

Mississippi Courts

October 2021

Published by the Administrative Office of Courts

Judges seek public's help in keeping courts open



Chancellor Vincent Davis, who took the COVID vaccine, prepares to record a testimonial ad.

The Mississippi Judiciary is collaborating with the Mississippi State Department of Health in a public health and safety awareness campaign regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thirteen trial and appellate judges from across the state spoke in videotaped testimonials about their efforts to keep the courts open while protecting public health. Each said they received the vaccine.

The testimonials began airing in each judge's local area on television and ra-

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Chief Justice issues emergency orders regarding COVID-19



Chief Justice Mike Randolph talks about public safety and the pandemic in an Aug. 10 radio interview on SuperTalk.

Chief Justice Mike Randolph issued an emergency order on Aug. 5 implementing COVID-19 safeguards in all courts in the state, and extended the COVID safeguards by orders on Sept. 2 and Oct. 13.

The emergency orders give individual judges discretion to adopt safety measures. Judges have discretion to postpone jury trials scheduled through Nov. 12.

The Oct. 13 order leaves in effect other safety provisions reimplemented Aug. 5, including using teleconferencing, videoconferencing and electronic filing to limit in-

person contact in courts, and allowing felony plea hearings, felony sentencing hearings and probation violation hearings to be conducted remotely by way of interactive audiovisual equipment.

Chief Justice Randolph in Emergency Administrative Order 21 said, "If not otherwise prohibited, all courts are urged to limit in-person, courtroom contact as much as possible by utilizing available technologies, including electronic filing, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing." The order said, "Any in-person proceedings shall be limited to attorneys, parties, witnesses, security

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Judge Stanley Sorey



Judge Deborah McDonald



Chancellor Tiffany Grove



Judge Carlyn Hicks

dio on Sept. 6. Production and air time were paid for by the Department of Health.

Judges who gave testimonials include Justice Dawn Beam of Sumrall, Justice Robert P. Chamberlin of Hernando, Court

of Appeals Judge Anthony N. Lawrence III of Pascagoula, Court of Appeals Judge Deborah McDonald of Fayette, Chancellor Vincent Davis of Fayette, Chancellor Tiffany Grove of Raymond, Chancellor Joseph Kilgore of Phila-

delphia, Chancellor Jacqueline Mask of Tupelo, Chancellor Bennie L. Richard of Greenville, Circuit Judge Kelly Luther of Ripley, Circuit Judge Stanley Sorey of Raleigh, Chancellor Charles E. Smith of Meridian and

Hinds County Court Judge Carlyn Hicks of Jackson.

Chief Justice Mike Randolph said that all courts have a constitutional and statutory responsibility to remain open. The Chief Justice reimplemented safety guidelines for all

Jury trial delays extended by Emergency Administrative Order 22

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officers, members of the press, and other necessary persons, as determined by the trial judge.”

Chief Justice Randolph said that all courts have a constitutional and statutory responsibility to remain open. The Aug. 5 order lists more than a dozen proceedings which must be conducted in person if remote technology is unavailable or not feasible.

Judges are strongly encouraged to refer to Mississippi State Department of Health guidelines for preventing spread of COVID-19, including recommendations for social distancing, capacity limitations on gatherings and personal protective measures including face coverings.

Chief Justice Randolph said the worsened pandemic required changes to

safeguard the public. He said, “Unfortunately, circumstances have precipitously deteriorated, especially with respect to the Delta variant of COVID-19. On today's date, State Epidemiologist Dr. Paul Byers reported to the Court that the Delta variant is much more contagious and spreading three times faster than other strains. As of August 2, 2021, there were 1,574 new COVID-19 confirmed infections in Mississippi. Two days later, on August 4, 2021, the number of new confirmed infections had more than doubled to 3,164. These new cases are dominated by the Delta variant and a growing number of infections are found in individuals aged 40 or younger. COVID-19-related hospitalizations and ICU occupancy are rapidly rising to levels

seen during the worst days of the pandemic in Mississippi, with multiple hospitals throughout the state at maximum capacity. Unvaccinated Mississippians account for the overwhelming majority of confirmed infections, emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and deaths. Dr. Byers further stated that between June 1 and August 1, 2021, unvaccinated individuals accounted for 97% of COVID-19 cases, 89% of hospitalizations, and 82% of deaths. The latest guidance from the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) continues to encourage eligible individuals to ‘get a COVID-19 vaccination’ and recommends ‘wearing a mask in all indoor public settings, even if you are vaccinated.’ Similarly, ‘to maximize protection from the Delta variant and pre-

vent possibly spreading it to others,’ federal health authorities now recommend ‘wearing a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.’ According to Dr. Byers, every county in Mississippi presently constitutes ‘an area of substantial or high transmission.’”

The Chief Justice said a Sept. 2 order, “Because there has been no discernible reduction in the number of COVID-19 cases reported daily by the Mississippi Department of Health since Emergency Administrative Order-21 was filed, in my capacity as chief administrative officer of all courts in the state, I find that Emergency Administrative Order 21 should be extended.”

The Oct. 13 order continued the previous COVID safeguards.



Chancellor Charles Smith



Chancellor Bennie Richard



Chancellor Joseph Kilgore



Chancellor Jacqueline Mask

state courts on Aug. 5 and extended the safety measures on Sept. 2.

Chief Justice Randolph asked for cooperation from the public to keep courts open and protect court officials, staff and those who have business there.

“We need the public’s help so we can safely do our jobs. We need the public’s help to protect our court system,” Chief Justice Randolph said.

Judge Davis said people who come to court are not there by choice, but rather are compelled to be there. “They are not there because they want to be there. They are commanded to be there by the power of the state of Mississippi.”

Liz Sharlot, Director of Communications for the Mississippi State Department of Health, said, “We are incredibly grateful for

the opportunity to work with such fine individuals who were willing to give their time to produce these radio and TV spots. When Chief Justice Randolph approached me with the idea, I welcomed the unique opportunity to further reach out to Mississippians. The end product is exactly what we envisioned and will hopefully encourage others to get vaccinated.”

Judges shared their experiences. Some were personal, and painful.

Judge Sorey said that COVID claimed the lives of his wife, his sister-in-law and a friend and fellow judge. “Last October, I lost my wife of 27 years to COVID. This was before the vaccine was available.”

Lynn Sorey went by ambulance to a hospital on Labor Day 2020. She died Oct. 8, 2020. Her sister, Lisa Headrick of Raleigh, died Sept. 12, 2020, of COVID. Circuit Judge Eddie H. Bowen of Raleigh died Feb. 7, 2021, of complications from COVID.

Judge McDonald said, “I am a COVID survivor. I had COVID last year in June, and I quarantined in my house alone for 17 days. Thank God I didn’t have to be hospitalized.”

Everyone knew someone who died of COVID.

Judge Luther said, “I have lost a number of close friends due to COVID.”

Judge Hicks recalled the Aug. 4 death of Hinds County Sheriff Lee Vance. His death “was a monumental loss to Hinds County and the state of Mississippi,” she said.



Justice Robert Chamberlin, Court of Appeals Judge Anthony Lawrence and Circuit Judge Kelly Luther watch another judge record a COVID vaccine message.



Justice Dawn Beam talks about necessity to keep courts open and benefits of COVID vaccine.

Sheriff Vance's cause of death was cardiorespiratory failure as a result of COVID-19.

Judge Lawrence recalled the Aug. 12 death of George County Deputy Sheriff Bobby Daffin. Lawrence, a former district attorney, had worked with Daffin.

Judge Lawrence said of his family's decision to receive the vaccine, "We decided to get the vaccine to protect ourselves, our friends and the community in which we live."

Judge Davis recalled elected officials and classmates who died of COVID. "When I think about those kinds of things, it's incumbent on all of us to do all we can for everybody else."

The courts must remain open despite the pandemic.

Judge Sorey said, "It's imperative that the courts remain open. For criminal cases, the right to a speedy

trial is guaranteed. If the courts don't remain open, that right is violated."

Justice Beam said, "Our courts have been determined to stay open because people's needs continue to exist. And so we want to do all we can to serve Mississippi. With this Delta variant, it's my friends that are sick and it's hitting way close to home."

Justice Chamberlin said, "Now more than ever, it's vital that we keep our courts open and accessible to the people of the state of Mississippi. Justice delayed is justice denied."

Judge McDonald said, "It is very important that everyone gets his day in court. Our mission is to keep the courts open and to do it in a safe manner."

Judge Luther said, "It's important that we keep the wheels of justice moving, to protect the citizens and those charged with felony

crimes."

Judge Smith said, "The economy has to stay open. The government has to stay open. If people can't get into the courtroom to seek justice, there is no justice....The wheels of justice have to turn. We are just one of the spokes."

Judge Grove said Chancery Courts "touch some of the hardest times that a family will go through." COVID has added to the issues heard in Chancery. At a recent guardianship clinic, there were "three families where the only parent those children had, died of COVID." She said, "When people need access to the court system, we must be there to provide that access."

Judge Richard recalled a case in which a mother and father last year had a dispute over visitation with their child. The next time the case came before the court, the mother had died

of COVID.

Judge Davis said, "When there is a problem, people need to have the protection of the courts. If the court is not there, the rights are going to be settled somehow in the streets....This is a very stressful time for everyone. COVID is scary."

Judge Kilgore said issues such as child custody require immediate attention. "Those things just won't wait."

Judge Mask said, "It is imperative that Chancery Court remain open. We have the opportunity or the necessity to hear emergency cases where children's safety and well-being is at issue." Many Chancery proceedings have life-changing effects.

Judge Mask said that technology has allowed Chancery Court proceedings to go forward.

Youth Courts deal with abuse and neglect of children, and with youths who have committed delinquent acts. Judge Hicks said that Hinds County Youth Court utilizes technology to conduct virtual hearings to lessen the chance of exposure to the virus for those who are compelled to come to court.

Judge Kilgore said, "I'm fully confident in our ability to rise to the occasion. We've all known people who have suffered. It's caused a lot of pain in a lot of families. It's going to take us pulling together to get through this."

The videos may be viewed on the Department of Health YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/HealthyMS>.

Greg Snowden becomes director of Administrative Office of Courts

Former House Speaker Pro Tempore Greg Snowden of Meridian became director of the Administrative Office of Courts on June 22.

Chief Justice Mike Randolph said that Snowden's record of leadership and experience with governmental performance based budgeting and evidence based programming makes him ideally suited to serve the Courts of Mississippi.

Chief Justice Randolph said, "He has a proven track record in governmental performance based budget planning. We are very pleased that he has agreed to serve the courts in this important role."

Snowden was House Speaker Pro Tempore 2012-2019. He served on the Joint Legislative Budget Committee and was subcommittee chairman handling judiciary budgets on the House Appropriations Committee. He was chair of the House Management Committee and was a member of the Performance Based Budgeting Committee. Former Gov. Phil Bryant appointed Snowden in 2014 to the Commission for a Balanced Budget, a multi-state compact of which Mississippi is a founding member.

Snowden said, "I believe my budgeting experience in the Legislature and my history of overseeing the finance and personnel affairs of the House of Representatives will be of benefit to our State's Judiciary. I am deeply grateful to the Supreme Court for demonstrating their confidence in my abilities."

Snowden said he is excited by the challenges and



Greg Snowden

opportunities presented by leading the AOC. "It is quite an adjustment moving from the Legislature, which sometimes can be a hyper-partisan, political environment, to the Judiciary, which assiduously strives for a completely non-partisan, non-political atmosphere," he said. "Hopefully, I am navigating through the transition successfully."

"My work has been made much easier because of the extremely competent professionals surrounding me at AOC," Snowden said. "We have a great team in place. Our mission is to serve the courts - all of the courts - and that philosophy drives everything we do. The local judges, administrators and clerks also generally have been very welcoming and encouraging since I have been here."

Snowden nearly became an inaugural member of the Mississippi Court of Appeals, having been defeated in 1994 by a mere 363 votes out of more than 112,000 cast in the old 19-county Third Congressional District. Although a victor in the party primary, the results were held for naught when the U.S. De-

partment of Justice precleared a late change in the law, necessitating a new election in November. "I certainly thought it was a tough break at the time," he said. "However, I would have never had many of the wonderful experiences I later enjoyed in my law practice and in the Legislature if I had become a judge in 1994. As the Proverbs say, God indeed moves in mysterious ways."

Snowden was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1999 and represented Lauderdale County District 83 from January 2000 through December 2019. He was a member of the Judiciary A; Judiciary En Banc; Rules; and Compilation, Revision, and Publication committees.

He served terms on the executive committees of the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, and the Southern Legislative Conference. He was recognized among the Top 50 Influential People in Mississippi in 2016.

Snowden is the second former high-ranking legislator to lead AOC. Former Senator Martin Smith of Poplarville was AOC's first director after the administrative arm of the courts was created by the Legislature and began operation in 1995.

Kevin Lackey retired as AOC director on June 30, 2020, after 19 years as director and more than 30 years of state service. Lisa Counts, deputy director of AOC, admirably served the courts as interim director, Chief Justice Randolph said.

Snowden, 67, grew up in Meridian. He is a graduate of Meridian High School. He graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Alabama, earning a bachelor of arts degree in history. He was selected as a member of Phi Beta Kappa and was a College of Arts and Sciences Honors Scholar. He earned a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Vanderbilt University School of Law, where he was an associate editor of the *Vanderbilt Law Review*. He worked as a law clerk for former Senate Watergate Committee minority counsel Fred Thompson, who later became a U.S. Senator from Tennessee.

Snowden has practiced law for 42 years. He was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1979, and to the Mississippi Bar in 1981. He practiced law in Florida from 1979 to 1981. He practiced law in Meridian with the firm of Bourdeaux and Jones 1981 to 1995, and was a solo practitioner in Meridian 1995 to 2020. He became special counsel to the firm of Barry, Thaggard and May, formerly Bourdeaux and Jones, in 2021. He was Board Attorney for the Clarke County Board of Supervisors since 2012, and as municipal attorney for the town of Stonewall since 1995. He was chair of the Real Property Section of the Mississippi Bar 1993 - 1994. He is a member of the American Bar Association, the Florida Bar, the Mississippi Bar and the Lauderdale County Bar Association.

He and his wife, Renee, have two daughters, Emily and Katie, and eight grandchildren.

Mississippi makes improvements in access to justice



Pictured are, left to right, Joy Phillips, Chancellor Jacqueline Mask, Chancellor Denise Owens and Rodger Wilder. Judge Mask and Wilder are current Access to Justice Commission co-chairs. Phillips and Judge Owens are former co-chairs of the Commission.

Co-Chair Rodger Wilder of Gulfport said 15 years of work is beginning to show progress. “This is a great achievement for the Commission. I am proud of what we have done.”

Chief Justice Mike Randolph read from the Supreme Court’s En Banc order of June 28, 2006, which created the Access to Justice Commission: “This Court is committed to the principle that justice should be available to all persons without regard to economic status.”

Chief Justice Randolph thanked current and former Commission members. “Today we are recognizing you all for doing something about it,” he said.

Justice Dawn Beam, a member of the Access to Justice Commission, said it’s easy to be numbed to a last place ranking. “We get so used to being 50th that it doesn’t even move us.” One in four Mississippians lives in poverty, 45 percent of Black children live in poverty, and 22.9 percent of children are food deprived. At some point, they are hungry. “That should move all of us not just to tears, but to action,” she said. “We cannot be satisfied with where we are. We have to move onward.”

The National Center for Access to Justice ranked states in four civil justice policy areas: attorney access, self help, language access and disability access. The 2021 Justice Index also included for the first time a separate criminal justice ranking dedicated to curbing excessive reliance on fines and fees.



Nicole McLaughlin

Mississippi has made great improvements in providing legal access for the poor in civil disputes, yet there is still much work to do, leaders of the Access to Justice Commission said at the Commission’s 15th Anniversary celebration on June 8.

Mississippi moved from



Justice Dawn Beam

last in the nation in 2016 to 34th out of 52 jurisdictions on the Justice Index survey released on May 18. An even greater gain was rising to 14th in how the state assists self-represented litigants – up from next to last four years ago. The improvements ranked the state as seventh

in the nation for overall progress, said Access to Justice Executive Director Nicole McLaughlin of Tupelo. The survey, conducted by the National Center for Access to Justice at Fordham Law School, is a measure of 163 access to justice best practices in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

McLaughlin said, “If we are moving up in the survey, we are helping people.”

Chancellor Jacqueline Mask of Tupelo, Access to Justice Commission Co-Chair, said. “It surely is encouraging to see the numbers. I believe we are truly making a difference in the lives of so many people. We have to continue to move forward.”

Chancellor Jacqueline Mask receives 2021 Chief Justice Award



**Chancellor
Jacqueline Mask**

Chancellor Jacqueline Mask of Tupelo is this year's recipient of the Chief Justice Award. Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Randolph presented the award on July 16 at the Mississippi Bar Convention.

The annual award recognizes individuals whose actions significantly impact the law, the administration of justice, and the people of the state.

Chief Justice Randolph selected Judge Mask in

recognition of her leadership that has improved access to justice for the poor. Judge Mask became Co-Chair of the Access to Justice Commission in 2016, two years after the Supreme Court appointed her as a member of the Commission.

The plaque which Chief Justice Randolph presented to Judge Mask reads, in part: "Your tireless energy and dedication to assist the poor has improved access to justice for all. You have exceeded every standard by which all judges are measured."

In 2015, Judge Mask began scheduling a free legal clinic in every courthouse in the eight counties of the First Chancery District in north Mississippi. Judge Mask encouraged lawyers in each county to donate their time. In conjunction with the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission, Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, the University of Mississippi School of Law Pro

Bono Initiative and local bar leaders, she has led the charge to provide legal assistance to low income people in family law matters such as divorce, child support and guardianship.

Judge Mask recognized the urgent civil legal needs of poor people across the state. With the support of the Mississippi Supreme Court and a work force of volunteer lawyers, free legal clinics were held in all 20 Chancery Court districts across the state in 2018. Legal clinics were held statewide again in 2019. The pandemic forced in-person free legal clinics to be curtailed in 2020, so the Access to Justice Commission helped provide virtual clinics and helped produce a series of informational videos for self-represented litigants.

In recognition of the extraordinary efforts to improve civil legal services, the American Bar Association in June 2019 named the Mississippi Bar as the recipient of the 2019

Harrison Tweed Award. In 2020, the Access to Justice Commission and the Mississippi Bar received the E. Smythe Gambrell Professionalism Award from the ABA for their efforts to provide free family law clinics statewide. Judge Mask has been a key leader in this effort.

Judge Mask is the senior chancellor of the First Chancery District, which includes Alcorn, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, Prentiss, Pontotoc, Tishomingo and Union counties. She became chancellor in January 1999. She was vice-chair, then chair of the Conference of Chancery Judges.

She was in private practice for 16 years and was Youth Court public defender for 15 years. She is a 1979 graduate of Mississippi University for Women. She earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law, and was admitted to the practice of law in 1982.

New members appointed to Access to Justice Commission

Hancock County Court Judge Trent Favre, Harrison County Law Library Director Stephen T. Johnson and Jackson attorneys Cynthia Lee and Julian D. Miller have been appointed to the Access to Justice Commission. Hinds Chancery Judge Tiffany Grove of Raymond and Itawamba County Chancery Clerk Michelle Clouse of Fulton were reappointed to the Commission.

Chief Justice Mike Randolph issued the appointment order on July 9. The

appointees will serve three-year terms set to end June 30, 2024.

Access to Justice Commission Executive Director Nicole McLaughlin of Tupelo said, "The Commission is excited to have these new and returning Commissioners and we look forward to the insight they will bring to assist with projects and initiatives that expand access to justice in Mississippi."

The Supreme Court created the Access to Justice Commission in June

2006. The Commission works to develop and recommend policies, programs and initiatives which assist the judiciary in meeting needs for civil legal services to the poor.

The Access to Justice Commission provides assistance to low income people through free family law clinics across the state. The Commission most recently partnered with the Mississippi Center for Justice to create a virtual court navigator for litigants in Justice Court. The

Commission has worked to help self-represented litigants in Chancery Court by creating forms to help them draft documents. The Commission helped produce a series of self-help videos for litigants in Chancery and Youth Courts. The Commission through its website also provides information about eviction and other housing issues, expungement, immigration law, workers' rights, and assistance for the elderly and veterans.

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Judge Trent Favre



Stephen T. Johnson



Cynthia Lee



Julian D. Miller



Chancellor Tiffany Grove

Judge Favre was appointed Hancock County Court and Youth Court Judge in January 2018. The Commission on Children's Justice recognized him in 2019 as a Champions for Children. The Mississippi Bar named him the 2020 recipient of the Judicial Excellence Award. He previously served as City Attorney for Bay St. Louis and was an assistant prosecutor for Bay St. Louis and the Hancock County Justice Court.

Johnson, of Gulfport, has served as director of the Harrison County Law Library since February 2018. He was a police officer for more than 20 years, working for the Gulfport Police Department, Long Beach Police



Michelle Clouse

Department and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.

Lee is an associate at Phelps Dunbar in Jackson. Her practice includes labor and employment law. She is a participant in the American Bar Association Litigation Section Young Lawyer Leadership Program and a member of the Mississippi Bar's Young Lawyers Division Diversity Committee. She is an adjunct professor at the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Miller is an associate at Forman Watkins & Krutz in Jackson. His practice includes administrative, commercial, labor and employment, products liability, education and appellate litigation. He is ad-

junct clinical supervising attorney of the Education Law Clinic at Mississippi College School of Law. He is a founder and director of the Delta Fresh Foods Initiative and the Clutter 2 Compost Initiative. He helped found the Trinity Development Foundation and the Mississippi Chapter of Black Alliance for Educational Options.

Judge Grove has served on the Hinds Chancery Court since January 2019. The Mississippi Women

Lawyers Association named her Outstanding Woman Lawyer of the Year in 2018. She was chair of the Women in the Profession Committee of the Mississippi Bar for two years. She is former chair of the Capital Area Bar Association, CABA.

Clouse took office as Chancery Clerk of Itawamba County in January 2016. She has served on the Commission since June 2018. She is a former teacher.

4 appointed to Board of Certified Court Reporters



Melissa Magee

The Supreme Court appointed two new members to the Board of Certified Court Reporters and reappointed two members. New appointees are Court

Reporter Melissa Magee of Mt. Olive and attorney Jerry D. Sharp of Laurel. Circuit Judge David H. Strong of McComb and Court Reporter Huey Bang of Pass Christian were reappointed to the Board. Chief Justice Mike Randolph signed the appointment order on July 6. New terms on the Board are two years. Magee and Bang were nominated by the Mississippi Court Reporters Association. Magee is a freelance court reporter. Bang is an official court reporter for the Second Circuit Court District of Harrison, Hancock and Stone counties. Judge Strong was nominated for

Classes for stenographic court reporters began in August

Seven aspiring court reporters began classes in August in Pearl River Community College's inaugural program.

The program is designed to respond to an urgent need for well-trained professional stenographers to record, transcribe and create an official record of court proceedings. There is a shortage of certified court reporters, as retirements have outpaced new people coming into the profession. There are 281 licensed court reporters in Mississippi, according to the Mississippi Board of Certified Court Reporters. There were 375 licensed court reporters 10 years ago, including official court reporters for federal and state courts as well as freelance court reporters.

For students considering court reporting as a profession, "You are not going to have a problem finding a

job," said Rose Sanchez of Hattiesburg, president of the Mississippi Court Reporters Association. She is a court reporter in the 15th Circuit District.

Other job opportunities include closed captioning in television, movies and sports broadcasting.

Sanchez and Twila Jordan-Hoover of Carriere, immediate past president of the Court Reporters Association, teach classes on Friday and Saturday twice a month. The hybrid program also includes online classes.

The Mississippi Court Reporters Association set plans in motion for a training program about three years ago. Sanchez, Jordan-Hoover and other court reporters volunteered to give instruction through a national organization that does a hybrid online six-week introduction to court reporting. The free pro-



Rose Sanchez is one of two instructors for the training program.

gram, A to Z, lets students see a possible career path without investing a lot of time and money.

Online programs are available through which students can pursue training, but the nearest classroom program for court reporting was in Gadsden, Ala. "The problem is if they leave, what if they don't come back," Jordan-Hoover said. "Having a school here will allow us to keep our students here and fulfill the need we have in our state."

Jordan-Hoover is a court reporter for Chancellor Deborah Gambrell Chambers in the 10th Chancery District. She discussed the association's ideas with Judge Gambrell Chambers, who reached out to Chief Justice Mike Randolph and Mississippi Judicial College Director Randy Pierce. They discussed ways to set up a training program. Pearl

River Community College agreed to provide the program and obtained approval for the curriculum.

"There was a need and we just figured out a way to bring it to fruition," said Judge Gambrell Chambers.

"Pearl River Community College and its leadership are to be commended," Pierce said.

Chief Justice Randolph said, "I am extremely pleased that the leaders of the Court Reporters Association, in conjunction with urging by Judge Gambrell Chambers, and the willingness of Pearl River Community College, have created this wonderful opportunity for young people to get involved in a very well-respected and well-paid profession. This will provide a career path for those individuals who do not desire a four year education, but seek a meaningful and rewarding career."

Board of Court Reporters, *continued from page 8*



Judge David H. Strong

reappointment by the Supreme Court. Sharp was nominated by the Mississippi Bar.

The Legislature created the nine-member Board of



Huey Bang

Certified Court Reporters to oversee licensing of court reporters and temporary permission for non-certified and nonresident court reporters.

Judges Westbrook, McDonald receive National Bar awards



Court of Appeals Judges Latrice Westbrook and Deborah McDonald received National Bar Awards.

Mississippi Court of Appeals Judges Latrice A. Westbrook and Deborah A. McDonald are among 2021 award recipients honored by the National Bar Association.

They were recognized Oct. 14 and 15 during the National Bar Association's 32nd Annual Wiley A. Branton Symposium at the Westin Hotel in Jackson.

Judge Westbrook, of Lexington, received the Presidential Rising Star Award. Rising Star Awards also were presented to District Attorney Scott Colom of Columbus and Sen. Derrick Simmons of Greenville.

Judge McDonald, of Fayette, received the Presidential Unsung Hero Award. Attorneys Kenneth Mayfield of Tupelo and Carroll Rhodes of Hazlehurst also received Unsung Hero Awards.

The National Bar Association, in announcing the awards, said, "the NBA recognizes barristers whose careers exemplify Wiley Branton's objectives of civil rights and equal justice for all. The NBA is proud to honor this year's various Wiley Branton Award Recipients as their careers clearly outline their commitment to being a change agent and using their legal acumen for the greater good."

Judge Bernice Donald of the Sixth U.S. Court of Appeals received the Lifetime Achievement Award. Judge Donald, who grew up in DeSoto County, became the first African-American female judge in Tennessee when she was elected to the Shelby County Court of General Sessions in 1982. She became the first African-American female fed-

eral bankruptcy judge in the nation when she was appointed in 1988. She was nominated to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee in December 1995. She was appointed to the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in 2011.

Presidential Visionary Award recipients are Clarksdale Mayor Chuck Espy and Ashley Robinson, Vice President and Director of Athletics at Jackson State University.

Presidential Black Excellence Award recipients are Mississippi College School of Law Dean Patricia Bennett of Jackson, Mississippi Bar President Robert Gibbs of Jackson and attorney Orlando Richmond of Ridgeland.

Wiley A. Branton Award recipients are U.S. Congressman Bennie Thompson, attorney Con-

stance Slaughter-Harvey of Forest, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy of Jackson and attorney Robert McDuff of Jackson.

Branton, who began his law practice in Pine Bluff, Ark., represented African-American students in litigation that desegregated the Little Rock public schools in 1957. He represented Freedom Riders in Mississippi, who were arrested for desegregating public transportation and public accommodations. He worked to increase voter registration and represented African-Americans involved in voter registration drives throughout the South. He was a special assistant to the United States Attorney General, where he worked on implementation of the Civil Rights Act. He led anti-poverty and social action programs. He served as Dean of the Howard University School of Law, where he worked to train the next generation of civil rights lawyers.

The National Bar Association, founded in 1925, is the nation's oldest and largest national network of predominantly African-American attorneys and judges.

Judge Westbrook was elected to the Court of Appeals in November 2016 and took office on Jan. 3, 2017.

She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tenn., and a law degree from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law.

She became an assistant

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Judge Carlton honored with Champion of Change Award



Judge Virginia Carlton, at right, is congratulated by incoming North Jackson Rotary Club President Dr. Suman Das.

Court of Appeals Presiding Judge Virginia C. Carlton was honored with the Champion of Change

Award presented by the Women in Rotary Committee of Rotary District 6820, which includes 45 Rotary clubs.

Judge Carlton is a member of the North Jackson Rotary Club. The award was presented at a luncheon on May 11 in Jackson.

Judge Carlton was honored as “a longstanding female Rotarian with unique and stellar accomplishments,” said Ed Thurman of Lexington, Rotary District Governor. Judge Carlton was recognized for her judicial and military careers.

The award celebrates the accomplishments of women professionals for their careers and contributions to their communities, said Barbara Travis, chair of the Women in Rotary Committee. The award is officially called the Sylvia Whitlock Champion of Change Award, named for one of the first three wom-

en who joined the formerly all male service organization in 1987 in California.

Judge Carlton said she became a Rotarian for the first time when the Rotary Club of her hometown, Columbia, asked her to join in 2000. She was among the first women to be invited.

“Scott and I really are dedicated to community service,” she said, referring to her husband, Dr. Scott Carlton, a family practice physician. Rotary Club gives her an opportunity to be involved in community service projects.

“Scott and I both are military and came up through the ranks,” she said. They were both indoctrinated in the “be, know and do” principles of leadership. “It’s not enough to develop competence if you don’t act on it,” she said.

Judge Carlton is the second woman to attain the position of Presiding Judge on the Court of Appeals. Four women currently serve on that court. She has served on the Court of Appeals since January 2007.

The Columbia native served as State Representative for Mississippi House District 100 from January 2004 through December 2006. She also served as an assistant district attorney and county public defender.

Judge Carlton’s more than 24 years in the military included active duty, Reserve and National Guard duty. She retired from military service in February 2015 as a Colonel.

National Bar Association Awards, *continued from page 10*

district attorney in the Second Circuit District in October 1997. She was the first African American woman assistant district attorney in the Second Circuit District. She served as prosecutor for the city of Durant and as city attorney for the town of Isola. For almost 10 years, she was a public defender in Holmes County. She was interim communications director for Jackson Mayor Chokwe Lumumba in 2013, then joined the Jackson City Attorney’s office as legal counsel for the Jackson Police Department. She returned to pri-

vate law practice in 2014. She served as Municipal Judge for the city of Lexington before she was elected to the Court of Appeals.

Judge McDonald was elected in November 2018, and began her judicial term on Jan. 7, 2019.

She is a graduate of Alcorn State University, where she studied social science education. She earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

She began her legal career at Southwest Mississippi Legal Services in McComb. She was staff

attorney, managing attorney and executive director. She entered private practice in 1991. Her practice areas included civil rights, employment discrimination, consumer law, personal injury, product liability and family law. She did extensive work in voting rights litigation, including legislative redistricting.

She was Fayette Municipal Judge for 23 years. She was attorney for the city of Port Gibson, Jefferson County Hospital, Jefferson County Nursing Home and the Hazlehurst School District.

Task Force to study, recommend changes in domestic relations laws



Justice Kenneth Griffis

The 2021 Legislature established a task force to study Mississippi's domestic relations laws and to develop recommendations to the Legislature and the Supreme Court for the purpose of revising Mississippi's domestic relations laws and rules of court.

The Task Force, composed of judges, attorneys, child advocates, and law professors, is studying models used by other states for child support, child care, and support expenses and will analyze current trends of law regarding no-fault divorce, child support payments past the age of majority for disabled children, and costs for guardians ad litem who represent the best interests of children.

The Task Force is expected to make recommendations on or before Dec. 1.

The 15-member Task Force includes:

Senate Judiciary A Chairman Brice Wiggins of Pascagoula and House Judicial A Chairman Angela Cockerham of Magnolia; Justice Kenneth Griffis of Ridgeland; Chancellor Troy Odom of Brandon and Chancellor Jennifer



Chancellor Troy Odom

Schloegel of Gulfport, appointed by Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Randolph; Court of Appeals Judge David Neil McCarty of Jackson, appointed by Court of Appeals Chief Judge Donna Barnes; attorneys Mark A. Chinn of Jackson, Donna S. Smith of Columbus, A. Regnal Blackledge of Collins and Diandra Hosey of Jackson, appointed by the Missis-



Chancellor Jennifer Schloegel

sippi Bar; attorney guardians ad litem Melissa B. DiFatta of Pascagoula and Lee Ann Turner of Starkville, appointed by the Mississippi Bar; Division of Child Support Enforcement Senior Attorney J. Michael McCauley of Bay St. Louis, appointed by Mississippi Department of Human Services Executive Director Robert G. Anderson; Professor Deb-



Judge David McCarty

orah Bell of Oxford, Senior Faculty in Service at the University of Mississippi School of Law, appointed by Dean Susan Duncan; Professor Shirley Kennedy of Jackson, Director of the Family and Children's Law Center and Director of Child Advocacy Programs at Mississippi College School of Law, appointed by Dean Patricia Bennett.

Three reappointed to Commission on CLE



Sam H. Buchanan

The Supreme Court has reappointed attorneys Sam H. Buchanan of Hattiesburg, Elizabeth Lee Maron of Ridgeland and



Elizabeth Lee Maron

Robert Michael Tyner Jr. of Sumner to the Commission on Mandatory Continuing Legal Education.

The nine-member Com-



Robert M. Tyner

mission has supervisory authority over the administration of rules regarding continuing legal education

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Supreme Court reappoints three to Board of Bar Admissions



William Manuel

The Supreme Court reappointed attorneys J. William Manuel of Jackson, Walter Alan Davis of Oxford and Michael C. McCabe Jr. of Gulfport to the Board of Bar Admissions.

Their three-year terms will end Oct. 31, 2024. Davis and McCabe have served on the Board for six years. Manuel has served for three years.

Justice Kenneth Griffis reappointed Manuel, Justice Josiah D. Coleman reappointed Davis, and Justice David M. Ishee



Walter Davis

reappointed McCabe. Chief Justice Mike Randolph signed the appointment order on Sept. 28.

Manuel is a partner in the Jackson office of Bradley Arant Boult Cummings. As a member of the firm's Litigation Practice Group, he defends commercial and employment litigation. He is former President of Mississippi Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates and former President of the Capital Area Bar Association. He received the 2019 Law-Related Public



Michael McCabe

Education Award from the Mississippi Bar Foundation for almost 25 years of involvement with the Mississippi High School Mock Trial competition. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Mississippi State University, *magna cum laude*, as a Harry S. Truman Scholar. He earned a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law.

Davis is a partner in Dunbar Davis in Oxford. His practice includes family law and estate litigation as well as business, em-

ployment and personal injury litigation for defense and plaintiffs. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Mississippi State University, *magna cum laude*, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law, *magna cum laude*. He is a member of American MENSA.

McCabe, a member of the Butler Snow firm, focuses his practice on litigation including business torts, real estate disputes and employment matters. He served for three years on the Committee on Character and Fitness. He was recently named Chair of the Mississippi Bar's Ethics Committee. He serves on the National Conference of Bar Examiners' Multistate Essay Examination /Multistate Performance Test Committee. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration, *magna cum laude*, from Mississippi State University, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi.

Buchanan, Maron, Tyner reappointed to Commission on Mandatory CLE, *continued from page 12*

requirements for attorneys in the state of Mississippi. The Supreme Court sets the rules for continuing legal education training.

Each of the nine Justices makes a recommendation for a member of the Commission. Justice David Ishee recommended Buchanan's reappointment. Presiding Justice Jim Kitchens recommended Maron's reappointment. Justice Robert P. Chamberlin recommended Tyner's reappointment. Chief Justice

Mike Randolph signed the appointment order on May 25. The three-year terms will end July 31, 2024.

Buchanan is executive director of the Mississippi Center for Legal Services. He has served in that capacity for more than 32 years, overseeing a staff of attorneys who provide free civil legal representation to low-income persons in 43 counties of central and south Mississippi. He has served on the Commission for 12 years.

Maron is a partner in the firm of Adams and Reese, where she advises clients in the areas of education law and employment law. She counsels school districts, community colleges and universities, and defends companies and public entities in employment and education related litigation. She has served on the Commission for almost 18 years, having been appointed in September 2003.

Tyner has a civil law practice in Sumner. His

practice includes real estate, estate planning, guardianships and conservatorships, and personal injury litigation. He has served on the Commission for three years.

In 2020, the Commission on CLE approved for credit 120 live programs that were held in the state, 684 live programs held outside the state of Mississippi and 5,397 programs that were given by satellite, teleconference or online webcasts.

Beam, Shelton, Broome reappointed Children's Justice Co-chairs



Justice Dawn Beam

Chief Justice Mike Randolph reappointed Commission on Children's Justice Co-Chairs Associate Justice Dawn H. Beam, Rankin County Court Judge Thomas Broome and Tenth District Chancellor Rhea Sheldon. Chief Justice Randolph also appointed new members and reappointed members. He signed the appointment order on Sept. 30.

The Commission on Children's Justice is made up of judges, child welfare professionals, educators, legislators and others involved with programs that work to ensure the well-being of children. The Mississippi Supreme Court created the Commission by order on April 26, 2006. The Supreme Court charged the Commission with developing a statewide comprehensive approach to improving the child welfare system; coordinating the three branches of government in assessing the impact of government actions on children who are abused or neglected; and recommending changes to improve children's safety, strengthen and support families, and promote



Judge Thomas Broome

public trust and confidence in the child welfare system.

Judges who are new members of the Commission include Madison County Court and Youth Court Judge Staci O'Neal; Lamar County Court and Youth Court Judge Brad Touchstone; Harrison County Court and Youth Court Judge Michael Dickinson; Hancock County Court and Youth Court Judge Trent Favre; and Hinds County Court and Youth Court Judge Carlyn Hicks.

Department of Child Protection Services staff joining the Commission are Commissioner Andrea Sanders; Jaworski Davenport, Deputy Commissioner for Child Safety; Karen Austin, Director of Federal Reporting; Kimberly Wheaton, Deputy Commissioner for Child Welfare; Shannon Rushton, Deputy Administrator for Human Capital; and Shaquita Mallett, Deputy Administrator for Child Welfare.

Legislators appointed to the Commission include Sen. Brice Wiggins of Pascagoula, Rep. Jansen Ow-



Chancellor Rhea Sheldon

en of Poplarville, Rep. Kent McCarty of Hattiesburg and Rep. Angela Cockerham of Magnolia.

Other new members include Deanna Graves, Youth Court Programs and Court Improvement Director for the Administrative Office of Courts; Rachelle Richardson, Deputy Director of the Division of Youth Services of the Mississippi Department of Human Services; Joe Goff, Chief of Advocacy and Counsel to the Mississippi Department of Education; Dr. David Elkin, Executive Director of the Center for the Advancement of Youth at the University of Mississippi Medical Center; Parent Constituent Representative Christine Simmons; and Youth Constituent Representative Haley Rowell.

Commission members who were reappointed are: Chief Justice Kevin Briscoe of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Youth Court Judge Holly Denson of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; First District Chancellor Jacqueline Mask; Lauderdale County and Youth Court Judge Veldore

Young-Graham; Mississippi Judicial College Executive Director Randy G. Pierce; Jurist in Residence Judge John Hudson; Access to Justice Commission Director Nicole McLaughlin; Special Assistant Attorney General Teri D. Gleason, Director of the Bureau of Victim Assistance; LaRenda J. Harrison, Bureau Director II of the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement; Lynda Stewart, Director of the Children's Division of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health; Mississippi Department of Human Services Executive Director Robert Anderson; Mississippi Department of Human Services Bureau Director Toni Kersh; Special Assistant Attorney General Paula Broome of the Prosecutor and Law Enforcement Training Division; Special Assistant Attorney General Anna Sukmann, Statewide Human Trafficking Victim Services Coordinator; Andre deGruy, Director of the Office of the State Public Defender; David Calder, Director of Children's Advocacy Clinic, University of Mississippi School of Law; Shirley Kennedy, Director of the Children's Advocacy Program, Mississippi College School of Law; Angela Robertson, Associate Director and Research Professor at the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University; Dr. Lisa Nored, Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Southern Mississippi; Dr. Scott Benton, Professor of Pediatrics, Director,

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Luther, Mozingo and Williamson are Circuit Conference leaders



Judge Kelly Luther

Officers elected in April by the Conference of Circuit Judges are Judge Kelly Luther of Ripley, chair; Judge Tony Mozingo of Oak Grove, vice-chair; and Judge Dal Williamson of Laurel, secretary-treasurer.

Officers were elected on April 28 during the Trial and Appellate Judges Conference in Biloxi.



Judge Tony Mozingo

Judge Luther previously served as Conference vice-chair. He has served as a Third District Circuit Judge since January 2015. Judge Luther served as an assistant district attorney for 19 years. He previously served as County Attorney for Pontotoc County, and as city judge for Pontotoc. He graduated from Pontotoc High School and attended Itawamba Junior College.



Judge Dal Williamson

He is a graduate of Mississippi State University, and earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

The Conference of Circuit Judges also nominated Judge Mozingo to the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules. Judge Mozingo previously served as secretary-treasurer of the Conference. He has served as a

Circuit Judge of the Fifteenth Circuit Court since January 2011. He previously served as Municipal Court Judge for the cities of Purvis and Lumberton, Justice Court Judge Pro Tempore for Jefferson Davis County, and attorney for the Lamar County Board of Supervisors. He graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi and earned a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law.

Judge Williamson has served as Jones County Circuit Judge since January 2015. He practiced law for 34 years before election. He is a past president of the Jones County Bar Association. He earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law. He is a graduate of Jones County Junior College and Mississippi State University.

Children's Justice

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Division of Forensic Medicine, Medical Director, Children's Safe Center, University of Mississippi Medical Center; Amy Wilson, Executive Director of CASA Mississippi; Karla Tye, Executive Director of Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi; Devon Loggins, President and Chief Executive Officer of Mississippi United Methodist Children's Homes; John Damon, Director of Canopy Children's Solutions; Linda Southward, Executive Director of Children's Foundation for Mississippi; and Patti Marshall, advisor to the Children's Foundation of Mississippi.



The Mississippi Municipal Court Judges Association elected officers on June 10 during the summer conference in Biloxi. Officers pictured are, left to right, Oxford Municipal Judge Hal Neilson, secretary-treasurer; immediate past president Jay Westfaul, Municipal Judge in Batesville, Pope and Courtland; and Meadville Municipal Judge Bill Halford, Municipal Judges' representative on the Board of Governors of the Mississippi Judicial College. Not pictured are President Jason Mangum, Municipal Judge in Newton, Union, Decatur and Hickory; and Vice-president Ryan Bruhl, Tylertown Municipal Judge.

Rankin County Court Judge Kent McDaniel retired Sept. 30



Judge Kent McDaniel

Rankin County Court Judge Kent McDaniel retired Sept. 30 after 24 years on the bench.

He said, "It's time."

Former Gov. Kirk Fordice appointed him to the Rankin County Court on Sept. 1, 1997. He has 38 years of public service. He retired a few days after his 74th birthday.

"It's bittersweet. I love this job and I love the people," he said. "It's been the most wonderful thing. It's the greatest honor. I have lived the most blessed life of anybody I've ever known, seen or been around. God has just blessed me in incredible ways."

He became one of the original agents of the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics in 1972 and worked undercover for three years before supervising investigations in 27 south Mississippi counties.

He was Deputy Commissioner of Corrections 1979-1980, then was director of the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy 1980-1986. He was in private law practice for about three years. He was First Assistant U.S. Attorney for

the Southern District of Mississippi 1989 - 1995. He returned to private practice and was Flowood Municipal Judge from November 1995 until his appointment to the County Court bench.

Judge McDaniel was chairman of the Conference of County Court Judges for more than 10 years. He was appointed to the Commission on Judicial Performance in January 2015. He stepped down Aug. 13 as Commission chairman.

He grew up in Sandersville in Jones County. He graduated with honors from Belhaven College in 1969, then earned a master's degree with honors from the University of

Southern Mississippi. He earned a Juris Doctor degree from Mississippi College School of Law, graduating first in his class. In 2013, he was awarded a Doctor of Laws degree from Mississippi College School of Law, where he served as an adjunct faculty member for 25 years, teaching trial practice.

He served with the 20th Special Forces Group of the Mississippi Army National Guard 1968-1973 and with the 112th MP Battalion, MANG, 1973-1978, leaving the service as a First Lieutenant.

He was a charter member and first president of the Mississippi Chorus. He sang for many years in the

choir of Lakeside Presbyterian Church. He still sings patriotic and spiritual music for church groups and seniors.

He said of future plans, "I've got golf balls to chase and I've got grand kids to chase, even though I'm no good at either one of them." His parting e-mail to anyone still trying to reach his old address was, "If you are seeing this message, it is because I'm retired and having the time of my life. I may be out golfing, or fishing, or on a well-earned Caribbean cruise with my wonderful wife. Something you can look forward to when you've reached my status and vintage."

David Morrow appointed to Rankin County Court



Judge David Morrow Jr.

Gov. Tate Reeves appointed David Morrow Jr. of Brandon as the new Rankin County Court Judge. Judge Morrow was sworn in on Sept. 30 by Judge Kent McDaniel on the day Judge McDaniel retired.

Judge Morrow's appointive term began Oct. 1.

The term continues through Jan. 2, 2023.

Gov. Reeves said in announcing the appointment, "David's extensive legal experience and dedication to public service make him well-qualified to work on behalf of Rankin County residents. I am grateful that he accepted this appointment and confident he will hit the ground running."

Judge Morrow, 65, said he does not expect to make changes. "Judge McDaniel had an excellent system in place, and I hope to continue that excellent system," he said.

He has served since 2016 as a Rankin County Chancery Court family master. He served as the Board Attorney for the Rankin County Board of Supervisors from January 2002 until December 2007.

He is the son of the late attorney David Morrow Sr. of Brandon, and grandson of former State Treasurer Robert D. Morrow Sr., who served 1956 to 1960. His grandfather was an administrative assistant to U.S. Sen. John C. Stennis and managed Stennis' first Senate campaign.

Judge Morrow said, "I got to grow up around Senator Stennis, not really appreciating who he was and the significance of all of that."

He graduated from the United States Air Force Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree, and earned his law degree from Mississippi College School of Law. He was admitted to the practice of law in 1998. His private law practice included real estate, domestic, probate, trusts and wills.

U.S. Magistrate Judge John C. Gargiulo died Oct. 3, 2021



Judge John Gargiulo

U.S. Magistrate Judge John C. Gargiulo of Gulfport died on Oct. 3, 2021, of cancer. He was 54.

A funeral mass was held Oct. 12 at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Gulfport. Burial was in Biloxi National Cemetery.

Judge Gargiulo was appointed U.S. Magistrate Judge of the Southern District of Mississippi on Aug. 1, 2014. Before his appointment as U.S. Magistrate Judge, he served for five years on the Circuit Court. He was appointed to the Second Circuit Court by former Gov. Haley Barbour and was sworn in July 14, 2009. He previously served for nine years as an assistant district attorney for the state's Second Circuit Court District, which includes Harrison, Hancock and Stone counties.

Senior Circuit Court Judge Lisa P. Dodson said, "He and I were in the District Attorney's office together and then we were Circuit Judges as well. He was a fine person. He was an excellent judge. He was always very concerned about the folks who came

in front of him and always wanted to be fair. We are going to miss him – his sense of humor and the professionalism that he brought to the bench. It's just been a sad day for everybody that knew him."

Harrison County Circuit Clerk Connie Ladner had known Judge Gargiulo since they went to school together. "He was a great father, attorney, prosecutor, Circuit Judge and Magistrate and served his country," she said. "But most of all he was a good person. As much as we loved him in Circuit Court, we were so happy for his success" when he was appointed a federal magistrate.

Chief U. S. District Judge Daniel P. Jordan III said, "Since his appointment in August of 2014, Judge Gargiulo has served our court with efficiency and distinction, and he will be sorely missed."

U. S. District Judge Halil S. "Sul" Ozerden of Gulfport, who worked closely with Judge Gargiulo, noted not only his service as U. S. Magistrate Judge, Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit Court District, and Assistant District Attorney, but also his active-duty service as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army. He retired as a Colonel in the Mississippi Air National Guard. "Judge Gargiulo served his state and his country at the highest levels. In fact, he dedicated his professional career to serving others," Judge Ozerden said. "We owe him and his family a deep debt of gratitude, and we grieve with them at this

most difficult time."

Judge Gargiulo served on active duty in the U.S. Army 1989-1994. He was an intelligence officer during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, concluding his active duty as Battalion Operations Officer. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve 2000-2001, and joined the Mississippi Army National Guard in December 2001. He served as Administrative Services Chief of the 1108th AVCRAD in Gulfport. Judge Gargiulo and four brothers served as military officers, following in the footsteps of their

father, Thomas Gargiulo, who immigrated to the United States from Naples, Italy.

Judge Gargiulo was born in South Dakota. His father's military assignments took them from North Africa to the Gulf Coast. The family moved to south Mississippi when he was six, and he grew up on the Gulf Coast.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in political science from the University of Southern Mississippi. He earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1998.

Bar Memorial honors 103 who died

The Mississippi Supreme Court convened on Oct. 12 to honor the service of 103 members of the Mississippi Bar who died during the past year.

Mississippi Bar President Robert Gibbs noted that the dead included former Gov. William F. Winter, judges and other public officials and many attorneys in private practice. Their service ranged from only eight years to 73 years as a member of the Bar.

"No matter how long they served, they all served and sacrificed for our profession and for that we are eternally indebted," Gibbs said in his eulogy.

"For his work to improve race relations, Governor Winter received the Profiles in Courage Award from the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum," Gibbs said. Gov. Winter and all those memorialized "represent a tremendous

loss to our profession and for our society."

Members of the judiciary who died during the past year include U.S. District Judge William H. Barbour Jr., Circuit Judge Eddie Bowen, retired Chancellor Edward G. Cortright Jr., retired Municipal Judge and Mayor Dale Danks Jr., retired Justice Court Judge Patricia F. Dunmore, retired Circuit Judge Michael Eubanks, retired Mississippi Court of Appeals Judge Eugene Love Fair, U.S. District Judge Walter J. Gex III, retired Chancellor Norman Gillespie, retired Circuit Judge L. Breland Hilburn, and retired Municipal Judge John W. Whitten III.

Presiding Justice Leslie D. King in his response for the Court said those who died include friends, colleagues, judges before whom he practiced law, elected and appointed offi-

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Retired Chancellor Norman L. Gillespie died August 29

Retired Chancellor Norman L. Gillespie died peacefully at his home in Oxford on Aug. 29. He was 87.

A funeral service was held on Sept. 4 at First Baptist Church in Oxford.

Judge Gillespie held positions in the state and federal justice system during more than 40 years of public service. He served as County Prosecuting Attorney of Union County from 1964 until 1968. He was appointed as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the

Bar Memorial

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cial, attorneys whom he knew by reputation, and some that he did not know. He called Gov. Winter “a real statesman who sought to fully and fairly advance the best interests of all Mississippians.”

“Whether widely known or working in relative obscurity, each of the persons memorialized today shared a belief in and a commitment to the rule of law. Through their embrace of the rule of law, each of them in his or her own way contributed to the betterment of their respective communities,” Presiding Justice King said. They were “ordinary people of good character, ordinary people committed to improving their community, ordinary people dedicated to serving the needs of their community. Today we honor their character, commitment and service. Because of their character, commitment and service, ours is a better society.”

Northern District of Mississippi in November 1968. He was U.S. District Court Clerk for the Northern District of Mississippi for 24 years, serving 1974-1998. He also served as part-time U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Northern District of Mississippi from 1980 to 1996.

After he retired from the federal court clerk’s office, he was elected Chancellor of the state’s 18th Chancery District, which includes Benton, Calhoun, Lafayette, Marshall and Tippah counties. He served January 1999 - December 2002. After his retirement, he continued to serve as a senior status judge, hearing cases by appointment of the Mississippi Supreme Court.

U.S. District Judge Michael P. Mills said, “He was a most delightful person to have dealings with, either as Clerk of the Court or Magistrate Judge. He was very patient. Particularly as a young lawyer, which I was, it meant a lot to me to have somebody who didn’t scare me to death when I walked into the courthouse.”

“I have a couple of books in my office that he brought by for me to read” in later years. “He was always interested in politics, law and government,” Judge Mills said.

“He was a bright light. He had an abiding curiosity and enthusiasm for life. His training was in the law. He was very enthusiastic about making the law better,” Judge Mills said.

Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Edwin

Lloyd Pittman appointed Judge Gillespie to the Judicial Advisory Study Committee in July 2002. Judge Gillespie continued to serve on the Study Committee until June 2014, having been reappointed by Chief Justice Jim Smith and Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. Judge Gillespie served a term as chair of the Study Committee, which made policy recommendations to the Supreme Court and the Legislature for improvements affecting the administration of justice.

Supreme Court Justice James D. Maxwell II of Oxford remembered Judge Gillespie as a gifted storyteller. Justice Maxwell said, “Judge Gillespie was a fine Christian man, judge, and lawyer. He was a particularly gifted storyteller and a real people person too. He never met a stranger and was always friendly and encouraging. If you met Norman, you immediately liked him. He loved his family and all things lawyerly.”

“And he always had a finger on the pulse of local and regional politics. Always. Judge Gillespie loved everything about the more rural areas up here and never missed or forgot a single detail about their goings-on,” Justice Maxwell said.

Court of Appeals Judge Jim M. Greenlee of Oxford said, “Whether from swearing me in to practice in the Federal Courts, shepherding my filings as Clerk of the District Court, experiencing his wisdom as Magistrate Judge, knowing his impartiality as



Chancellor Norman Gillespie

Chancellor, or his just being a wonderful neighbor, Norman Gillespie was all times hospitable, gracious and yet demanding of the best. A gentleman in our profession, Norman’s service to our system of justice was impeccable, but he was an even better person.”

Norman L. Gillespie was born in Bruce, Mississippi, on Aug. 10, 1934, the youngest child of A.L. Gillespie and Lora Overby Gillespie. He graduated from New Albany High School in 1952, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Mississippi in May 1956. He received a commission to the Military Intelligence Corps as a U.S. Army Second Lieutenant and served in the Counter Intelligence Corps in Europe from April 1957 until September 1958. He earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law in May 1961, and served as president of the law school student body. He practiced law in New Albany from June 1961 until November 1968.

Retired Circuit Judge Michael Eubanks died Aug. 21



Judge Michael Eubanks

Retired Circuit Judge Michael R. Eubanks of Lumberton died Aug. 21 at his home, surrounded by family, after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 80.

A funeral service was held at the Lumberton United Methodist Church on Aug. 28.

Judge Eubanks was elected Circuit Judge in 1982, and took office Jan. 1, 1983, in the 15th Judicial District, which includes Jefferson Davis, Lamar, Lawrence, Marion and Pearl River counties. He retired in December 2006, but continued to serve as a senior status judge, hearing cases by appointment of the Mississippi Supreme Court. He also pursued interests in the oil and gas industry.

The Pearl River County Bar Association in a resolution signed by its President, Scarlett A. Jones, said that “all the years of distinguished judicial service by Judge Eubanks were characterized by unflinching integrity and unquestioned legal ability....Judge Eubanks was truly a great judge, was well liked, was devoted to the law, was loved and

respected by all members of the Bar, his community and church to a degree seldom reached and never surpassed.”

The resolution said, “Judge Eubanks was an outdoorsman, being an accomplished boater, fisherman and quail hunter who exhibited great common sense, had a vibrant sense of humor, and was extremely friendly, always courteous and thoughtful of others, thereby fitting the description of a true ‘Southern Gentleman.’ ”

“He was fair minded and impartial and he absolutely believed that everyone was created equal and was entitled to equal protection of the law,” said attorney Joe Montgomery, a longtime close friend. “He made sure that happened in his court.”

Even families of those who stood before him for sentencing had good things to say. Montgomery recounted a conversation from a few days earlier with a man whom he didn’t know, but who knew Judge Eubanks. The man said, “He really did a good job when he sentenced my boys.”

Court of Appeals Judge Virginia Carlton practiced before Judge Eubanks when she served as an assistant district attorney. She recalled his compassion. “He presided over each case that came before him with integrity and impartiality. He was a dedicated public servant who will be greatly missed.”

Circuit Judge Claiborne “Buddy” McDonald practiced before Judge Eubanks as a prosecutor, first as an assistant district at-

torney then as District Attorney of the 15th District. He recalled Judge Eubanks’ keen intelligence, analytical abilities and fairness.

Circuit Judge Prentiss Harrell was elected as Judge Eubanks’ successor. Judge Harrell said, “Judge Eubanks was an excellent mentor from whom I regularly sought advice and counsel. He was very pragmatic and a student of the law. He was fair to all who came before him.”

Circuit Judge Anthony Mozingo said, “I began a solo law practice straight out of law school and Judge Eubanks, so temperate, compassionate and kind, was an example to me. Twenty years later, when I was sworn in to the same office he held, he guided and advised me. I still wear his simple, unpretentious judicial robe, always with a thought of him and his humble, good way.”

Michael Ray Eubanks was born Sept. 21, 1940, the son of Michael Joseph Eubanks and Nell Elizabeth Bass in Lumberton. He went to Lumberton Elementary School and Phillips Academy High School in Andover, Mass. He graduated from Tulane University with a bachelor of business administration in 1962. He earned a Juris Doctor from Tulane Law School in 1965. He played hockey at Andover and lettered in track at Tulane. He was an enthusiastic Tulane fan and supporter.

He was admitted to the practice law in Louisiana in 1965, and to the Mississippi Bar in 1966. He opened a general law prac-

tice in Lumberton. He later moved his office to Purvis. He served as city attorney, city judge, attorney for the Lamar County Board of Supervisors and attorney for the Lumberton School Board.

Judge Eubanks was elected to the 15th Circuit when the Legislature created a second judgeship for the district. The senior judge was Circuit Judge R.I. Prichard III. “Together they formed one of the most respected benches in Mississippi,” said Montgomery. The district now has three circuit judges.

Judge Eubanks loved boating, fishing, spending time with his fishing buddies, traveling, hiking, playing bridge, gardening, and most of all being with his family and friends.

“Anything you did with Mike was an adventure,” Montgomery said.

Judge Eubanks was a longtime member of the Lumberton United Methodist Church, where he served as Chairman of the Board.

Survivors include his wife of 53 years, Sue Griffin Eubanks; children Michelle Eubanks Juden and husband Alex of Houston, Texas; Christy Eubanks Madden and husband Dan of Dallas, Texas; Mark Eubanks and wife Dana of Houston; and ten grandchildren. He is also survived by his sisters, Nell Noonan and Mary Eubanks of Durham, NC, and his brothers Gaston Eubanks and wife Shannon and David Eubanks of Chapel Hill, N.C.

Retired Chancellor Edward G. Cortright Jr. died August 11, 2021



Retired Chancellor Edward G. Cortright Jr. died Aug. 11. He was 94.

A graveside service was held Aug. 21 at Glenwood Cemetery in Yazoo City.

Judge Cortright served as chancellor for 26 years in the 11th Chancery District of Yazoo, Holmes, Leake and Madison counties. He was appointed twice by the Governor to serve as a special chancellor of the 11th Chancery, in 1966 and again in 1969. He was elected in November 1970 and took office Jan. 1, 1971. He retired in April 1997. He continued to hear cases as a senior status judge for a number of years. He also sat by appointment as a special justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court in 2005.

He was a teacher and a conscientious judge.

Retired Chancellor William Lutz of Ridgeland remembered Judge Cortright as a learned chancellor and a wonderful mentor. Judge Lutz practiced law before Judge Cortright, then worked alongside him as a chancellor.

“He taught a lot of young lawyers,” Judge

Lutz said. “He knew the law. He was practical. He was mild-mannered but demanding. He never lost his temper. He never raised his voice.”

Judge Cortright told the *Yazoo Herald* at the time of his retirement that it was important to teach young lawyers the practical matters of the law. “There is a good bit of opportunity to be a teacher and a judge. I got that from my predecessor, Judge C.D. Williams. I’ve always liked to teach people the law where I felt it would be helpful to them.”

Camille Evans, Assistant Court Administrator of the Mississippi Court of Appeals, grew up across the street from Judge Cortright. She said that he was one of the reasons she became a lawyer.

Judge Cynthia Brewer of Madison said that after she became a chancellor in 2007, Judge Cortright read appellate decisions in her cases and called her often to discuss them. “Judge Cortright was very conscientious of duties to lead by example, and wanted me to be strong and knowledgeable.”

Judge Cortright was a member of the Continuing Judicial Education Committee and served as chairman of the Conference of Chancery Judges. He was a member of the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules for 14 years, 1983-1997. As one of the original members of the Charles Clark Inn of Court, he was among prominent jurists, scholars and practitioners to serve as Masters of the Bench,

or “Benchers.”

Edward G. Cortright Jr. was born Dec. 20, 1926, in Yazoo City. He attended Virginia Military Institute, then served in the United States Army Air Corp. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Mississippi in 1949 and a law degree at the University of Virginia in 1952. He was admitted to the Mississippi Bar in 1952. He engaged in the general practice of law in Yazoo City for 18 years. He served as a Yazoo City alderman from 1957 to 1961. He lived in Yazoo City until 2006, when he moved to St. Catherine’s Village in Madison.

After retirement, he was active in Red Cross relief efforts and served as chairman of the Disaster Committee.

Justice Court Judge Bruce Strong died September 12



Retired Harrison County Justice Court Judge Bruce Strong died Sept. 12 at his home in Biloxi. He was 84.

A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated Sept. 16 at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church. He was

buried with military honors at Biloxi National Cemetery.

Judge Strong began his first term as Justice Court Judge in 1996, and served for six terms. He was President of the Mississippi Justice Court Judges Association for three terms and Executive Director for two terms. He also served as a member of the Mississippi Judicial Advisory Study Committee.

Judge Strong was born in Oak Grove, Louisiana. He moved to Biloxi in 1967. He received a master’s degree in criminal justice from the University of Southern Mississippi. He enlisted in the Air Force on March 22, 1954, as a reciprocating engine

mechanic and became a flight engineer on RC-121, C-54, and C-124 aircraft. His assignments included Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina; Nouasseur Air Base in Casablanca, Morocco; Savannah, Georgia; and Keesler AFB in Biloxi. He retired April 1, 1974, as Master Sergeant. He joined the Biloxi Police Department in March 1975, where he served for 20 years, including 13 years as a detective. The City of Biloxi awarded him the Medal of Valor.

His extensive volunteer work included church fundraisers for Our Lady of Fatima and other charitable efforts, and the Biloxi High School Boosters Club.