

The Official Newsletter
of the Georgia Council
of Probate Court Judges

2013
News
Winter Edition

Volume 19, Number 1

The Gavel



COURT NEWS!

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Dear *Judges*

It's a new day for the Council of Probate Court Judges...a new year, a new term...a new ERA! Our family lost many of our long serving judges during this past term, who brought great history and knowledge to this family of Probate Court Judges. We have many new faces to welcome into our family. I encourage each of you to reach out to all of our new judges with a welcoming heart. I encourage each of you new judges to get involved in the working of the Council of Probate Court Judges by attending a district meeting as a start. I also want to encourage the new judges to read and study your benchbook and handbook. You may have taken the New Judges Orientation but it is your responsibility and I believe your duty as an elected official to educate yourself as much as possible.

With much love, I wish you all a Happy New Year!

Mary Jo Buxton, Judge

Johnson County Probate Court
Wrightsville, Georgia

PRESIDENT
MESSAGE FROM THE



FROM THE EDITOR

The new judge orientation and training in Athens this past November was very well done. Missy Tolbert of the ICJE, Hon. Lynwood Jordan of Forsyth Co., Hon. Tammy Brown of Barrow Co., Hon. Keith Wood of Cherokee Co., Hon. Kelley Powell of Henry Co., Hon. Robert B. Struble, Atty. Rich Reaves of the ICJE, Ms. Jennifer Ammons of DDS, Hon. David Hobby of Ben Hill Co., Atty. David Quilliams, Hon. Laverne Ogletree of Greene Co., Hon. Jason Harper, Ms. Deborah Aderhold of Vital Records of Ga., CPCJ President Hon. Mary Jo Buxton of Johnson Co., and the staff from AOC and ICJE all contributed to an informative and valuable educational session.

While buoyed by the arrival of our new judges we also note the retirement and passing of many of our more experienced and long-serving judges. We applaud and salute those who are leaving our ranks through retirement and wish them the best in their new endeavors. To say we will miss you is an extreme understatement. To those joining us, we welcome you and offer our hands to help. Many of our retiring judges will continue to be resources for us all as they join the ranks of Senior Judges.

Many thanks to the various contributors to this issue of *The Gavel* especially given our shortened submission time.

The goal of *The Gavel* is to provide you with valuable information concerning the Council of Probate Court Judges. Special thanks is due to LaShawn Murphy of the AOC for her assistance with the newsletter. If you have an interest or question for us to address please let us know by contacting me at candlerprobate@gmail.com

Respectfully,

Judge Tony Thompson
Candler County Probate Court
Editor, *The Gavel*



The 2012-2013 Officers of the CPCJ from left to right: Judge Darin McCoy (Evans Co.) Secretary-Treasurer; Judge Kelley Powell (Henry Co.) President-Elect; Judge Mary Jo Buxton (Johnson Co.) President; Judge L. Chase Daughtrey (Cook Co.) First Vice President

2012 -2013
CPCJ
Officers

CPCJ OFFICERS

Prosecutors in Probate Courts:

“Council Seeks Legislation to Clarify the Statute”

by:

L. Chase Daughtrey
Cook County Probate Court

In recent years, many municipal courts and probate courts have been looking for new methods to streamline their court operations in an effort to make their courts more effective and more efficient. One of those areas has been in the area of prosecuting the traffic and criminal cases in the respective courts.

In O.C.G.A. 40-13-21(c), the statute allows the probate court judge, upon his or her own motion, to request the assistance of the district attorney to prosecute cases in their court if there is no state court in their county. The statute does not address what the procedures are if the district attorney chooses not to assist the probate court.

On May 18, 2001, the Attorney General’s office issued Unofficial Opinion U2001-2 in regards to a request from the Oconee County Board of Commissioners asking for clarity if they chose to hire a private prosecutor for their probate court. The unofficial opinion stated, “Having examined the local laws enacted for Oconee County by the General Assembly and having found nothing that would prohibit the proposed action of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners, it is my opinion that, in a misdemeanor traffic case before the Oconee County Probate Court where the probate judge either has not requested the assistance of the district attorney or has requested assistance but the district attorney

has refused to conduct the trial or to designate a member of his or her staff to conduct the trial, the Oconee Board of Commissioners would be free to provide an attorney to prosecute the case. It is also my opinion that, in a case under the jurisdiction of the probate court other than a misdemeanor traffic case, the board of commissioners would be free to provide an attorney to prosecute the case.”

Since this unofficial opinion was issued, many probate courts have coordinated through their local Boards of Commissioners to hire private prosecutors for their courts. Over the past decade, the municipal courts and the probate courts have felt that while this opinion provided them with the “permission” they needed to use private prosecutors when the district attorney could not assist, there still needed to be statutory language that gives the authority to hire private prosecutors and establish the procedure for such appointment.

During the 2012 Legislative Session, the General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 352, drafted by Senator John Crosby (R-Tifton) which laid out the provisions and procedures for establishing prosecuting attorneys in the municipal courts. The municipal courts, arguably found themselves in the same position as that of the probate courts when it came to private prosecuting attorneys. Also during the 2012 Legislative Session, Representative Penny

Houston (R-Nashville) introduced House Bill 1309 which laid the foundation for establishing prosecuting attorneys in the probate courts.

Since the conclusion of the 2012 Legislative Session, the Traffic Committee and the Legislative Committee of the Council of Probate Court Judges have been working with the Prosecuting Attorneys Council, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and the General Assembly to seek passage of legislation that would provide for prosecuting attorneys in the probate courts.

The draft version of the probate court legislation, which can be found on the Georgia Judicial Collaborative Services webpage: <https://jcc.gajudiciary.us/Login>, mirrors that of the municipal court legislation. The probate court legislation lays out the procedure for the appointment of a prosecutor if the district attorney is unable to assist. In short, if the district attorney is unable to assist, the governing authority of the county shall have the authority to hire a prosecuting attorney. The governing authority will also determine if the position should be full-time or part-time, if the position were to be full-time, then the attorney could not engage in the private practice of law. If the prosecuting attorney is part-time, the attorney can engage in

the private practice of law, but could not practice in the probate court or appear in any matter in which he or she has exercised jurisdiction as the prosecuting attorney.

The duties of a prosecuting attorney in the probate court will consist of representing the state on violations regarding traffic, fish and game, and etc in which the probate court has jurisdiction. Under the proposed legislation, the prosecuting attorney can also prosecute any weapons carry license revocation or denial pursuant to O.C.G.A. §16-11-129(e) in the probate court. The compensation of the prosecuting attorney will also be set by the governing authority of the county. The probate courts and their respective counties would be bound by this legislation unless otherwise provided by local law.

The Council intends to make the prosecutors legislation one of its top priorities during the 2013 Legislative Session. Currently, there is discussion from stakeholders involved with Title 40 Reform that the best course of action would be to encompass this legislation with a broader piece of legislation that is expected to come from a study committee out of the House of Representatives.



“Hot Topics In Weapons And Mental Health”

by:
Judge Susan Tate
Clarke County Probate Court

As people across the country search for reasonable, common sense responses to the recent tragedy in Newtown, it's a good time to reflect on whether any of the emerging issues in Georgia will be ones we as probate judges may want to weigh in on, and if so, which ones. As in the past, I am sure there will be controversy over some, such as carry policies, concerning which we have no official role and about which we historically take no position on either way.

In Georgia, a statewide ban on assault weapons or high capacity magazines is extremely unlikely. I would not anticipate this idea gaining any traction in the legislature, even if it were to be proposed in some quarters. We will certainly see a renewed fight to allow guns on college campuses, and it would not surprise me if such a measure were to pass. Although the debate about churches will probably also resurface, this issue doesn't seem to arouse the passion that surrounds the freedom to carry on our urban campuses.

I believe we will also see much debate about placing armed guards in schools for minors, and people volunteering to perform that function. I've already had one letter from a retired police officer who proposes that former or retired police officers and military personnel be trained and certified to be volunteer school guards. I would be interested in

knowing whether other judges have received any similar communications. This idea should be approached cautiously, in my opinion, and by others with more expertise. I am referring my inquirer to our local police chief, who, by the way, has forwarded to me a position paper of the International Association of Chiefs of Police on various topics in a comprehensive approach which seems to me to be quite sensible.

The main areas in which we should have a voice, I submit, have to do with (1) tightening background check requirements, (2) instituting a “rap back” provision (weapons carry license holders who have become ineligible by virtue of arrest, hospitalization, etc. would be reported to a statewide database and subsequently to the court which issued the license), and (3) filling gaps in the reporting of people who are prohibited from eligibility for mental health reasons.

While I think many gun owners and advocates would support legislation to require checks on all sales at gun shows, I expect a vigorous resistance to the idea of background checks on every transfer. Extending background checks to include all private sales is something I think gun safety advocates will push hard for, so a big fight may be looming on this front. To a number of us in the council as well as law enforcement and the judicial system as a whole, having a

rap back system mandated by law has long been a crucial missing feature of our weapons licensing laws. Now that we have the technical capability to easily implement such a system, and there is more political awareness that current law do not go far enough to protect public safety, this would be the ideal time to propose this change. It appears obvious to me that we should also work with various entities, including the GBI, DBHDD and others, to help identify the gaps in our mental health reporting and fix them. I would anticipate support for this idea from all sides.

A fourth possible idea involves the need to actually use involuntary outpatient treatment as one along a continuum of tools available to provide much needed (and neglected) mental health treatment and supportive services, when appropriate. Think about all those you have for whom you have issued multiple orders to apprehend for an involuntary evaluation: would you want any of them to be able to obtain a weapons carry license? Yet they are eligible to possess weapons and be issued a license unless they have been ordered to receive treatment. In my individual opinion, the hesitation of the DBHDD and other mental health professionals to use this tool when nothing else has worked creates a public safety risk in those instances in which the person is clearly on a downhill slide to a psychotic break or to becoming a danger to themselves or others, yet are unwilling to engage in treatment.

We must stress that this tool should only be used as a last resort, but the truth is that mandated intervention in these cases at these times serves both the patient and the public. We could expect serious pushback on this from roughly half the mental health advocates in the state and widespread support

from the other half. Consequently, this idea might better be broached in individual conversations rather than as a body, so as not to further widen the schism in Georgia between these two groups, but my thinking may well evolve on the best strategy, should we agree here.



Press Release by the Executive Committee

*Council of Probate Court Judges of Georgia
November 30, 2012*

By:
Judge Lynwood Jordan
Forsyth County Probate Court

All Probate Courts in the State of Georgia perform the same fundamental duties assigned by law¹; however, individual Probate Courts may be assigned additional duties as local judges and governing authorities deem best to serve their individual county's constituents most effectively and efficiently.

In a great number of Georgia Counties, the local Probate Judge and local Governing Authority have determined that the county's citizens can be served best if the Probate Judge serves as the local official to enforce the Federal and Georgia election laws and conduct the local elections. For the enforcements of the many elections laws, training of local election workers, supervising the local elections, and bearing the responsibility of elections being properly conducted, the Probate Judge is compensated in an additional amount of \$323.59 per month (\$3,883.08 annually).² Of course, there are many other expenses which vary with population. As a county's population increases, the election burdens likewise increase, and at some point the Probate Judge ceases to supervise elections, separate officers and boards are created to supervise elections, and the financial burdens likewise increase.

In many Georgia Counties, the local constituents feel that the Probate Judge should preside over

traffic cases. The Probate Judges in those counties receive an additional \$404.41 per month (\$4,852.92 annually)³ for performing those additional duties. As with the conduct of elections, population increases over time often result in the transfer of traffic jurisdiction to another court in the county, but, again, with vastly increasing cost.

In other counties, the Probate Judge and local authorities conclude that their constituents can best be served by the Probate Judge also performing the duties of Magistrate or Chief Magistrate. The imposition of these additional duties is accomplished by local legislation and, not surprisingly, these additional duties engender additional compensation which is specified in the local legislation; however, in 2002, the legislature established a minimum additional annual salary for the Probate Judge serving as Magistrate or Chief Magistrate, that being \$11,642.54,⁴ for the performance of the additional duties.

In many counties, the local officials determine that greater efficiencies and constituent services may be obtained by the designation of the Probate Judge as the local vital records official. Local vital records officials are appointed by the state registrar.⁵ The local registrar receives fees in specific amounts for each document issued⁶; however, it was determined in the mid-1990's that efficiencies

cont. pg 11

and constituent and taxpayer benefits would be obtained by empowering local governing authorities to set the compensation for the additional duties⁷ where the Probate Judge is the local vital records official. Therefore, in 1997, the local officials were empowered (absent a different agreement or a local law), to set a compensation limit for the performance of these addition duties of \$7,500.⁸ The Association of County Commis-

sioners of Georgia has published a suggested form resolution to effect the provisions of this statute. This approach comports with the flexibility and local control inherent in all of the above references.



¹ E.g., Exercising original and exclusive jurisdiction over decedents' estates, guardianships and conservatorships for both minors and incapacitated adults, compromises of claims for non-sui juris persons; ordering evaluations of adults; determining funeral arrangements in certain circumstances; determining whether life-sustaining treatments should be imposed; issuing marriage licenses and weapons carry licenses; and, many other ministerial and judicial duties.

² Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 15-9-64.

³ Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 15-9-64

⁴ Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 15-9-63.1

⁵ Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 31-10-6.

⁶ Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 31-10-8

⁷ The additional requirements and duties are partly found in The Georgia Administrative Code, Chapter 290-1-3.

⁸ Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 15-9-58

IN MEMORIAM: JUDGE GREG ADAMS

by:
Judge Darin McCoy,
Evans County Probate Judge

In Our Thoughts..



The late Judge Greg Adams (middle) receiving his 30 year ICJE certificate in 2010. Pictured here with the late Judge Pat Hardaway, Columbia County (left) and Judge Helen Harper, Laurens County (right).

Judge Adams grew up in Monroe, Georgia and attended Jacksonville State in Jacksonville, Alabama, where he played football. He and some other football players were in an automobile accident during his sophomore year. Greg's neck was broken, resulting in his being confined to a wheel chair and with only slight use of his arms.

Judge Adams served as Walton County Probate Court Judge from January 1, 1981 until his death on December 26, 2012 after 32 years of service. Judge Adams chose not to seek re-election during the 2012 election cycle. Here are a few comments from his fellow judges:

"Judge Adams was a respected and honorable Judge and even a better man. He will be missed and may God rest his soul and my prayers go out to his staff, wife and family."

Judge Donald Boyd
Troup County

"Just watching him across the training room was encouraging as he set an example of how we all should handle any challenges we may face. We never know how in passing we may touch someone's life and I feel sure that he touched many in endless positive ways!

God Bless a truly awesome man and a great Judge!"

Judge Terri Adams
Lowndes County

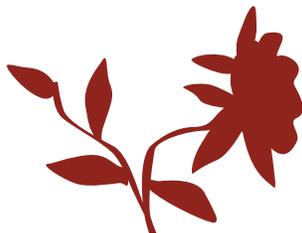
In Our Thoughts...
Judge Greg Adams cont.

Obituary

Walton County Probate Judge H. Greg Adams, age 68, died December 26, 2012. He was born in Walton County on December 5, 1944, to Grady and Evelyn Towler Adams. His parents preceded him in death. Surviving are his wife Judy Johnston Adams; sister and brother-in-law Mindy and Chris Dorn; brothers and sisters-in-law Tony and Sharon Adams and Dexter and Kelley Adams; sisters and brothers-in-law Jane and T.S. McFerrin and Kaye and Donny Parker; several nephews and nieces.

Visitation was held on January 5, 2013 in the Probate Courtroom in the Walton County Government Building on Hammond Dr, Monroe, GA. His memorial service was held on January 6, 2013, at The Lighthouse World Outreach Center in Monroe, GA.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church kitchen fund, Walton County Special Olympics or F.I.S.H



“NEW DEATH REGISTRATION MODULE COMING SOON”

by:
Judge Darin McCoy,
Evans County Probate Court

The State Vital Records Office is currently doing UAT (user acceptance testing) on the new death module and plan to send out a training schedule sometime in February with the intent of “going live” on 4/1/13. This project has been delayed for several months due to hardware issues, but they are working long and hard to make this deadline.

All of the county Vital Records Offices will be notified by email and USPS, but the registration will be handled electronically and the training delivered via webinars. Although the system is very similar to VEIS, there will be some subtle differences addressed in the training, so it is essential that all users attend.

The webinars will only be 90 minutes long and can only accommodate approximately 20 lines (telephone and internet) per session. It is possible, if you have a projector and speaker phone, for several people in one location to view the session at the same time, or for 2-3 people to gather around a computer, but you would need to be able to see the monitor. The sessions are specific to the type of user, so there will be different sessions for the funeral homes and medical folks.

Look for more information on this new system coming soon.

“SAVE THE DATES!”

CPCJ Executive Committee Mtg	February 19, 2013	Westin Peachtree Plaza, Atlanta, GA
2013 Judges Courses	Dates	Location
Probate Judge Mentor Training	March 6	Georgia Center, Athens
PJTC Meeting	April 18	Georgia Center, Athens
CPCJ Executive Committee Mtg	April 15	Georgia Center, Athens
Probate Court Judges Spring Seminar	April 16-18	Georgia Center, Athens
Probate Court Judges Traffic	April 18 – 19	Georgia Center, Athens
South Georgia Training	August 1	UGA Conference Center, Tifton
North Georgia Training	August 6	Georgia Center, Athens
COAG Fall Conference – Probate Judges	October 8-10	Hyatt Riverfront, Savannah
2013 Probate Clerks Courses		
Probate Court Clerks Traffic	June 13	UGA RDC Conf. Center, Tifton
Probate Court Clerks Licenses, Wills & Estates, Guardianships	June 27	Holiday Inn, Gainesville
Probate Court Clerks Traffic	July 11	KSU Conf. Center, Kennesaw
Probate Court Clerks Licenses, Wills & Estates, Guardianships	July 17	GSU Conf. Center, Statesboro
Probate Court Clerks Licenses, Wills & Estates, Guardianships	August 8	CSU Conf. Center, Columbus
Georgia Elections Officers Association	May 5-8	Savannah Riverfront Marriott

SAVE THE DATES

2012 New Judges Orientation class



Photograph of the 2012 New Judges Orientation class at the University of Georgia during the week of instruction conducted by the Probate Judges Training Council of Georgia and the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education of Georgia.

Swearing in... **Judge Sarah S. Harris, Bibb County Probate**

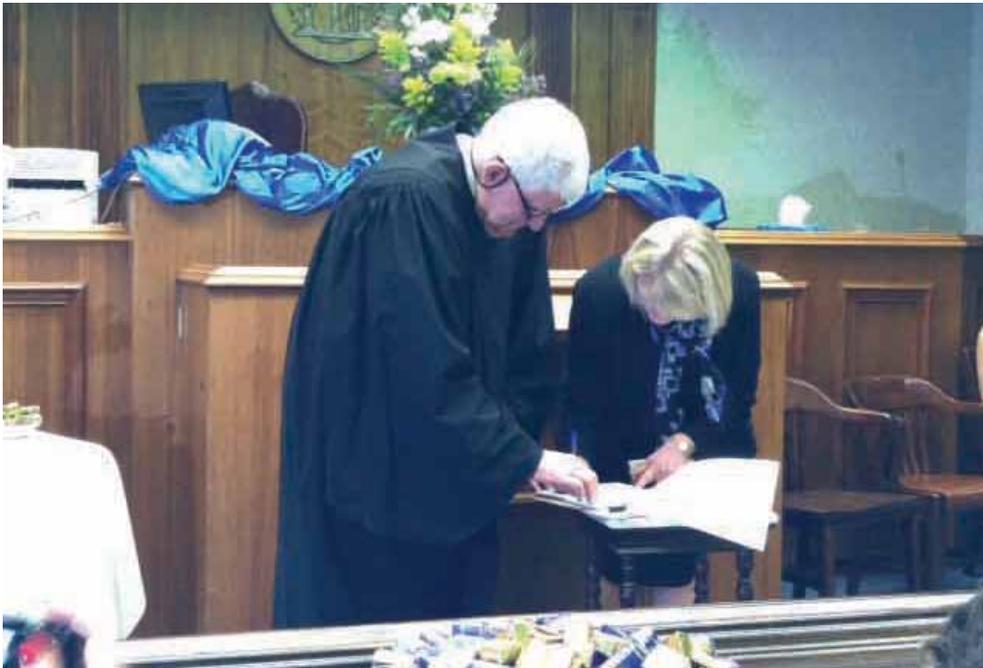


Judge William Self, II (predecessor) giving the invocation at the swearing in ceremony. Left, Judge Sarah S. Harris.

Swearing in...
Judge Sarah S. Harris cont.

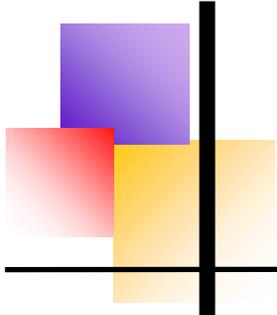


Chief Judge S. Phillip Brown (Macon Judicial Circuit) administering the oath of office to Judge Elect Sarah S. Harris.



Judge Harris signing the Oath pictured with Chief Judge Brown.

SWEARING IN



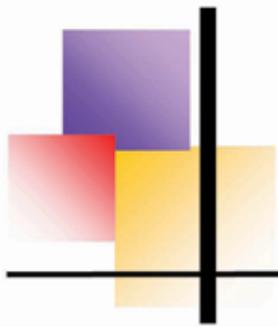
LEGISLATIVE/LEADERSHIP
CONFERENCE



February 19-20, 2013

Westin Peachtree Plaza
210 Peachtree St NE
Atlanta, GA





INFORMATION

Registration

Registration Fees for the Conference are as follows:

Full Registration—\$125 - Includes: Tuesday break, breakfast Wednesday and transportation to the Capitol Wednesday

Daily Registration—Tuesday —\$85

Cancellations made by February 12 will receive a refund minus \$35 administrative fee.

AGENDA

Tuesday, February 19

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm | COAG Registration |
| 9:00 am – 11:30 pm | Group Board Meetings |
| 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Legislative Process 101 |

What happens under the gold dome? What can you do to help the legislative process? Every year new legislation is created and old legislation can be brought back. Let's learn from seasoned constitutional officers how this process works and what you can do to help. We will hear from two of our veteran members and also learn about the current legislative issues that are being followed.

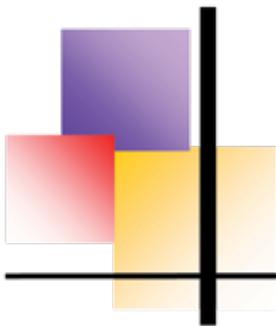
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|-----------------|---------------------|
| 4:00 pm—5:00 pm | Legislative Updates |
|-----------------|---------------------|

Wednesday, February 20

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 8:00 am – 8:30 am | COAG Continental Breakfast |
| 8:30 am | Transportation begins departing for the Capitol |

We will head to the Capitol to visit with your Legislators and employ some of the tips you learned the day before. You will be working with seasoned pros today as they guide you through the process. Be ready to make yourself known as a resource for your legislators.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 12:30 pm – 5:00 pm | COAG Board of Directors Meeting |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|



REGISTRATION

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. COPY FORM FOR EACH PERSON REGISTERING.

<input type="checkbox"/> Clerk	Name	County
<input type="checkbox"/> Probate	Address	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sheriff	Address	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tax	City/ Zip Code	Email Address
	Phone	Fax

Registration Fee	
Please choose from the following options:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Registration, February 19-20, 2013—\$125	
<input type="checkbox"/> I will ride the bus on Thursday to the Capitol	
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily Registration, February 19, 2013—\$85	\$
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	
	\$

Mail with payment to: COAG Legislative/Leadership Conference, PO Box 1644, Decatur, GA 30031 or Fax to 404-378-7831

Please make checks payable to *Constitutional Officers' Association of Georgia, Inc.*

Cancellations made by February 12, receive refund minus \$35 administrative fee.

Hotel Reservations
Room Rates: \$139 King or Double Beds
Hotel Reservations can be made by calling 800-937-8461. You will need to tell them our code, which is Constitutional Officers' Association of Georgia or COAG, to get our rate. Reservations may also be made online. Go to the http://tinyurl.com/COAG2013 to make your reservation.
Reservations must be made by January 30, 2013. If they tell you the block is full, please call the office and we will help you get a room.
In the event you need to cancel, you must contact the hotel 24 hours in advance to avoid a one-night no show charge.

National College of Probate Judges

300 Newport Avenue
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147

www.ncpj.org

Membership Application

Name: _____

Title: _____

Court Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Email Address: _____

Court Website: _____

Elected Appointed

Term Length: _____ Expires: _____

(if applicable): General jurisdiction court with probate division. Membership will be personal court.

Bar Admissions/Year: _____

Jurisdiction (Check all that apply):

- Decedents' Estates
- Trusts
- Adult Guardianship/Conservatorship
- Minor Guardianship/Conservatorship
- Domestic Relations
- Child Custody
- Adoptions
- Neglect/Deprivation/Delinquency of Juveniles
- Civil Commitment (Mental Illness/Drug Addiction or Abuse)
- Criminal Jurisdiction: _____
- Elections
- Vital Records
- Licenses/Registrations/Taxes
 - Marriage Licenses
 - Automobile Tags/Taxes
 - Firearms Carry Permits
 - Fireworks Display Permits
 - Other: _____

Other: _____

Optional: (Not disseminated publicly)

Spouse: _____

Home address: _____

Personal email: _____

Home telephone: _____

Memberships/Dues:

- Regular \$150/year
- Jud. Position \$150/year
- Group \$135/year/member
- Associate \$75/year
- Retired \$70/year
- Life \$1,000 one payment
- Professional \$150/year

Membership Categories:

Regular Membership - any judge, former judge, retired judge, judge-elect, surrogate, registrar, chief clerk, or any duly appointed referee, magistrate, commissioner, chief administrative officer or other designated judicial officer exercising probate jurisdiction; includes Group Memberships, Life Memberships, Judicial Position Memberships, and Honorary Memberships. **Group Membership** rate applies if more than 50% of a state's probate judges apply for membership at the same time.

Judicial Position Membership - is for general jurisdiction courts where judges rotate, however often, through probate jurisdiction. Regular membership is offered to the Court, with the membership being filled or represented by whichever judge is, during the term of the membership, serving in the probate division.

Professional Membership - any attorney, law professor, financial advisor, conference exhibitor and/or sponsor, law firm, corporation, trust, bank or trust company officer, foundation or association.

Associate Membership - court personnel, staff and others having an interest in probate matters. Associate Membership dues are \$75 annually.

Retired Membership is available only to those who have held Regular Membership in NCPJ and who are retired from the position.

Only those holding Regular Membership, including those in the subcategories of Regular Membership, may vote or hold office in the NCPJ; Professional and Associate Members may serve on Committees by appointment.

Please print and complete application; mail application and dues to: National College of Probate Judges, 300 Newport Avenue, Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147

Judicial Council of Georgia
Administrative Office of the Courts
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Atlanta, GA 30334
404-656-5171 • www.georgiacourts.gov