

Supreme Court makes appointments to Complaint Tribunal, CLE Commission and Rules Advisory Committee

January 11, 2007

The Mississippi Supreme Court today announced appointments to three entities which work to improve the administration of justice.

Supreme Court Chief Justice James W. Smith Jr. on Jan. 10 and 11 signed orders making new appointments as well as reappointing members to the Bar Complaint Tribunal, the Commission on Continuing Legal Education and the Advisory Committee on Rules.

Bar Complaint Tribunal

New appointees to the Bar Complaint Tribunal include Chancery Judge Kenneth M. Burns of Okolona and Chancery Judge Randy G. Pierce of Pascagoula.

Supreme Court Justice Chuck Easley nominated Judge Burns for a term that will run through Jan. 1, 2010. Supreme Court Justice Oliver E. Diaz Jr. nominated Judge Pierce for a term that will run through Jan. 1, 2009. Members serve staggered terms.

Members who were reappointed include attorneys Felicia Dunn Burkes of Gulfport, Mark A. Nelson of Hattiesburg, Ron G. Peresich of Biloxi, James R. Reeves of Biloxi, Lisa M. Ross of Jackson, and Ronnie L. Walton of Meridian.

Members of the Complaint Tribunal hear and decide disciplinary matters arising out of complaints against attorneys. Decisions from the Complaint Tribunal may be appealed to the Mississippi Supreme Court. Actions by the Complaint Tribunal are final if not appealed.

The 27-member Complaint Tribunal is made up of nine judges and 18 lawyers selected by the nine members of the Supreme Court from three Supreme Court districts. The Complaint Tribunal sits in panels of three, with each panel comprised of two attorneys and one judge.

Commission on Continuing Legal Education

Biloxi attorney Gerald H. Blessey is the new appointee to the Commission on Continuing Legal Education. Supreme Court Justice Jess H. Dickinson nominated Blessey to a term which runs through July 31, 2009.

Three other members were reappointed to the Commission on Continuing Legal Education. They are attorneys Peter Abide of Biloxi, Elizabeth Lee Maron of Jackson, and Selene D. Maddox of Tupelo.

Each of the nine justices of the Mississippi Supreme Court appoints a member to the Commission on Continuing Legal Education. Members serve staggered three-year terms.

The Commission on Continuing Legal Education has supervisory authority over continuing legal education requirements for lawyers in Mississippi. Each lawyer who practices in Mississippi must attend at least 12 hours of continuing legal education programs each year. The Commission accredits programs which may offer CLE credit. An administrative staff person for the Commission maintains records of CLE credit and tracks attorney compliance with CLE requirements.

Advisory Committee on Rules

Four new members have been appointed to the Advisory Committee on Rules. They are: Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter of Raymond, nominated by the Conference of Circuit Court Judges; Jackson County Court Judge T. Larry Wilson of Pascagoula, nominated by the Conference of County Court Judges; attorney Edward J. (Ned) Currie of Jackson, nominated by the Mississippi Defense Lawyers Association; and attorney Charles Ozier of Jackson, nominated by the Mississippi Bar.

The Supreme Court reappointed Court of Appeals Judge T. Kenneth Griffis of Ridgeland, who was nominated to another term by the Court of Appeals, and attorney C. Victor Welsh III of Jackson, who was nominated to another term by the Mississippi Trial Lawyers Association.

Their terms will run through Dec. 31, 2009.

The Supreme Court is the rule making authority for Mississippi courts. The Advisory Committee on Rules makes suggestions to the Supreme Court on the need for changes in the procedural rules that govern the handling of matters in various courts of the state. The committee was established by the Supreme Court in 1983 to advise the court on changes to the rules of practice, evidence and procedure.

The 16-member Advisory Committee on Rules includes two representatives each from the Conference of Chancery Court Judges, the Conference of Circuit Court Judges, the Mississippi Bar, the Mississippi Trial Lawyers Association and the Mississippi Defense Lawyers Association; and one member each from the Court of Appeals, the Conference of County Court Judges, the Mississippi College School of Law, the University of Mississippi School of Law, the Mississippi Prosecutors Association and the Mississippi Public Defenders Association.

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