

Judge Carlton earns Master of Strategic Studies from U.S. Army War College

August 23, 2012

Court of Appeals Judge Virginia Carlton recently graduated from the U.S. Army War College.

Judge Carlton, who holds the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves, earned a Master of Strategic Studies degree. The U.S. Army War College awarded 349 degrees during a July 27 ceremony at Carlisle Barracks, Penn.

Judge Carlton said, "I think it will help me become a better officer, a better judge and a better citizen. Primarily I did it to expand my knowledge of the law."

Judge Carlton has served as a JAG officer in the Army for 22 years. She is now assigned to the U.S. Army Reserve judiciary as a Reserve judge. In fulfilling Army Reserve judicial duty and drill requirements, last year she assisted the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals with 22 criminal courts-martial cases on appeal and one court-martial trial.

Judge Carlton pursued the Master of Strategic Studies degree for the past two years through a distance learning curriculum. She juggled the course during available time in the evenings, weekends, and holidays, and she spent her two-week annual training time during the past two summers at the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Penn., completing the resident phases of curriculum.

Course work included studies in international relations; national security and national defense strategy including examination of applicable legal authorities; national defense theory including study of applicable domestic and international legal authorities; strategic management of military resources at the national level; rule of law initiatives internationally; and military assistance to civil authorities in support of disaster relief efforts.

While most of those who completed the course are preparing to be military commanders, "I don't have aspirations of trying to become a commander," Judge Carlton said. "I enjoy serving as a military judge, and as an appellate judge for Mississippi. I work hard to try to hone and perfect the art of judging and to expand my knowledge of the law."

As Judge Carlton was completing her studies, her husband was preparing for deployment to Kosovo. Lt. Col. Scott Carlton, M.D., is a family physician and serves as a medical officer in the Mississippi National Guard. He deployed Aug. 17 to provide medical support for on-going peace keeping operations and forces in Kosovo.

Judge Carlton's hometown is Columbia, and she resides in Jackson to be closer to the court. She has served on the Mississippi Court of Appeals since January 2007.

Judge Carlton's career has included active duty with the U.S. Army as well as stints in the U.S. Army Reserves and the Mississippi Army National Guard. During her previous active duty service from 1990-1998, she served as senior defense counsel, Fort Polk, Louisiana; chief of legal assistance, 25th Infantry Division (Light), Hawaii; U. S. Army Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, Hawaii; chief, administrative law, Hanau Legal Center, V Corps, Germany; chief of claims, Hanau Legal Center, V Corps, Germany; and military magistrate, Hanau Legal Center, V Corps, Germany.

In the U.S. Army Reserves, she held positions including Chief of Justice, 377th TSC, New Orleans; U.S. Army Command and General Staff College instructor, 11th Bn, 95th (Institutional Training) Division, Oklahoma City; Deputy SJA, 95th (Institutional Training) Division; and Staff Judge Advocate, 3rd Personnel Command, Jackson, Mississippi. In the Mississippi Army National Guard, she was assigned to the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Jt. Force Headquarters.

Judge Carlton's military awards and medals include six Meritorious Service Medals; four Army Commendation Medals; the National Defense Service Medal; two Overseas Service Ribbons; the Army Service Ribbon; Army Reserve Component's Achievement Medal (3rd award); Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with M device); and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. She also earned a foreign award, the German Military Sportsman Performance Badge (bronze) while serving on active duty overseas.

After discharge from active duty, Judge Carlton served as a public defender and then as an assistant district attorney in the 15th Judicial District in southwest Mississippi. She also worked with the Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center as a staff attorney and instructor.

She served in the Mississippi House of Representatives 2004-2006.

Judge Carlton has served as an adjunct professor at Mississippi College School of Law and at Belhaven University.

She currently serves on the Mississippi Commission on Children's Justice, where she leads a subcommittee which deals with education issues. She previously served on the study committee reviewing the Code of Judicial Conduct and on the study committee reviewing the state's domestic violence laws.

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