

# Mississippi Courts

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## Study Committee recommends revisions to Canons

A committee of judges and lawyers has recommended revisions to the Mississippi Code of Judicial Conduct.

The Code of Judicial Conduct Study Committee filed proposed revisions on April 7. The draft proposal and the study committee's summary of the principal substantive changes are posted on the State of Mississippi Judiciary

web site at <http://www.mssc.state.ms.us/rules/rulesforcomment/2010/CodeofJudicialConduct.pdf>.

Members of the bench and interested lay persons may submit comments in writing to the Clerk of the Supreme Court, P.O. Box 249, Jackson, Mississippi 39205. All comments should be submitted no later than May 27, 2010.

The Mississippi Code of Judicial Conduct Study Committee was created by order of the Mississippi Supreme Court in June 2009. The committee conducted a comprehensive study of the code and recommended revisions in light of changes to the Model Code of Judicial Conduct adopted by the American Bar Association in 2007.

Jackson attorney Luther

Munford, chair of the study committee, said, "The ABA completely revised its model code in 2007. The Supreme Court wanted us to reconsider the Mississippi rules in light of the ABA changes.

"We wanted to make the rules clearer so that lawyers and judges would know what is allowed, and what is not," he said.

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Members of the Code of Judicial Conduct Study Committee are, left to right, John Walker, Chancery Judge Edward E. Patten Jr., Circuit Judge Michael M. Taylor, David P. Pitre, Chairman Luther Munford, William M. Dalehite Jr., Warren County Justice Court Judge Edwin Woods Jr., and committee reporter Donald E. Campbell. Not pictured are Court of Appeals Judge Virginia Carlton and Washington County Court Judge Vernita King Johnson.

## Judge Carlton called to Army active duty



**Judge Virginia Carlton**  
Court of Appeals

Judge Virginia Carlton of the Mississippi Court of Appeals reported to active military duty March 1. She will serve for approximately 90 days with the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals in Alexandria, Va.

She was promoted to the rank of Colonel in a ceremony at Mississippi College School of Law on April 10.

Judge Carlton will be on an unpaid leave of absence from the Mississippi Court of Appeals until May 31.

Judge Carlton will assist in the appellate review of active duty Army courts-martial.

Judge Carlton said, "I'm humbled that the active duty Army has called upon me to serve my country in this way with the active duty Army criminal appellate court. I am also humbled by the Army's confidence in me to activate me from the Mississippi National Guard to serve with active duty Army appellate judges to review

active duty courts-martial. I'm honored to do my duty and to serve my country."

Judge Carlton will sit on a three-judge panel to hear appeals before the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals, which is a military intermediate appellate court. The panel is ordinarily made up of active duty judges from the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps. It is believed that this is the first time that a Mississippi National Guard JAG officer has been activated to sit on the Army appellate court.

Judge Carlton said, "Deployments in support of the global war on terrorism created a temporary staffing shortage on the Army's intermediate appellate court, and a backlog of cases resulted."

As an experienced JAG officer, Judge Carlton possesses the court-martial experience and the appellate judicial experience needed to assist the Army on short notice. Judge Carlton graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and then served as an instructor for the course. She also was selected for the U.S. Army War College. She is certified as a military judge, having successfully completed the intensive military judges' course at The Judge Advocate General's School in Charlottesville, Va. She also was board selected to serve with the U.S. Army Reserve Judiciary with the 150<sup>th</sup> Legal Support Organization.

Judge Carlton, of Columbia, has nearly 20 years of military experience. She served on active duty with the U.S. Army 1990-1998. She served in various capacities including prosecutor

and defense counsel in numerous courts-martial. She served in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1998-2007. She has served with the Mississippi National Guard since 2007.

## Code of Judicial Conduct

Amendments to the code are not expected to go into effect this year and will have no effect on the 2010 judicial elections.

The Supreme Court in 2002 created the Special Committee on Judicial Election Campaign Intervention to investigate allegations of campaign misconduct. The study committee recommended broadening the special committee's membership and its function.

Munford said, "The proposal retains the special committee charged with speaking out on ethical issues during judicial campaigns, but expands its membership to include non-lawyers, gives it responsibility not just for campaigns but for ethical advice in general, and makes it clear that the committee has no disciplinary authority."

The recommendations call for justice court judge elections to be subject to oversight by the special committee, Munford said. Those elections are not currently subject to review by the special committee.

With regard to campaign

contributions, Munford said, "The proposal would get rid of a rule that now requires a judge to recuse himself in a case if a specific dollar amount has been given by a 'major donor,' and would substitute a more general requirement that a judge recuse himself where a party, a party's lawyer, or even an independent group has made contributions which are illegal or would 'create an appearance of impropriety.'" Munford said that the proposed revision adopts the approach taken by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Caperton v. Massey*, decided in June 2009.

In an effort to increase transparency, "The proposal would require judges to report any gifts in excess of \$500 within any calendar year," Munford said.

The study committee will revise its recommendations after taking into account the public comments. The Supreme Court Rules Committee on the Legal Profession will review the final proposal and public comments and will make recommendations to the entire court.

## E-filing underway in Madison and Scott counties

Madison County Circuit Court began voluntary electronic filing of court documents in specified civil cases March 1, and e-filing became mandatory April 15.

Madison County Circuit Court is the first Circuit Court to extensively test the e-filing program as part of the Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC) pilot project. Madison County Chancery Court was the original test site for the adaptation of the federal courts' e-filing system to state trial courts, with mandatory e-filing in effect since Sept. 15, 2009.

Scott County Chancery Court was scheduled for mandatory e-filing April 1. Warren County Chancery Court is expected to begin voluntary e-filing in May.

The system allows attorneys to file their pleadings and retrieve documents via the Internet, and makes court records more accessible to the public.

Madison County Circuit Judge William Chapman III said, "Implementation of the e-filing system will allow court personnel, judges, attorneys and parties to be more efficient because case files will be accessible online. The large amounts of pleadings and documents the court clerk receives will be maintained electronically instead of in paper form, and this will also allow the public to

access their court system online."

Madison County Circuit Clerk Lee Westbrook said, "In any courthouse, storage of files is a problem. An electronic system will help us alleviate the storage problems we all face. Additionally, I think attorneys will enjoy the ability to review a file at their leisure rather than having to visit the courthouse to view the file."

Westbrook said, "We look forward to having the attorneys utilize the system very shortly. So far everything has just worked so smoothly, and we appreciate the Supreme Court allowing Madi-

son County to be a pilot."

Chancery Judge H. David Clark II of Forest said, "Eventually, our courts will be essentially paperless and will be available over the internet for not only the attorneys but the general public....There will be no paper, no ink, no postage. It's a whole lot faster and a lot less expensive. I think it's going to be much more convenient and much more efficient for the attorneys and for the litigants."

Judge Clark for a number of years has used his own computerized system in the Second Chancery District, which includes Scott, Newton and Jasper counties. From his office in Forest, he keeps track of dockets for cases filed in Bay Springs, Paulding and Decatur.



## H1N1 vaccine public health campaign visits Gartin Building



**Marshal A.W. Grubbs takes H1N1 vaccine.**

Twenty-three employees working in the Gartin Justice Building in Jackson rolled up their sleeves and took the H1N1 vaccine Feb. 18.

Nurses from the Mississippi State Department of Health spent the morning at the courthouse giving the free immunizations. The Department of Health has offered flu shots at schools and other locations around the state as part of an effort to combat the swine flu pandemic. More information is available at [www.msdh.state.ms.us](http://www.msdh.state.ms.us).



**Court of Appeals Chief Judge Leslie D. King rolled up his sleeve to take the vaccine.**

## Former legislator appointed to 17th Chancery



**Judge Vincent Davis**

Chancery Judge E. Vincent Davis was two years into his first term as a state Senator when he applied for and accepted Gov. Haley Barbour's appointment to the 17<sup>th</sup> District Chancery Court. He filled the judicial vacancy created by Judge Kennie Middleton's Sept. 17, 2009, death.

Judge Davis' appointment began Dec. 8. Gov. Barbour said in announcing the appointment, "While his work in the Senate will be missed, Vincent Davis will bring integrity and leadership to the bench....I know he will be an asset to the State's judicial system and will continue to serve our citizens with fairness and dedication."

Judge Davis, 46, of Fayette, said, "I realize the decisions that are made in Chancery Court affect the lives of people for years to come because you are talking about families and custody issues and rights to property and assets. Those are decisions that could affect people for the rest of their lives.

I take the job very seriously and try to be mindful of that as I go about my duties."

Judge Davis is one of two judges serving the 17<sup>th</sup> Chancery, which includes Adams, Claiborne, Jefferson and Wilkinson counties. Judge George Ward is senior chancery judge.

Judge Davis said he had been winding down his private practice caseload in anticipation of going into another legislative session when he accepted the judicial appointment.

Members of the Senate adopted a resolution congratulating their former colleague upon his appointment. Part of the resolution reads, "Whereas, it is with great pride that we recognize the high esteem that a respected member of the Mississippi Senate was held among The Mississippi Bar and by the Governor, and the honor he has brought to his community and to the state of Mississippi."

Judge Davis said, "That was a very rewarding experience, serving in the Legislature, and it was a difficult decision for me to make, but it was a decision that had to be made. We had a judge to pass away and the seat needed to be filled."

Judge Davis said, "Anything I've done, I've been content with it. I would have been content remaining in the Legislature. I had never in my life thought about being a chancery judge. People who supported me in prior endeavors, people who I really

trust, strongly encouraged me."

Judge Davis' early career plans weren't set on the bar or the bench. He earned an undergraduate degree in agricultural economics from Alcorn State University and went to work as an assistant county supervisor for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farmers Home Administration. His late father had retired after a 30-year career with the Farmers Home Administration.

"I took the law school admission test to see how I would do. I was just curious," Judge Davis said. "I didn't have the money to go to law school. Once the possibility came up, Mississippi College offered a scholarship. That door was open."

He began practicing law in 1989 in Natchez, then moved his practice to Fayette

in 1992. His general practice included personal injury, product liability, insurance bad faith claims, domestic relations, wills and estates, property law, bankruptcy and criminal defense.

"I got out of law school and thought I would be content being a solo practitioner for the rest of my career," Judge Davis said. "One of the assistant district attorneys got elected circuit judge, and the District Attorney asked me if I would come and work for him. I never envisioned myself being there either."

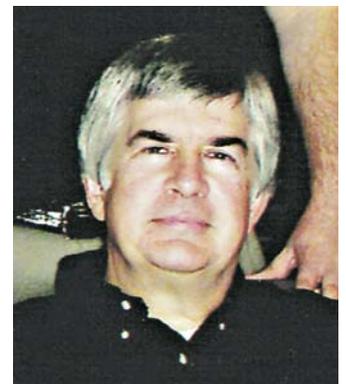
He served from January 1995 through December 2001 as an assistant district attorney for the Sixth Circuit District, which includes Adams, Amite, Franklin, and Wilkinson counties. He later served as the city attorney for the city of Fayette.

## 2 Drug Court leaders die

Mississippi drug court professionals mourn the loss of two innovators in the drug court movement.

Columbia Municipal Court Judge Forest Dantin, 56, died Jan. 9 from a brain aneurysm. Leake County Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator Tiffany McLain, 39, died Feb. 16 in an auto accident on Mississippi Highway 25 near Carthage.

Judge Dantin was the driving force behind the May 2008 creation of the misdemeanor Drug Court in



**Judge Forest Dantin**  
Columbia Municipal Court

*Continued, Page 5*

## Chancery Judge Kennie Middleton died Sept. 17

Friends and colleagues of the late Chancery Judge Kennie E. Middleton remembered him as a mentor and as a fair and compassionate jurist.

Judge Middleton, 59, of Fayette, died Sept. 17.

Chancery Judge Vincent Davis, who was appointed to the vacancy after Judge Middleton's death, previously shared office space with the late judge when both were in private practice in Fayette. "Judge Middleton was a friend of mine," he said. "We had been friends since I first got out of law school," Judge Davis said. "He was a mentor for sure."

Circuit Judge Lillie Blackmon Sanders of Natchez remembered Judge Middleton as "a competent and caring member of the judiciary....And he was an extremely compassionate person who cared about his job and the people he worked with."

Judge Middleton was Senior Chancery Judge for the Seventeenth Chancery Court District of Adams, Claiborne, Jefferson and Wilkinson counties. He was first elected in 1994 and took the bench in 1995.

He served two terms as mayor of Fayette before he was elected to the bench. He

previously served as executive director of the Jefferson Comprehensive Health Center. He was editor and publisher of the *Jefferson County Chronicle*.

Judge Middleton attended Alcorn State University and graduated from Southern University in Baton Rouge. He earned his law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

He was admitted to the bar in 1974. He practiced law as a partner in the firm of Gambrell and Middleton in Hattiesburg. He was later of counsel with the law office of Rep. Percy W. Watson of Hattiesburg.



**Judge Kennie Middleton**

He was a member of the Magnolia Bar Association, the Mississippi Bar, the National Bar Association and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

## Judge Forest Dantin and Tiffany McLain remembered as innovators

Columbia Municipal Court.

Marcus Ellis, president of the Mississippi Association of Drug Court Professionals, said, "Judge Dantin could be stern and hard-faced, but the participants knew exactly where they stood with him, and they knew exactly where they stood in the Drug Court. No nonsense, but firm and caring characterized his every action....Judge Dantin's legacy is one that all should strive to emulate: a man whose passing is mourned, but whose gifts to his fellow man will live on. A man who owned the ground upon which he stood, but a man who desired nothing more than to protect those who needed that protection the most."

Judge Dantin worked as a Hinds County Assistant District Attorney after earning his law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law. He returned to his hometown of Columbia in 1981 to become a partner in his father's law firm. He served as Marion County Prosecuting Attorney from 1982 to 1985, and was appointed Municipal Court Judge in 1989.

Ellis, who worked closely with McLain, described her as a woman "on a mission to serve, a mission to ensure that every child who needed help, received that help, that no child was ever left behind or neglected."

McLain counseled juveniles in the Drug Court pro-



**Tiffany McLain**

**Drug Court Coordinator**

gram when they needed help, whether it was at night or on the weekend. Their problems were her problems.

The Mississippi House of Representatives adopted a resolution commending

McLain's life and service. Rep. Alyce Clarke, who introduced House Resolution 94, said McLain possessed "a heart for the youth of this state who suffer from alcoholism and drug addiction."

McLain, a licensed professional counselor, previously worked as coordinator of the Harrison County Adult Drug Court and the Madison County Juvenile Drug Court. In 2009, she helped create the Leake County Juvenile Drug Court program. Leake County was one of the first two jurisdictions in the state to implement drug court programs at the chancery court level under the supervision of a youth court referee.

## Former county prosecutor appointed to Hinds Circuit Court

Hinds County Circuit Judge Malcolm O. Harrison at his Nov. 9 investiture said that he will be honest, fair and accountable, and that he will hold those who come before him accountable.

"I will be what I believe all judges should be, a fair and honest jurist who reads and follows the law," Judge Harrison said. "I will return judicial integrity to Post 4 of the Hinds County Circuit Court."

Gov. Haley Barbour appointed Judge Harrison to fill the vacancy created by the July 2009 resignation of former Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter. Judge Harrison will serve out the remainder of the term, which ends Jan. 3, 2011.

Hinds County Circuit Judge Winston Kidd said,



Former Gov. William Winter speaks at the investiture. Seated are Hinds County Circuit Judge Winston Kidd and Tomie Green.



Circuit Judge Malcolm O. Harrison, at left, takes the ceremonial oath of office as his wife, Tammiko Walker Harrison, holds the Bible. Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. gave the oath.

"The Governor made an excellent choice in selecting Judge Harrison, and we know he will do an excellent job."

Judge Harrison took the oath of office on Oct. 30 and began work on Nov. 2. Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. administered the ceremonial oath to Judge Harrison Nov. 9 at the Hinds

County Courthouse.

Former Gov. William Winter said that in taking the oath of office, "he is pledging to see to it that he will enhance the respect for the law...I know that you will protect our rights, see that everyone gets justice and be an inspiration to all of us."

Harrison worked his way through Jackson State University while employed as a runner at the law office where Winter worked. "He had an interest in being a lawyer and he did his best to get ready for the responsibilities that come with being a member of the legal profession," Winter said. "I saw in him as he was coming along, before he went to law school, that sense of responsibility, that sense of obligation."

Winter drew an ovation

when he urged Judge Harrison to offer himself as a role model to young people and to work to increase their understanding of and respect for the law.

Winter said he is concerned about the skepticism and cynicism with which young people view the legal and political system. "We cannot have a citizenry that has a negative opinion about how we govern ourselves," he said.

Winter said, "I hope that you will make it part of your duties to do more than just preside over the court, but to go out into the community and present yourself as a role model for young people in this community. When they see a young man raised here in Jackson who has been able to do what he has been able to do, now be-

## Washington County adds Youth Drug Court

Washington County Court Judge Vernita King Johnson is moving forward with a juvenile drug court. The program is expected to begin accepting participants in May.

The program received provisional certification from the state Administrative Office of Courts in November, and received approval March 31 for funding totaling \$116,000 for a year of operations. The Washington County Board of Supervisors approved office space at 150 N. Harvey Street, across the street from the Courthouse.

Jo Thompson was recently hired as Drug Court coordinator, and a field officer and case manager will

join the staff shortly.

Alcohol and drug use are an underlying cause of much of the juvenile crime in Washington County, as well as truancy and problems at home, said Judge Johnson. The Washington County Juvenile Drug Court aims to identify teenagers with alcohol and drug problems and address those problems.

Judge Johnson said, "The need is here....If we can effectively deal with the underlying problems of alcohol and drugs, that reduces problems in the schools, in the homes and in the community."

In the schools, the effects of alcohol and drug use are seen in truancy, inattention and disruptive behavior in

class, and in offenses against other students, Judge Johnson said.

"We find that alcohol and drugs play a large part in children not going to school. As a consequence, this child is not benefiting from the education process at all. This child is disruptive to the other students. This child is destined to be constantly suspended or expelled. To the community, this means this child is on the street getting into whatever activities that are available that will allow this child to continue to use drugs," Judge Johnson said. "The focus for us is to try to turn our children around so that they may benefit from the education process and become successful."

Without intervention, the teenagers who show up repeatedly in Youth Court for incorrigible behavior, truancy and thefts are destined to progress to committing felonies that will land them in Circuit Court. "All the time I see them on the way down the hall to Circuit Court," Judge Johnson said. "That's a constant thing and a sad thing. If we could change and modify behavior at this level, we have a good chance of them not ending up down the hall to the 'big court,' as they call it."

Plans for the Youth Drug Court program call for it to accept juveniles ages 12 to 17 who have a Youth Court adjudication on a drug-related offense or a non-drug-related offense with a history of substance abuse.



**Washington County Judge  
Vernita King Johnson**

The program does not accept violent offenders. The maximum capacity of the program would be 20 people.

The Drug Court program is expected to have four phases which would take a minimum of nine months for a participant to complete. Individualized treatment plans may include referrals to in-patient care for up to 28 days if necessary, or to local outpatient care through a local mental health facility. Individual and group counseling will be offered. Family counseling may be offered to the entire family if there are mental health or wellness issues. The plan calls for making parenting classes available.

Participants must be in school, enrolled in a General Education Development (GED) class or vocational program, or be employed throughout the program. Tutoring will be offered, as well as GED classes, vocational training and life skills classes.

### Harrison appointment, *continued*

come a circuit judge here in the capital city of Mississippi, they are bound to be impressed with that opportunity that exists if they will develop themselves, use their God given talent, get an education and be a constructive citizen in our community. That is how we lift ourselves up."

Gayle Walker said Judge Harrison is one of seven former Magnolia Bar Association presidents who went on to serve as judges. Harrison served as president of the Magnolia Bar Association 2008-09. Walker is the current president.

Hinds County Circuit Judge Tomie Green said,

"We are here to add another chapter to the history books."

Judge Harrison, 40, of Raymond, was elected in 1999 and took office in 2000 as Hinds County Prosecuting Attorney. He also maintained a private civil law practice, handling plaintiff personal injury litigation as well as insurance defense.

Judge Harrison grew up in Jackson and graduated from Jackson State University in 1991. He earned his law degree from the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in Birmingham in 1994. He was admitted to the practice of law in April 1995.

## Pro Bono Celebration honors judges and lawyers

Supreme Court Justice Jess H. Dickinson called on lawyers to give their time in free civil legal service to poor people.

Justice Dickinson was among four judges and 10 lawyers honored Oct. 29, 2009, during the National Pro Bono Celebration at the Mississippi Bar in Jackson. The Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project honored judges who have worked to increase pro bono service to poor people and lawyers who have provided free civil legal service.

Other judges honored included former Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Edwin Lloyd Pittman of Ridgeland, Hinds County Chancery Judge Denise Owens, and U.S. District

azza Jr., and Leonard D. Van Slyke Jr.; and Hattiesburg attorneys Charles E. Lawrence Jr. and Maura D. McLaughlin.

Justice Dickinson said volunteer service is an opportunity to do good. "That goal, that moral imperative is never more perfectly met than when a lawyer uses his or her knowledge, training and legal skills to provide help to some man, woman or child who lives in poverty and has nowhere else to turn."

A. La'Verne Edney of Jackson joined the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project as General Counsel Sept. 1, 2009. She works full time recruiting other lawyers to do pro bono work.

"There is such a need that



**Justice Jess Dickinson and former Chief Justice Ed Pittman were among honorees at a Pro Bono celebration.**



**Hinds Chancery Judge  
Denise Owens**

Judge Daniel P. Jordan III. Pro bono volunteers honored for their work included Jackson attorneys Kyle B. Ainsworth, P. Ryan Beckett, Franklin Harrison Coxwell III, Kenneth Dewayne Farmer, Robert L. Houston, Felicia Perkins, Ben J. Pi-



**U. S. District Judge  
Daniel P. Jordan III**

is unmet and we as attorneys owe that duty to give of our time," said Edney, who gave up a partnership in the law firm of Brunini, Grantham, Grower and Hewes to work for MVLP for the next two years. "I am here to make a difference in the lives of

other people," Edney said.

Mississippi Bar President George R. Fair of Jackson said that it's up to the private practice lawyers of the state to fill the unmet needs for civil legal representation of poor people. Fair, addressing about 60 people at the Jackson reception and awards ceremony, recalled a discussion several years ago with MVLP board member Virginia T. Munford, who said that members of the private bar had an obligation to step up and meet those needs.

"It was and is the right thing to do," Fair said.

Fair said that Justice Dickinson has become a leader in the movement to improve civil legal access

for the poor. As the Supreme Court's liaison to the Legal Services community and a member of the Access to Justice Commission, he has spoken to national and regional conferences about access to justice issues.

Justice Dickinson said that in his 20 years of private law practice, he knew little about "pro bono" beyond the words on a coffee mug in his office. Former Chief Justice Pittman changed that. Shortly after Justice Dickinson took office in 2004, Pittman sent him to the Equal Justice conference in Atlanta. Justice Dickinson said it was there that he realized much of the progress made in other states to improve poor peo-

## Mozingo honored for service to Bar Admissions

Attorney James R. Mozingo was honored Nov. 12 for 21 years of service on the Mississippi Board of Bar Admissions, including seven years as chairman.

The Board of Bar Admissions elected Jackson City Attorney Pieter Teeuwissen to serve as chair. Attorney Ann Bowden-Hollis of Ocean Springs is vice-chair.

New members who joined the board are attorneys Jeff Styres of Madison and Trey Byars of Oxford. Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. appointed Styres to the Board at the expiration of Mozingo's term. Presiding Justice George C. Carlson Jr. appointed Byars to replace Marjorie T. O'Donnell of Oxford.

Chief Justice Waller thanked Mozingo for his 21 years of service during a

reception at the Gartin Justice Building. "You have devoted tireless hours," he said.

Mozingo will continue his service to the bar in another capacity. Chief Justice Waller appointed him to the Bar Complaints Tribunal.

Mozingo said, "The people who serve on this committee are here because they care about it and they care about the Bar...It has absolutely been a labor of love. I have often described this as either the best job you will ever hate or the worst job you will ever love. I never was quite sure which that actually was."

Styres said, "I believe that being an attorney should be and is a serious calling. Becoming an attorney also means becoming a part of one of the few professions



**Retired Bar Admissions chair Jim Mozingo accepts an award for his service from new chair Pieter Teeuwissen.**

that also sets its own standards and criteria for admission. I believe that those standards should be high, but should also be reliable and fair. In determining the admission standards for attorneys to practice in our courts, there is also a responsibility to protect the

public. I am honored that Chief Justice Waller asked me to serve."

Byars said, "It's necessary to ensure that people of high character and fitness are admitted to the practice of law in the state of Mississippi."

### Pro bono celebration, *continued*

ple's access to the courts was accomplished through rule changes. Pittman took the lead in pushing for rules changes by the Mississippi Supreme Court to help fund civil legal assistance for poor people.

Judge Owens has served as co-chair of the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission since its inception in June 2006. MVLP Executive Director Shirley Williams said Judge Owens, a longtime supporter of efforts to assist people who cannot afford legal representation,

has helped organize pro se divorce clinics and guardianship clinics provided by MVLP.

Williams said that Judge Jordan made significant contributions to promote pro bono work as a lawyer in private practice before he joined the bench. He conducted training sessions for the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project's Homeless Legal Clinic at Stewpot. He recruited lawyers to give of their time to help those in need, and conducted orientations of new volunteers.



**Jeff Styres**



**Trey Byars**

## Judge Henry Lackey named MC Alumnus of the Year

Mississippi College named Circuit Judge Henry Lackey Alumnus of the Year 2009, honoring him at an Oct. 31 luncheon on the Clinton Campus. He will be the keynote speaker at the Mississippi College School of Law graduation May 14.

The 1956 Business Administration graduate and former member of the MC Board of Trustees enjoys visits to the campus. "It's a treat to come back. I do have the best memories," he said.

He paid a portion of his tuition from his earnings selling popcorn at his father's Calhoun City Ben Franklin Five and Dime store while in elementary

and high school, and from working for Deposit Guaranty National Bank while a student at Mississippi College. "I hitchhiked from Calhoun City on the weekends until I scrounged up a car and started working at Deposit Guaranty part-time," he said.

He said of his selection as Alumnus of the Year, "I feel unworthy when I consider those that have received it before me."

Retired MC administrator Van "Doc" Quick, a former classmate, said, "Nobody deserves it more than this man."

Judge Lackey is also modest about accolades for

his honesty and integrity. He alerted federal authorities and wore a wire in an investigation that rocked the legal community.

"It's like praising the sheriff for not stealing. It's just doing what you promised to do when you took the oath," he said.

He recently completed a term as chairman of the Commission on Judicial Performance. He was a member of the commission for six years. He was the 2008 recipient of the Supreme Court's Chief Justice Award. He was named a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation in 2009.

He will not seek reelection



**Circuit Judge  
Henry Lackey**

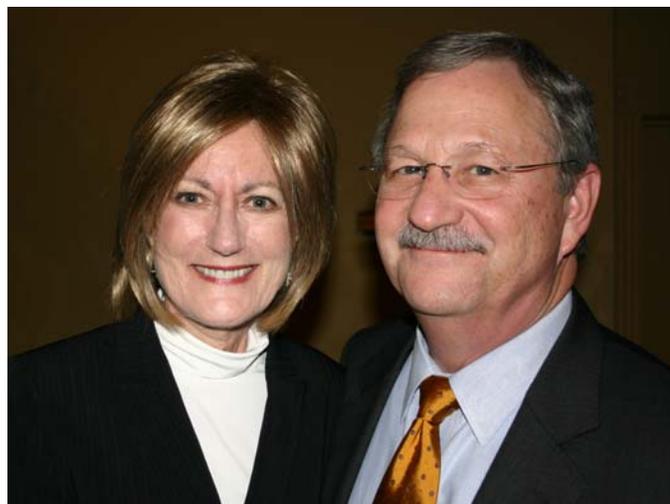
tion to the Third District judgeship he has held since 1993. "The people have been so good to me. I've had a mighty good run. The Lord's been good to me."

## Judge Alfonso, Justice Dickinson inducted as Bar Fellows

Supreme Court Justice Jess H. Dickinson and Eighth Chancery District Judge Margaret Alfonso, both of Gulfport, and Workers Compensation Commission Administrative Law Judge Deneise Turner Lott of Jackson have been named Fellows of the Mississippi Bar Foundation.

Bar Fellows were inducted at a dinner ceremony at the Old Capitol Inn in Jackson on April 15.

Being named a Fellow is the Bar Foundation's highest honor. Mississippi Bar Foundation President Harold H. Mitchell Jr. said that Fellows are recognized by their peers for integrity,



**Chancery Judge Margaret Alfonso and Justice Jess Dickinson are among this year's newly inducted Bar Fellows.**

competence, leadership and professionalism.

Others inducted as Fellows for 2010 are attorney

Henry J. Applewhite, Aberdeen; North Mississippi Rural Legal Services Executive Director Ben T. Cole Jr., Oxford; former U.S. Attorney Jim M. Greenlee, Oxford; attorney Judy Guice, Biloxi; Mississippi College School of Law Professor J. Larry Lee, Jackson; attorney William T. May, Newton; attorney Maura D. McLaughlin, Hattiesburg; attorney Cynthia I. Mitchell, Clarksdale; Assistant Federal Public Defender Kathryn N. Nester, Jackson; attorney Paul H. Stephenson III, Jackson; attorney Jim B. Tohill, Jackson; and attorney Michael N. Watts, Oxford.

## Judge Lamar named Tate County Citizen of the Year

Justice Ann H. Lamar of Senatobia was honored as Citizen of the Year by the Tate County Economic Development Foundation at its annual meeting and Leadership Tate County graduation March 9.

The award honors a Tate County citizen who has contributed most significantly to improving the quality of life in the county, said foundation executive director Janie Mortimer.

Mortimer said, "Throughout her career, she has made a profound difference in every aspect of the community that she has touched. Our leadership development program functions with the 'leading by serving' philosophy, and we feel that Justice Lamar truly embodies that principal of giving back to your community and making it better for having been there."



Justice Ann H. Lamar, second from left, was honored as Citizen of the Year. With her are, left to right, Tate County Economic Development Foundation President Bailey Meeks, former President Greg Gough and Executive Director Janie Mortimer.

### June 2-4 writing workshop

A judicial writing workshop is scheduled June 2-4 at the Jackson Hilton on County Line Road. WestLaw judicial research is June 2. *Black's Law Dictionary* Editor in Chief Bryan A. Garner of Dallas will present Legal Writing in Plain English for trial judges June 3, and Advanced Judicial Writing for appellate judges June 4.

Funding for travel and overnight accommodations will be provided by the Mississippi Judicial College. Participation is limited to 50 people.

Registration info is on the Judicial College web site at <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/mjc/specialprojects.html>.

## Judge Lee receives honorary Master of Laws

Mississippi College School of Law awarded Mississippi Court of Appeals Judge L. Joe Lee an Honorary Master of Laws degree at a luncheon on Nov. 12 at the law school.

Others receiving the Honorary Master of Laws degree were Earl Keyes, Roland Marble, Harry Owen and Alan Perry.

Judge Lee has served on the Court of Appeals since January 1999. He became a Presiding Judge in 2004.

In 1970, he enrolled in the Jackson School of Law, now Mississippi College School of Law. He attended law classes at night and worked as a high school teacher and principal. He earned his Juris Doctorate in 1973.

MCSOL named Judge Lee as Lawyer of the Year in 2004. He has shared his experience and promoted the legal profession by mentoring law students and by serving as a judge to moot court teams.



Judge Joe Lee  
Court of Appeals

## Every 15 Minutes program targets Pike County

Pike County officials are taking a hard-edged approach to reach students with a message about the dangers of drinking and driving.

On the morning of May 11, a character dressed as the Grim Reaper will pull a student from the classroom at South Pike High School in Magnolia. An officer will enter the classroom and report that a student has been the victim of a drunken driving crash. An obituary will be read. The student will return wearing a morgue tag and white makeup, but will not speak or interact with classmates for the remainder of the day.

Students will be pulled from classrooms every 15 minutes during the morning. That's how often someone in the United States dies as the result of an alcohol related collision, said Pike County Juvenile Drug Court Case Manager Charli Hensley.

The Pike County Youth Drug Court is basing the program on the nationally recognized Every 15 Minutes model. Hensley is coordinating the program aimed at high school juniors and seniors.

"We are trying to give them an in your face, real life look at what could happen because of the decisions they make, and to show them how many lives can be affected," Hensley said. "We are trying to save at least one child's life. Our

goal is to try to deter all of them from drinking or using and driving, and from making bad decisions behind the wheel of a car. We are trying to make them think before they get into a vehicle with an impaired driver."

About midday, an auto crash will be staged outside the school. Emergency medical services workers, the coroner and a local funeral home will respond. Two students will be transported to Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center. One will be listed as dead at the scene. A student driver will be subjected to a field sobriety test, taken into custody and taken to jail.

Students participating as accident victims will spend the evening on a retreat. The following day, May 12, stu-



**Pike County Court Judge  
John Price**

dents will attend a staged funeral in the school auditorium and a court proceeding at the Pike County Courthouse.

The program is scheduled for the week of the prom at the local high school.

"Homecoming, prom and

graduation times are the three most dangerous times for a student to go out and drink and drive," said Pike County Court Judge John Price, who presides over the Youth Court and Juvenile Drug Court. "We hope to be able to have them experience, in a way that is not going to be harmful, the effects of what actually could happen to them."

"We have lost too many young people to the effects of alcohol and drugs," Hensley said. "They think they are invincible."

Although none of the students will know when a particular person will be called out, all who are participating have volunteered and will be oriented about the program in advance, Hensley said.

## Judicial Performance appoints new chair



**Chancery Judge  
H. David Clark II**

Members of the Commission on Judicial Performance on March 12 elected Chancery Judge H. David Clark II of Forest as Chairman. Circuit Judge Lee Howard of Starkville became Vice Chairman.

Circuit Judge James L. Roberts Jr. of Pontotoc was appointed to the commission as an alternate member. His term began Jan. 1.

John B. Toney is executive director of the commis-

sion, replacing Luther T. Brantley III. Toney previously served as a circuit judge in the 20th District of Madison and Rankin Counties before returning to private law practice.

Circuit Judge Henry Lackey of Calhoun City previously served as chairman. At the conclusion of Judge Lackey's term, Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. presented him with a certificate commending his service.

## Davis Magnet second graders visit court



Second graders at Jackson's Davis Magnet School visited the Gartin Justice Building in February and March as part of their Congress Street neighborhood walk. The school is near the courthouse.

Court of Appeals Judge Virginia Carlton did mock trials with two classes on Feb. 24. Judge Carlton invited students to assume the roles of judges, lawyers and staff to introduce them to the workings of trial and appellate courts and the importance of rights afforded by the justice system. Judge Carlton, in top left photo, explains fingerprints as evidence.

Small groups of students returned with cameras and questions on March 1 and 3. Students interviewed Supreme Court Justice George C. Carlson Jr., top right photo, Justice Ann H. Lamar, bottom right, with Law Librarian Amanda Watson, and Justice Randy Pierce, bottom left photo.



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## **Librarian lock-up raises funds for summer camp**



State Library Catalog Librarian Liz Thompson was led out in handcuffs and put in a patrol car by an officer from the Hinds County Sheriff's Office on Sept. 30. Thompson surrendered her freedom as part of the Muscular Dystrophy Association Lock-up. Donations for "bail" for Thompson and others helped raise funds for this year's MDA summer camp for kids.

