

## **Parent Representation Committee to meet October 14**

October 11, 2016

The Mississippi Parent Representation Committee will meet at 10:30 a.m. Oct. 14. The quarterly meeting will be held on the first floor at the Mississippi Supreme Court, 450 High Street in Jackson.

The Parent Representation Committee, chaired by Rankin County Court Judge Thomas Broome, is working to develop a program to provide legal representation for low income parents whose children come into the custody of the Youth Courts and the Department of Child Protection Services due to allegations of abuse or neglect.

Parent representation pilot programs provide free legal representation for low-income parents in Youth Court hearings in which allegations of abuse or neglect could result in court-ordered removal of children from parents' custody. Pilot programs operate in Youth Courts in Adams, DeSoto, Forrest, Hancock, Harrison and Rankin counties.

The meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. with brief introductions. At 10:45 a.m., Isabel Blanco, senior director and lead strategic consultant for Casey Family Programs in Mississippi, will discuss funding for parent representation. Casey Family Programs provides matching funds for many of the parent representation pilot programs.

At 11 a.m., Judge Broome and Jurist in Residence John Hudson will discuss formalizing oversight of parent representation pilot programs and issuance of standards. The Committee has spent more than two years drafting standards of practice for attorneys representing parents in child protection and termination of parental rights proceedings. The Mississippi Judicial College, University of Mississippi School of Law and Mississippi College School of Law have worked with representatives of the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and the University of South Carolina School of Law Children's Law Center to draft standards of practice. At 11:15 a.m., Christopher Church will discuss data collection in the pilot programs. Church is law and policy director at the Children's Law Center at the University of South Carolina.

After a working lunch, the Committee at 12:45 p.m. is expected to finalize the Parent Representation Program Operations Manual and discuss continuing legal education.

At 1:15 p.m., Judge Broome and others will discuss a Kellogg Grant that will help support parent representation programs in Mississippi and Louisiana.

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