

Judge Virginia Carlton called to active duty with U.S. Army

February 24, 2010

Judge Virginia Carlton of the Mississippi Court of Appeals has been called to active military duty for approximately 90 days to serve with the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals in Alexandria, Va.

Judge Carlton reports to active duty March 1. She will be on an unpaid leave of absence from the Mississippi Court of Appeals March 1 until her return on May 31.

Judge Carlton will assist in the appellate review of active duty Army courts-martial.

Judge Carlton said, "I'm humbled that the active duty Army has called upon me to serve my country in this way with the active duty Army criminal appellate court. I am also humbled by the Army's confidence in me to activate me from the Mississippi National Guard to serve with active duty Army appellate judges to review active duty courts-martial. I'm honored to do my duty and to serve my country."

Judge Carlton in recent weeks has worked extremely hard to complete pending cases assigned to her on the Mississippi Court of Appeals. She will resume case assignments upon her return.

Judge Carlton will sit on a three-judge panel to hear appeals before the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals, which is a military intermediate appellate court. The panel is ordinarily made up of active duty judges from the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps. It is believed that this is the first time that a Mississippi National Guard JAG officer has been activated to sit on the Army appellate court.

Judge Carlton said, "Deployments in support of the global war on terrorism created a temporary staffing shortage on the Army's intermediate appellate court, and a backlog of cases resulted."

Judge Carlton, as an experienced JAG officer, possesses the court-martial experience and the appellate judicial experience needed to assist the Army on short notice. She stated that the three-month assignment will allow for timely review of appeals by soldiers in courts-martial, and will provide time for the active duty replacement to be selected, trained, and assigned.

Judge Carlton, of Columbia, has nearly 20 years of military experience and holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She has been selected for promotion to Colonel by a Department of the Army Promotion Board. Her promotion is expected to become effective later in March after she enters temporary active military duty.

Judge Carlton served on active duty with the U.S. Army 1990-1998. While on active duty, she served the military in various capacities including duties as a prosecutor and defense counsel in numerous courts-martial. After returning home to Mississippi, she then served in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1998-2007. She has served with the Mississippi National Guard since 2007.

Judge Carlton graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and then served as an instructor for the course. She was also selected for the U.S. Army War

College. She is certified as a military judge, having successfully completed the intensive military judge's course at The Judge Advocate General's School in Charlottesville, Va. She was also board selected to serve with the U.S. Army Reserve Judiciary with the 150th Legal Support Organization.

Judge Carlton joined the Mississippi Court of Appeals in January 2007. The Mississippi Legislature created the Court of Appeals in 1994 to speed appeals and relieve a backlog of cases. The Court of Appeals issues more than 500 written decisions on the merits each year. The state Supreme Court assigns cases to the Court of Appeals.

Judge Carlton previously served for three years in the House of Representatives from District 100, which includes Jefferson Davis, Lamar and Marion counties. She is a former assistant district attorney for the 15th Circuit Court District, and a former public defender.

Judge Carlton previously served as an adjunct professor at Mississippi College School of Law, and at Belhaven College in Jackson.

She earned her law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1989, where she served as a member of the Mississippi Law Journal, Moot Court Board and Phi Delta Phi legal fraternity. Judge Carlton is a fellow of the American Bar Association Foundation. She is a member of the National Association of Women Judges, and the American Judges Association. She serves on the Women in the Profession Committee and the Military Affairs Committee of the Mississippi Bar.

Judge Carlton is married to Dr. Scott Carlton, a former Army Special Forces medic and Army doctor. They have three children: Rachel, Read, and Phoebe.

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