

Supreme Court appoints Special Judge for Hinds County

December 30, 2010

The Mississippi Supreme Court has appointed retired Hinds County Circuit Judge L. Breland Hilburn to assist the Seventh Circuit Court of Hinds County with its criminal case docket.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. signed an order Dec. 30, 2010, appointing Judge Hilburn to continue the work of the JET grant program, which was begun in 2008 to address violent and drug related crimes. The appointment is for a term beginning Jan. 4, 2011, and extending through October 31, 2011.

Funding will come from part of a grant provided by the federal Office of Justice Programs through the Mississippi Department of Public Safety Office of Public Safety Planning. The grant totaling \$2,048,976 includes funding for both law enforcement and the judiciary. The judicial component of the grant includes funding for judicial salaries, a court administrator, a court reporter, a clerical assistant, two assistant district attorneys and a public defender.

The new grant covers Nov. 1, 2010, through Oct. 31, 2011. While the grant is new, the funding allows the continuation of the Jackson Enforcement Team (JET), which began operation in 2008.

The Supreme Court in 2008 appointed Special Hinds County Circuit Court Judges William A. Gowan Jr. and Melvin V. Priester for terms beginning Aug. 1, 2008. Judge Gowan was elected in November 2010 to a position on the Hinds County Circuit Court, and Judge Priester was elected to the Hinds County Court. Both will be sworn in to their new elective offices Jan. 4, 2011.

The Supreme Court appointed Judge Hilburn to take over a Special Circuit Judge position for Hinds County.

Judge Hilburn has previously served by special appointment of the Supreme Court to assist in hearing criminal cases in Hinds County. He was first appointed as a special judge for Hinds County in July 2004, and continued to hear cases through March 2010.

Judge Hilburn retired from his elected judgeship May 31, 2002, after 30 years on the bench. He served as a Seventh District Circuit Judge from 1981 through 2002. He previously served as a Jackson Municipal Court Judge 1972-1978, then as a Hinds County Court Judge until 1981.

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