

Investiture of Justice Kitchens is January 17 in Hazlehurst

January 12, 2009

An investiture ceremony for Mississippi Supreme Court Justice James W. Kitchens is scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17, 2009, at the Copleah County Courthouse in Hazlehurst. The public is invited.

Chief Justice William L. Waller Jr. of Jackson will welcome guests. Speakers will include U.S. Congressman Bennie G. Thompson and attorneys Kathryn N. Nester of Madison, Carlton Reeves of Jackson and Ronald L. Whittington of McComb. Justice Kitchens' son Daniel W. Kitchens will speak on behalf of the justice's family.

Retired Circuit Judge Joe N. Pigott of McComb, who continues to serve as a senior status judge, will administer the judicial oath to Justice Kitchens during the investiture.

Justice Kitchens took the oath of office Jan. 5 with three other justices of the Supreme Court in Jackson, and began his duties on the court. It is traditional to have a formal investiture ceremony, including a ceremonial administering of the oath, at a later time. Justice Kitchens chose to have his investiture in Copleah County, where he is a lifelong resident.

Justice Kitchens' wife, Mary T. Kitchens, will hold the Bible and assist Justice Kitchens in donning his judicial robe.

After taking the oath, Justice Kitchens will present the Bible to the Circuit Court of Copleah County for future ceremonial use at the courthouse. Circuit Judge Lamar Pickard of Hazlehurst will accept the Bible.

Copleah County Sheriff Harold Jones will open the proceedings and give the Pledge of Allegiance. Rev. Victor Dixon, president of the Copleah County Ministerial Alliance and pastor of Egypt Hill Missionary Baptist Church near Crystal Springs, will give the invocation. Justice Kitchens' pastor, Dr. Stanley Weatherford of First Baptist Church of Crystal Springs, will give the benediction.

Justice Kitchens, 65, was elected to an eight-year term on the Mississippi Supreme Court in November 2008. He previously served for nine years as district attorney for the circuit court district which at that time included Copleah, Lincoln, Pike and Walthall counties. He was first elected district attorney in 1971. He returned to private law practice. Three of his five children practiced law with him in Jackson before he joined the court.

Justice Kitchens graduated from Crystal Springs High School in 1961. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1964, and a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1967.

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