

Investiture of Judge Eugene Fair is January 6 in Jackson

December 29, 2011

An investiture ceremony for Judge Eugene L. Fair Jr. of the Court of Appeals of the State of Mississippi is scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday, Jan. 6, 2012, at the Gartin Justice Building, 450 High Street in Jackson.

The investiture will be webcast on the State of Mississippi Judiciary web site, www.courts.ms.gov. Members of the bench, bar and the public are invited.

Gov. Haley Barbour appointed Judge Fair to the District 5, Place 1 seat on the Court of Appeals. Judge Fair will replace Judge William H. Myers, who is retiring Dec. 31. The appointment is for one year. A special election will be held in November 2012 in the Court of Appeals district which includes Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Pearl River, Perry, Stone and parts of Wayne counties.

Judge Fair, 65, of Hattiesburg, said, "I'm both honored and humbled by the appointment of the Governor."

Gov. Barbour, his Chief of Staff Paul A. Hurst III, and Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. will speak at the investiture. Former Mississippi Bar President George R. Fair, Judge Fair's brother, will speak and will introduce special guests. Court of Appeals Chief Judge L. Joseph Lee will preside over the investiture ceremony.

Senior U.S. District Judge William H. Barbour Jr. will administer the oath of office. Judge Fair's wife, Dr. Estella Galloway Fair, will assist with the enrobing.

Rev. Dr. Stephen Ramp, Judge Fair's pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, will give the invocation. Rev. Dr. John C. Dudley of Hattiesburg, Administrative Presbyter of the Presbytery of Mississippi and Judge Fair's former pastor, will give the benediction.

Judge Fair served for five years as a chancellor on the 10th Chancery Court. The district includes Forrest, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River and Perry counties.

Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Neville Patterson appointed him to the Mississippi Ethics Commission in 1984. Fair served on the commission for 20 years, including 19 years as vice-chair. He was board attorney for the Pat Harrison Waterway District 1988-1992.

Judge Fair grew up in Louisville. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Mississippi and a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

During college, he was editor of *The Mississippian* for two years, and wrote for the *Mississippi Law Journal*. He helped pay his way through college with freelance writing for newspapers. He began working as a newspaper stringer at age 15, calling in sports scores and writing obituaries. He did freelance work for the *Clarion-Ledger*, the now defunct *Jackson Daily News*, the *Meridian Star*, the Associated Press and United Press International.

He called his work as a news reporter and photographer "wonderful preparation to be a lawyer."

He helped screen and recommend lawyers to fill judicial vacancies as a member of Gov. William Winter's Judicial Nominating Committee. A similar group, Gov. Barbour's

Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee, recommended Fair to fill the vacancy on the Court of Appeals.

Fair ran unsuccessfully for election to the Supreme Court in 1988, and for the Court of Appeals in 1994. The 1994 race was for Position 1, District 5, the same position to which he has been appointed.

He said, "I have thought about it (serving on an appellate court) for a long time. My uncle was Supreme Court Justice Stokes V. Robertson Jr., and I was greatly influenced by his dedication and love of the law. My cousin Charles Fair, having the same characteristics, had a similar influence on me."

His grandfather, also named Stokes Robertson, served as the first member of the House of Representatives from Forrest County and as Clerk of the House for four years. He was also Revenue Agent of the state of Mississippi, a statewide elective office later renamed State Tax Collector and abolished when William Winter held the office.

His great-grandfather, G. C. Robertson, was the last Justice of the Peace of District 2, Perry County, before the county was split to form Perry and Forrest counties.

He served for four years on active duty with the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps during the Vietnam War, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander, and spent five years as a reservist in the Jackson Naval J.A.G. Reserve Unit.

He practiced law in Hattiesburg from October 1972 to December 2006. During that time, he tried cases in 57 courthouses across the state. He was admitted to practice law in all state courts, the U.S. District Courts for the Northern and Southern Districts of Mississippi, the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court of Texas and the U.S. Supreme Court.

He served on the Mississippi Supreme Court Committee on Technology in the Courts 1988-1990, and on the Judicial Advisory Study Committee Technology Consulting Group 1993-1994.

He served as treasurer, secretary, vice-president and president of both the Young Lawyers Section of the Mississippi Bar and the South Central Mississippi Bar Association. He held numerous leadership positions in the Mississippi Bar. He is a former member of the Board of Bar Commissioners, and is a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation and a Charter Fellow of the Young Lawyers.

He is a trustee, elder and Sunday School teacher at Westminster Presbyterian Church. He is a former chairman of deacons, and was church treasurer for 18 years.

He is an Eagle Scout.

He has two daughters and four grandchildren. Melissa Fair Wellons M.D. is assistant professor at the University of Alabama Birmingham (UAB) School of Medicine. Julia Fair Myrick is a screenwriter and producer in Pasadena, Calif.

The 10-member Court of Appeals of the State of Mississippi is the state's second-highest court. The Supreme Court assigns cases to the Court of Appeals, and has discretionary review of its decisions. The Legislature created the intermediate appellate court in 1993 to speed decisions and relieve a backlog of appeals. The Court of Appeals began hearing cases in 1995.

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