

## **Judge John Gargiulo becomes federal magistrate; Judge Michael Ward appointed as interim Circuit Judge**

August 1, 2014

Judge John C. Gargiulo resigned from the Second Circuit Court bench today to accept appointment as a U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Southern District of Mississippi.

Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. appointed retired Harrison County Court Judge Michael H. Ward of Gulfport as a special judge of the Second Circuit to fill the vacancy. The appointment is effective Aug. 4, and will continue through Nov. 30.

Chief Justice Waller said, "Judge Gargiulo has been an outstanding trial judge, as evidenced by the vote of confidence by the district judges of the Southern District of Mississippi. This reflects the excellent work of our Mississippi trial judges."

Federal magistrates are selected and appointed by the federal district judges. Currently serving U.S. Magistrate Judges Robert H. Walker of Gulfport and Michael T. Parker of Hattiesburg are also former state trial judges. Judge Walker is a former circuit judge of the Second Judicial District. Judge Parker is a former Hinds County Court judge.

Chief Justice Waller noted that Judge Ward has continued to serve as a senior status judge, hearing cases by special appointment of the Supreme Court since his retirement from the Harrison County Court bench in December 2010.

Chief Justice Waller said, "Judge Mike Ward has a long and distinguished career as a County Court judge in Harrison County. The Circuit Court will have on an interim basis an experienced trial judge who has the confidence of the public, the lawyers in the district and the other judges. This will be very efficient and will promote a smooth transition for the next newly elected circuit judge for this position."

Judicial elections will be held Nov. 4.

Judge Ward served for 12 Years as County Court and Youth Court Judge of Harrison County, and for 20 years as Harrison County Family Court Judge. He served as chair of the Mississippi Commission on Uniform Youth Court System and Procedures, and on the Committee on Continuing Judicial Education.

Judge Gargiulo served for five years on the Circuit Court. He was appointed by former Gov. Haley Barbour and was sworn in July 14, 2009, filling the vacancy created by the retirement of Circuit Judge Jerry O. Terry. He previously served for nine years as an assistant district attorney for the Second Circuit District.

The Second Circuit District includes Harrison, Hancock and Stone counties.

#####