

Court language interpreter ceremony scheduled for June 29

June 23, 2017

Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Jim Kitchens will administer the court interpreter's oath at 2 p.m. June 29 to the first Spanish speaking court language interpreter to be trained and certified under the state's own program.

Elizabeth Barrios of Meridian will take the court interpreter's oath during a ceremony at the Supreme Court Building at 450 High Street in Jackson.

One other locally trained interpreter, who speaks Russian, attained the state's highest level of court language interpreting credentials in 2015.

Barrios, 32, the daughter of American missionaries, lived in Mexico for 28 years. Her parents moved to Monterey, Mexico, when she was 2 years old. She has spoken Spanish since she was 5. She interpreted for non-Spanish speaking visitors in her parents' missionary work. Barrios moved back to the United States two years ago. She currently works as a bilingual sales representative for a Meridian car dealership.

The Administrative Office of Courts developed the Mississippi Court Interpreter Credentialing Program to assist state courts in their endeavors to provide equal access to justice for limited English proficiency individuals. The AOC program provides state courts with a list of language interpreters who have demonstrated proficiency in oral and written interpretation of court proceedings.

The credentialing program provides two levels of proficiency: registered and certified. Certified is the more advanced level. Twenty-two court language interpreters currently are credentialed by the Mississippi AOC. Ten, including Barrios, are certified, the highest level of credentialing. Eight of the certified interpreters were trained in other states and accepted in Mississippi by reciprocity. Twelve other interpreters are registered under AOC guidelines.

Mississippi's credentialed court interpreters include speakers of Spanish, Mandarin Chinese and Russian. There is a need for Vietnamese speakers, but none have been credentialed yet. Credentialed interpreters live in Biloxi, Brandon, Clinton, French Camp, Gulfport, Hazlehurst, Meridian, Newton, Ocean Springs, Oxford, Tupelo and Vicksburg as well as Cordova, Goodlettsville, Memphis and Nashville, Tenn., North Augusta, S.C., and New Orleans.

For additional information about court language interpreting, contact AOC Deputy Director Ta'Shia Gordon at 601-576-4632.

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