

Justices Coleman, Randolph, King to take oaths of office Jan. 7

January 2, 2013

New Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Josiah Dennis Coleman of Toccopola will take the oath of office at 10 a.m. Jan. 7 in the second floor Supreme Court En Banc Courtroom at the Gartin Justice Building in Jackson. A formal investiture ceremony will be scheduled later.

Presiding Justice Michael K. Randolph of Hattiesburg and Justice Leslie D. King of Greenville also are expected to take the oath of office to begin their new terms on the court. Justice Randolph, the third longest serving member on the court, became a Presiding Justice on Jan. 1.

Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. will administer the oaths of office.

Justice Coleman previously practiced law for 12 years, first in Tupelo, then in Oxford. He is the second member of his family to serve on the Mississippi Supreme Court. Both his grandfather and his father were appellate court judges. He is the grandson of the late J.P. Coleman, who served as Mississippi Governor and on the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. J.P. Coleman served briefly as a Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court in 1950, resigning to accept appointment as state attorney general. The younger Justice Coleman's father, Thomas Coleman, was one of the original members of the Mississippi Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals began hearing cases in 1995.

Justice Coleman, 40, grew up in Choctaw County and graduated valedictorian from Ackerman High School. He graduated *cum laude* from the University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and philosophy. He earned his law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Justice Randolph, 66, has served on the Supreme Court since April 2004, having first been appointed by then-Gov. Haley Barbour. He will begin his second elected term. Before his appointment to the court, he practiced law for 29 years, first on the Gulf Coast, then in Hattiesburg.

Justice Randolph graduated from Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla., with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration. He earned his juris doctorate from the University of Mississippi School of Law, where he served as president of the Law School Student Body.

Justice Randolph was decorated for heroism in Vietnam, where he served as an air traffic controller with the U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division. During law school he joined the U.S. Naval Reserve. He attended the Naval Justice School in Newport, Rhode Island. He served as an attorney with the Judge Advocate General Corps. He was honorably discharged in 1975.

Justice King, 63, will begin his first elected term, having served by appointment of former Gov. Barbour since March 2011. He previously served for 16 years on the Mississippi Court of Appeals, including almost seven years as chief judge. He served for 15 years in the Mississippi House of Representatives. He is a former Washington County Youth Court counselor, prosecutor and public defender, and former Metcalfe Municipal Judge.

Justice King is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and the Texas Southern University School of Law. He began practicing law in Greenville in 1973.

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