (State and Superior Court Information System) and retrieves the most up-to-date information whenever they need it.”

In 2010, 480 users registered with the Portal. So far this year, 619 users have registered.

Upcoming Ventures for the Portal

In the future, the AOC plans to use the portal as a self-service, dynamic information site. For 2012, the AOC looks to add many helpful features to the Portal including: continuing education credit information from ICJE, regulatory directories for certified court interpreters and court reporters, an online *Courts Directory*, and a news feed about the Georgia judiciary. The Portal will also allow AOC staff to quickly compile relevant information about every circuit in Georgia with the click of a button.

The AOC is currently working on enhancements such as Portal personalization, aesthetic changes, and performance. “The idea is for the Portal to become a customized site for judges and clerks, somewhat like a personalized Yahoo! homepage. We want to get to you the information you want in the most efficient manner.” We hope you will join us on the Portal!

How Does the Portal Work?

Portal registration is based on the E-mail addresses the AOC has in its database. If you cannot register because the AOC database does not have your current or correct E-mail address, contact us at 404-656-5171 or publications@gaaoc.us.

1. Register at:
myaocportal.georgiacourts.gov
Type in your e-mail address; an E-mail will be sent to you enabling you to start the registration process.
2. Once you have logged-in to the Portal, check your information. Depending on your role, you can view caseload data and/or verify your contact and personal information. If you have multiple roles, be sure to check each role for accuracy.
3. Once you have made a change, your data is changed automatically and the appropriate AOC staff member is notified.
4. Have a question? Click the appropriate e-mail address at the top of the page. ✍

Senior Judge John E. Girardeau Inducted into the Drug Court Professionals Hall of Fame

Senior Judge John E. Girardeau was inducted into the Stanley Goldstein Drug Court Hall of Fame on Wednesday, July 20, 2011, in Washington, D.C. by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP).

Over 10 years ago, Judge Girardeau became frustrated by what he observed in Georgia's criminal justice system. Specifically, he saw that nothing was working to curtail drug crimes and drug addiction. He found himself repeatedly dealing with the same individuals, and in some cases, with multiple generations of families whose involvement with the courts was due to drug-related crimes.

In 2000, Judge Girardeau decided enough was enough. He formed the Drug Court Steering Committee in Hall County, and in February of the next year the Hall County Drug Court took in its first participant.

Today, the Hall County Drug Court is in its tenth year of operation and has had 368 graduates. It serves as a mentor court and is seen as a model throughout the United States and the world. As one of the

founding members of the Judicial Council Standing Committee on Drug Courts, Judge Girardeau was influential in the establishment of legislation for drug courts in Georgia. Such legislation provided a firm, legal basis for the drug court movement to expand across the state. This legislation provides the foundation on which new courts can get started as well as legit-

imizing drug courts as a division of Superior Courts allowing state and federal funding to be solicited.

He was instrumental in the development of the Dawson County Treatment Court, the first hybrid DUI/Drug Court in Georgia, which opened in September 2006. Additionally, his vision inspired the creation of Hall County's DUI Court, Mental Health Court, Family Treatment Court, and Parental Accountability Court, as well as the formation of Friends of Recovery, a non-profit organization which supports the treatment courts and participants in the Northeastern Judicial Circuit.

"Judge Girardeau has made an indelible mark on Georgia's criminal justice system," said NADCP CEO West Huddleston. "His foresight and dedica-



Judge Girardeau founded the Hall County Drug Court in 2001 and has been instrumental in the creation of other Accountability Courts in Georgia.

tion has been a catalyst for drug court expansion in his circuit and across Georgia. In the

11 years since Judge Girardeau helped create the Hall County Drug Court, 52 other drug, DUI, juvenile, and family dependency courts have started in Georgia with more to come. Numerous lives and families have been saved and will continue to be positively impacted by his tremendous dedication and public service. It is a great honor to include Judge John Girardeau in the Stanley Goldstein Drug Court Hall of Fame."

Since the program's inception in early 2001, the Hall County Drug Court's retention rate is 91%. Drug Court estimates an annual taxpayer savings of \$310,500 in comparison to incarceration. ✍



Judge Girardeau, right, was inducted into the Stanley Goldstein Drug Court Hall of Fame by NADCP CEO West Huddleston.