

## Stephen Parks selected as new head of State Law Library

January 8, 2016

Stephen Parks of Jackson was elected State Librarian on Thursday, Jan. 7, during a joint session of the Mississippi Senate and House of Representatives.

The Supreme Court recommended Parks as its choice to head the State Law Library.

Parks, an attorney, previously served as research, instructional services and circulation librarian at his alma mater, Mississippi College School of Law. He was director of the Judicial Data Project, which compiles into a searchable database (www.judicial.mc.edu) the opinions, case briefs, and oral argument videos of the Mississippi Supreme Court



Photo by Chris Todd

and Mississippi Court of Appeals from 2007 forward.

He also devised and directed the Legislative History Project (www.law.mc.edu/legislature), a searchable database which archives video of floor debate in the Mississippi Senate and House from 2012 forward. His work earned awards from the American Association of Law Libraries twice for technological innovation, and again for promoting public access to government information. He also received the Mississippi Historical Society Award of Merit.

Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. said, “I am very impressed with and appreciative of Mr. Parks’ work to preserve the discussions and actions of two branches of our state government, and to make those archives easily available to the public. Some of these resources didn’t exist until he set to work to build them. The judiciary, lawyers, legal researchers and the average citizen with an interest in the workings of government can make use of these archives.”

“His tech savvy and his interest in public access will be an asset to the Law Library as he assumes responsibility for overseeing this extensive legal collection,” Chief Justice Waller said.

Parks said, “It is a great honor to be chosen for this position, one that dates back to the mid-Nineteen Century. Two of my favorite topics to read and research are Mississippi and the law, and this position will allow me to pursue those interests as I strive to provide the best services possible to the state judiciary, state officials and the citizens of Mississippi.”

The State Librarian oversees the State Law Library, which is located in the Supreme Court Building in Jackson. Known officially as the State Library, the law library is a specialized public library which provides legal research materials for the judiciary, state agencies, lawyers, students and the general public.

Parks taught legal research at MCSOL for the past five years. For the past year, he has also taught law librarianship as an adjunct professor at the University of Southern Mississippi. He has published an update to Mississippi court rules and legal journal articles on topics ranging from avoidance of unauthorized practice of law to the “birther” attacks on President Barack Obama.

Parks is president of the Central Mississippi Library Council, and previously served as vice-president and Scholarship Committee chair of the organization. He is a member of the Mississippi Bar, the American Association of Law Libraries and the Southeastern Chapter of AALL. He serves on the Southeastern Chapter’s Government Relations Committee.

He is a native of La Grange, North Carolina. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in political science, magna cum laude, from East Carolina University in 2006. He earned a law degree, magna cum laude, from MCSOL in 2010, and a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2013.

Parks replaced Clara Watson Joorfetz of Jackson, who retired as State Librarian on Dec. 31, 2015. Joorfetz’s 40-year career of professional librarianship included 16 years of service at the State Library, the past five years as State Librarian. She also serve as a medical librarian at St. Dominic Hospital, University of Mississippi Medical Center and Baptist Medical Center.

Chief Justice Waller said, “We appreciate her long and dedicated service. She is an encyclopedia of history and government. Her untiring enthusiasm well served library patrons ranging from scholarly researchers to school children. We will miss her, and wish her well in her retirement.”

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