

# Free family law clinic scheduled for July 6 in Tupelo

June 29, 2017

Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. will speak at a free family law clinic July 6 at 4 p.m. at the Lee County Justice Center in Tupelo.

Local lawyers will donate their time to help low-income clinic participants from 4 to 7 p.m. in the third floor Chancery Courtroom. Clinic participants can receive free legal assistance with adoptions, child support modification, custody, conservatorships, guardianships, irreconcilable differences divorces, emancipations and name changes.

Chief Justice Waller said, "It is vitally important for all citizens to have access to the courthouse. Mississippi has one of the highest rates of poverty in the United States and these legal clinics allow meaningful access with the assistance of volunteer lawyers. I very much appreciate the efforts of local lawyers in giving their time to this critical effort, and I urge lawyers across the state to follow their lead."

The July 6 free family law clinic is the first of nine free clinics scheduled throughout the First Chancery Court District during the summer and fall. The district includes Alcorn, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tishomingo and Union counties.

Chancellor Jacqueline Mask of Tupelo, co-chair of the Access to Justice Commission, implemented the clinics in 2013 in a collaborative effort with local bar associations and the Pro Bono Initiative of the University of Mississippi School of Law. Law students assist during the clinics.

Chief Justice Waller said, "Judge Mask is to be commended for her leadership in facilitating the work to establish and continue periodic pro se days."

Judge Mask said, "I am extremely thankful for our local attorneys, for their willingness to volunteer their time and expertise to help people in need. These attorneys assisted 116 individuals last year and we hope to expand our clinics this year."

Local attorneys will give legal advice and assist participants in preparing documents. The attorneys will explain upcoming court proceedings, provide legal information and answer questions. If the matters are not complicated and can be handled on the spot, Judge Mask will be available to hear matters and sign court orders. The attorneys are not obligated to provide extended legal representation or attend future court hearings. The expectation is that individuals will be given adequate information to be able to represent themselves in court.

The schedule of other free family law clinics is:

July 19, 4-7 p.m., Union County Chancery Building; 109 East Main Street, New Albany;  
July 20, 3-5 p.m., Itawamba County Courthouse, 201 West Main Street, Fulton;  
July 25, 4-7 p.m., Alcorn County Chancery Building, 501 East Waldron Street, Corinth;  
Aug. 1, 4-7 p.m., Monroe County Chancery Building, 201 West Commerce Street, Aberdeen;  
Sept. 26, 4-7 p.m., Pontotoc County Chancery Courthouse, 34 South Liberty Street, Pontotoc;  
Oct. 10, 4-7 p.m., Tishomingo County Courthouse, 1008 Battleground Drive, Iuka;  
Oct. 31, 4-7 p.m., Prentiss County Courthouse, 100 North Main Street, Booneville;  
Nov. 8, 4-7 p.m., Lee County Justice Center, 200 West Jefferson Street, Third Floor, Tupelo.

People seeking free legal services must be screened in advance to determine eligibility for legal services. Contact the Family Resource Center at 662-844-0013 to determine eligibility.

People whose income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive free legal assistance at the clinics. For example, an individual with an annual income of \$24,120 or less, or a family of four with an annual income of \$49,200 or less, would be eligible.

For more information, contact Access to Justice Commission Executive Director Tiffany Graves at [tgraves@msbar.org](mailto:tgraves@msbar.org) or 601-960-9581.