

## **Free legal clinic to be held in Tupelo Nov. 15**

November 11, 2016

A free family law clinic is scheduled for Nov. 15 from 4 to 7 p.m. on the third floor of the Lee County Justice Center in Tupelo.

Low income people may receive free legal assistance with adoptions, child support modification, custody, conservatorships, guardianships, irreconcilable differences divorces, emancipations and name changes. The legal clinic is intended to help low income people who are seeking to represent themselves in court because they cannot afford to hire a lawyer.

The media is invited and encouraged to attend the clinic, said Mississippi Access to Justice Commission Executive Director Tiffany Graves.

About 30 prospective clients had registered for the clinic as of Nov. 10. More than 30 attorneys have volunteered to assist during the clinic. The clinic is a cooperative effort of the Lee County Bar and Young Lawyers Association, the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project and the Pro Bono Initiative of University of Mississippi School of Law.

During the clinic, local attorneys volunteer their time to meet with clinic participants. Law students assist. The attorneys will explain the proceedings, provide legal information, answer questions and assist applicants in preparing documents. The attorneys are not obligated to file documents and accompany clinic participants to the courtroom. The expectation is that individuals will be given adequate information to be able to represent themselves in court.

The free legal clinic is intended to help low income people. Eligibility to attend a clinic is limited to people whose income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. For example, that would be an annual income of \$23,760 or less for an individual, or an annual income of \$48,600 or less for a family of four.

Chancellor Jacqueline Mask said, "These free legal clinics are important to ensure that in the First Chancery District, every person has access to justice and has access to the courthouse."

Judge Mask schedules at least one clinic annually in each of the eight counties of the First Chancery District. Several clinics are held each year in Tupelo. The district includes Alcorn, Itawamba, Monroe, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Lee, Tishomingo and Union counties.

Another source of free legal assistance is the website [ms.freelegalanswers.org](http://ms.freelegalanswers.org), provided by the Access to Justice Commission and MVLP.

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