

## **Court of Appeals to convene at USM Oct. 4**

September 27, 2012

The Mississippi Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments on the campus of the University of Southern Mississippi at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Oct. 4. A three-member panel of the court will convene at the Thad Cochran Center at 118 College Drive in Hattiesburg.

The Court of Appeals periodically schedules oral arguments on college campuses and occasionally at other locations as a teaching tool for students. It is known as the Court on the Road program.

Court of Appeals Judge David M. Ishee of Gulfport said the program helps educate students and the public about a level of court proceedings which they otherwise would have little opportunity to see.

Judge Ishee said, "We think it's a great learning experience for the students. Pre-law students are the ones who show the most interest, but I think it's a great learning experience for everyone, just to show what the court does. Very few people have an opportunity to come to appellate courts unless they are a party, so this is a good opportunity for the general public to actually see what goes on."

The Court of Appeals began the Court on the Road program as a part of its regular calendar for oral arguments in 2005. Chief Judge Joe Lee this year increased the number of college campus and county courthouse visits. Judge Lee said, "It provides an opportunity for people to see what we do."

The court will convene on the campus of Mississippi Valley State University Oct. 9. A three-judge panel will hear oral arguments at Mississippi State University on Nov. 13. The court convened at Mississippi College School of Law and the University of Mississippi School of Law this past April, at the Adams County Courthouse in Natchez on Aug. 8, and at Jones County Junior College on Sept. 11.

Oral arguments scheduled for Oct. 4 in Hattiesburg include two criminal appeals. Oral arguments will be heard at 11 a.m. in the case of John Edward McDonald v. State of Mississippi, Case. No. 2012-KA-0023. Oral arguments are scheduled at 2 p.m. in the case of Mike McTiller III v. State of Mississippi, Case No. 2011-KA-1662.

Each oral argument is expected to last approximately an hour. The appellant and appellee are each allowed 30 minutes.

People wishing to watch the oral arguments are asked to be in their seats 15 minutes before the oral arguments are scheduled to begin.

McDonald was arrested in Jackson on Sept. 23, 2009. McDonald was convicted Nov. 2, 2011, in Hinds County Circuit Court on a charge of possession of more than a kilogram of marijuana with intent to distribute. The indictment charged that the offense occurred within 1,500 feet of a church, and that McDonald was an habitual offender. Special Circuit Judge L. Breland Hilburn on Nov. 7, 2011, sentenced McDonald to 60 years in prison.

McTiller was convicted Aug. 26, 2011, in Washington County Circuit Court on charges of aggravated assault and use of a firearm during the commission of a felony. Circuit Judge Richard A. Smith sentenced McTiller to 15 years to serve on the aggravated assault

charge and five years on the firearms enhancement, with the sentences running concurrently. McTiller is accused of shooting Angelo Boykins in the shoulder with a .32-caliber pistol during a fight on Aug. 6, 2010.

George T. Holmes of the Indigent Appeals Division of the Office of the State Public Defender represents McTiller and McDonald. Special Assistant Attorneys General Stephanie B. Wood and Laura H. Tedder represent the Attorney General's office.

The oral arguments will not be broadcast via the court's Internet web site, since the Court of Appeals is convening a special session away from its camera-equipped courtroom.

Any media organization which may wish to photograph or videotape the arguments must file a Camera Coverage Notice at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of the proceedings. Camera Coverage Notices should be directed to Clerk of the Court Kathy Gillis, fax 601-359-2407, and to Assistant Court Administrator Katie Cassady, fax 601-576-4708. The Camera Coverage Notice form is at <http://courts.ms.gov/forms/camnotice.pdf>.

Photographers and videographers should be familiar with and follow the Rules for Electronic and Photographic Coverage of Judicial Proceedings. The camera coverage rules are available on the Mississippi Judiciary web site at [http://courts.ms.gov/rules/msrulesofcourt/rules\\_electronicphotographic\\_coverage.pdf](http://courts.ms.gov/rules/msrulesofcourt/rules_electronicphotographic_coverage.pdf).

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