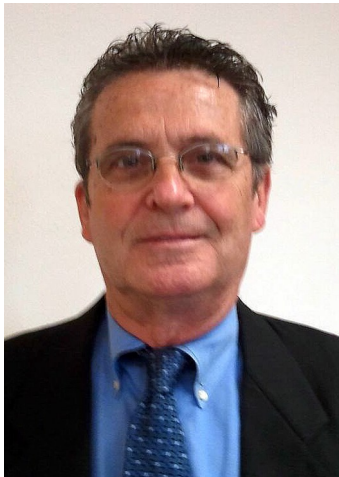


# Mississippi Courts

April 2022

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## Three longest serving MS trial judges to retire at end of year



County Judge Gaston Hewes



Chancellor Denise Owens



Circuit Judge Lee Howard

The three longest currently serving judges in Mississippi Chancery, Circuit and County Courts are among a dozen trial judges who plan to retire this year. Harrison County Court Judge Gaston Hewes, Hinds County Chancellor Denise Owens and 16<sup>th</sup> District Circuit Judge Lee Howard will not seek reelection.

They have a combined total of a century of judicial service.

Other judges who did not seek re-election include:

- Circuit Judge Tomie T. Green of the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, who will have served 24 years on the bench at the end of the year;
- Circuit Judge Dale Harkey of the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit; 24 years;
- Circuit Judge Albert B. Smith III of the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 22 ½ years;
- Circuit Judge Robert P.

Krebs of the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 20 years;

- Circuit Judge Lee Coleman of the 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 12 years;
- Pike County Court Judge John Price, 24 years;
- Jackson County Court Judge Sharon Sigalas will retire on May 27. She has served 19 ½ years on the bench. (*See story page 5.*)
- Bolivar County Court Judge William Hunter Nowell, who did not seek re-election to the County Court post that he has held for almost eight years, since May 1, 2014. He is unopposed for election to the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court.
- Lee County Court Judge James D. Moore, who will have served four years.

Judge Hewes is the longest serving of all current state judges, having been appointed by then-Gov. Ray Mabus on July 15, 1988, to fill a vacancy after the death of Judge Hewes' father Gaston

Hewes Sr. on May 30, 1988.

"My father and I combined have 100 years elective service in Harrison County," he said. The elder Judge Hewes had been County Court Judge for 20 years, and was Harrison County Prosecuting Attorney for 36 years before that. Judge Hewes Jr. was County Attorney for 10 years before he was appointed to the bench. He will have served 34 years on the bench at the end of this year.

His grandfather, George Poindexter Hewes, served as Harrison County Sheriff 1896-1900. He put on the badge two years before Gulfport was incorporated.

"It's been a long line of public life and public service," said Judge Hewes Jr., 72, of Gulfport. "I think what I'll miss most is the personal relationships developed over 44 years of public life."

He's spent most of his life around the courthouse, having succeeded his father on the bench. "I could never fill his shoes either. He was a great man. He gave me a great gift: a good name. He measured people evenly regardless of their station in life."

Chancellor Owens and Judge Howard were each elected in June 1989 and took office in July 1989.

"It seems like it's time, after 33 years," Judge Owens said. "It's in good hands," she said of the court.

Among her accomplishments is leadership in improving access to justice. She served as co-chair of the Access to Justice Commission for 10 years, from its inception in 2006. She is proud "to see the work that is being done, helping people, come to fruition." Hinds Chancery Court for many years has conducted free family law clinics to assist low-income people. The clinics provide "meaningful access" to the courts for those who can't afford to hire an attorney.

Judge Owens has worked to improve access to justice since she was a law school student at George Washington University. She worked for two years as a law clerk at a Washington, D.C., Legal Services elderly law clinic. Her first job after she was admitted to the Bar in 1979 was as a staff attorney.

*Continued on page 2*



**Harrison County Court Judge Gaston Hewes, center, was photographed with Chief Justice Mike Randolph, at left, and former Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. at the spring Judicial Conference on April 19, 2018.**

*Continued from page 1*

ney for the former Central Mississippi Legal Services in Jackson.

When Judge Owens was elected to the Hinds Chancery bench in 1989, she and Judge Patricia Wise became the first African American female chancellors in the state. They worked to increase diversity on the bench and bar by promoting interest in careers in law.

Judge Owens served in leadership roles on the bench, holding every office except treasurer of the Conference of Chancery Judges. She became secretary of the Conference of Chancery Judges in 1996, vice-chair and program chairperson in 1998, and chair in 2000. She served as conference chair for two years. She recently completed a term as President of the American College of Business Court Judges.

What's next?

"According to my family, I can pick up kids after school, help my mom

write a book, help my son with his law practice."

Judge Howard is senior circuit judge of the 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit District of Clay, Oktibbeha, Lowndes and Noxubee counties. He plans to retire at the end of December, but not before swearing in his successor, his son, Jay Howard, who is unopposed in the November election.

Judge Howard, 75, will have served 33 ½ years on the bench when he retires. "I've been around long enough to see a lot of stuff in the courtroom. I don't need to see any more, I guess. It's the people you miss," he said. "Somebody – an old judge – told me a long time ago, 'Don't worry about it. (You will know when ) it's time.' I'm going by what he said."

When he was growing up in Brooksville in Noxubee County, he was interested in ham radios. He went into the U.S. Marine Corps in 1967. His background in electronics

landed him an assignment as an aviation fire control technician, working on air-to-air weapons systems. He was honorably discharged in November 1970 at the rank of corporal. He still has an amateur radio receiver in the attic. His call letters, K5GVJ, are posted in his shop, where he likes to work on old cars.

He earned degrees in accounting and agricultural economics from Mississippi State University. He planned to work in the commodities market in Chicago, but a mentor at an accounting firm persuaded him to go to law school. His military service had paid for college so far under the GI Bill. "With the GI Bill that I had left, I could get almost through law school. I thought they were going to cut me off in the last semester of law school," he recalled, but as a student in good standing, his tuition was paid.

During law school, he

worked as an intern in the district attorney's office for the Seventh Circuit, which was then Hinds and Yazoo counties, then got a job as an assistant district attorney after graduation. It was part-time work as a prosecutor. He also had a civil practice doing chancery work. He was hired as an assistant district attorney in the 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit in 1977, and served there until his election to the bench.

Judge Howard is former chairman of the Conference of Circuit Court Judges. He served for 12 years on the Commission on Judicial Performance, including Commission chairman in 2015. He was inducted as a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation in 2018.

Judge Green was elected to the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit of Hinds County in November 1998 and took office in January 1999. She became senior circuit judge for the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit on Jan. 1, 2011. She was the first African American and the first woman to have the leadership role of senior circuit judge in the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court District. She also was the first woman elected to the bench in the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit. She served two terms on the Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on Rules, and served on the Supreme Court's Committee on Media and the Courts. She completed work to equip circuit courtrooms with computer technology, worked to implement Mississippi Electronic Courts in Hinds Circuit Court, and initiated video remote arraignments.

Judge Green's 35 years of public service include service in all three branch-



**The Mississippi House of Representatives adopted a resolution honoring the careers of, left to right, Chancellor Denise Owens, Circuit Judge Tomie Green and retired Chancellor Patricia Wise. They are pictured with House Speaker Philip Gunn at the Capitol on March 23.**

es of government. She was an assistant district attorney for three years in the 7th Circuit, then served two terms in the House of Representatives. She practiced law for 15 years before taking the bench. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tougaloo College, a Master of Science degree from Jackson State University and a Juris Doctorate from Mississippi College School of Law.

Judge Harkey was elected to the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Jackson, George and Greene counties in November 1998 and took office in January 1999. He served as chairman of the Conference of Circuit Judges in 2005.

He was an assistant district attorney for the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit 1984 - 1988, and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit 1990-1991. He became district attorney of the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit in 1992 and served until his election to the bench. He

served on the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Prosecutors Association 1992-1997. He is a graduate of Spring Hill College and the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Judge Smith was appointed July 1, 2000, to the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit of Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman and Tunica counties. He and former Judge Larry O. Lewis established the 11th Circuit Drug Court in 2003

with no budget and a team that volunteered their time. Judge Smith obtained grants to provide evidence presentation systems for three of the district's five courthouses, and implemented an accessible website for the 11th Circuit. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Mississippi, then worked as a manager for corporations in Memphis

and Atlanta. He earned a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law, then practiced law in Jackson for two years before returning home to Cleveland to practice. He was Bolivar County Prosecuting Attorney 1987—2000. He was president of the Bolivar County Bar Association in 1995, after serving terms as secretary, treasurer and vice-president.

Judge Krebs was elected to the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court in November 2002 and took office in January 2003. He practiced law 1975-2003, and served as an assistant district attorney in the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit 1976-1977. He was one of the early drug intervention court judges, presiding over a drug court program since 2004. His court is one of only three in the state to provide a veterans drug court program. He was appointed to the State Intervention Courts Advisory Committee in January 2021. He served on numerous Mississippi Bar committees, and was president of the Jackson County Bar Association 1982-1983. He is a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation and a for-

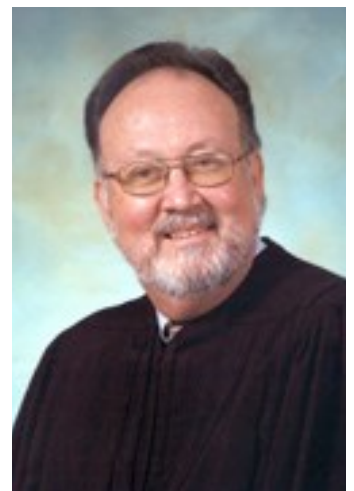
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**Judge Dale Harkey**



**Judge Albert B. Smith III**



**Judge Robert P. Krebs**



**Circuit Judge Lee J. Howard, at left, is pictured with his wife Mary Howard and son Jay Howard at the Bar Fellows induction ceremony in Jackson on April 5, 2018. Jay Howard is unopposed for election to the 16th Circuit Court in November.**

mer member of the Board of Bar Commissioners. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Joseph Seminary College and a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Judge Coleman was elected to a newly created judgeship in the 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit in November 2010 and took office in January 2011. He served for eight

years in the Mississippi House of Representatives and was attorney for the Clay County Board of Supervisors for 26 years. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in public administration from the University of Mississippi and a law degree from University of Mississippi School of Law. He was president of the law school student body.

Judge Price was elected to the Pike County Court bench in November 1998 and took office in January 1999. He practiced law in McComb before being elected Pike County Court Judge. He formed the Pike County Juvenile Drug Intervention Court in October 2007, and has presided over that court for more than 14 years. He is a former president of the

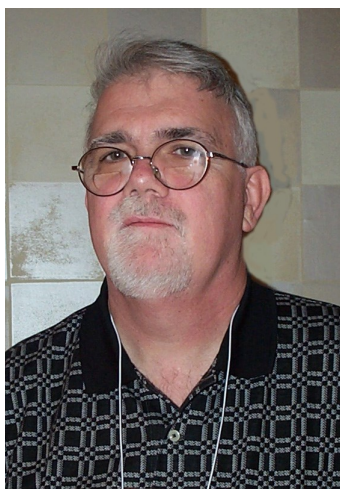
Southwest Mississippi Bar Association and a former Bar Commissioner. He is a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation and received the Bar Foundation Law Related Education Award. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Judge Nowell, before his appointment to the Bolivar County Court bench, practiced law in Cleveland. His practice included real estate, civil litigation, family law, criminal defense, social security and collections. He served as a public defender in municipal courts in Cleveland, Rosedale and Ruleville and in Bolivar County Justice Court. He also represented the Town of Merigold. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and University of Mississippi School of Law.

Lee County Court Judge James D. Moore was elected in November 2018 and took the bench in January 2019. He previously served 16 years as Lee County Prosecutor. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and the University of Mississippi School of Law.



**Judge Lee S. Coleman**



**Judge John P. Price**



**Judge W. Hunter Nowell**



**Judge James D. Moore**

## Jackson County Court Judge Sharon Sigalas to leave bench May 27

Jackson County Court Judge Sharon Sigalas will retire on May 27. She will leave the bench a day before her 66<sup>th</sup> birthday.

She said that her husband's health is the reason she will leave office before the end of the term. The Governor is expected to appoint a judge to serve until the end of the year.

She took office Jan. 1, 2003, as one of the county's two County Court judges. She ran for office because of her interest in the Youth Court System. "I wanted to make a difference," she said.

In more than 19 years as a Youth Court judge, she has sought to implement programs which help the children who come under the court's jurisdiction. "We have done a lot to improve the Jackson County Youth Court. I am proud of the work the staff and I have accomplished," she said.

Judge Sigalas said that she is especially grateful for the guidance she received from Judge John Hudson and Judge Tom Broome.

Early on, the Jackson County Youth Court served as a pilot site for the Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System, MYCIDS, and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, JDAI.

The Jackson County Board of Supervisors agreed to hire a master's level social worker to develop a program for infants and toddlers in Youth Court. Another program called Fostering Futures was created, also with a licensed social worker, to find services for foster

children 14 and older who are expected to age out of the youth court system.

Judge Sigalas said that the Jackson County Court Appointed Special Advocates, CASA, had four volunteers serving eight children when she took the bench. Now more than 100 volunteers serve more than 200 children. The program is one of the largest in the state, and Judge Sigalas wants to add 30 to 40 more volunteers so that every child has services.

She founded the Jackson County Juvenile Drug Court in 2008. She was appointed by the Supreme Court to the state Intervention Courts Advisory Committee in November 2018.

Judge Sigalas worked to create a school for children in detention. "In the past couple of years approximately 30 children got a GED or high school diploma equivalent. We are really proud of that. If you give them an education, you have given them hope. We really believe in giving kids an education so that they have hope to make something of their lives. It's just so important," she said.

She got a late start on her own education and took night classes before enrolling in college full-time. She earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Southern Mississippi at age 36 and a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law at 40.

She worked as office manager in the law firm of her husband, Donald Sigalas, for 14 years before she earned her law degree,



**Retiring Jackson County Court Judge Sharon Sigalas sketches an illustration for her book, *Sam the Foster Child*.**

then practiced law with him for five years.

In retirement, she will finish writing a book titled *Sam the Foster Child*. It's a story about a 10-year-old foster child and his 3-year-old sister. Their mother is a victim of domestic violence. They experience going to bed hungry, and relying on teachers at school to help them. The characters are fictional, but "everything that's in it is something that has happened to a foster child. It's based on the lives of children in foster care and the things they worry about and dread, and the things that they have to do without," she said.

She wants to help with

Sue's Home, a home for victims of domestic violence and their children. She also plans to work with Anchor Ministry, an aftercare program for men who have completed 90 days of drug treatment but aren't ready to be on their own without support services. They need help with things such as getting current on child support and getting records expunged to be able to seek better jobs.

"I have enjoyed my years on the bench." This has been the most rewarding job I have ever had and I am honored that I have had the privilege to serve," Judge Sigalas said.

# Judge tells adoptive parents “Love transcends biology and DNA”



A mother hugs her sons during Dec. 13 adoption ceremony in Hinds County Chancery Court.

Chancellor Crystal Wise Martin told 14 children who finalized adoptions that she hoped they felt like super heroes. Their adoptive parents picked them, and after all, Superman and Spiderman were adopted.

“Today is the day that the law gets to catch up to what has been growing in your hearts. Today you finally become a legal family,” she said to a courtroom filled with more than 50 family members who came to witness the Dec. 13 mass adoption

ceremony. “Love transcends biology and DNA.”

The children ranged from toddlers to pre-teens who came into the custody of the Youth Court system due to allegations of abuse or neglect. Adoptions included sibling groups of two, three and four children as well as individuals. Time spent in foster care ranged from two to 11 years.

Attorney Crystal Welch, who directs the Mississippi College School of Law Adoption Clinic, worked with law students to sched-

ule the adoptions for eight of the nine families. “We are so grateful to get these adoptions done before the holidays because what better gift,” she said.

A great aunt adopted three great nephews ages 4, 10 and 12. “Family is everything to me,” she testified. “I love these boys and I want the best for them and I don’t want them to be with anyone but family.”

Another couple adopted four siblings – three girls and a boy. “We love them and we’ve been waiting on

this day for a while,” the mother said.

Others were foster parents who had expressed a willingness to take care of children who had been abused. Several testified about receiving a call from social services workers to ask if they could take care of a child being released from hospital care.

An adoptive mother of a 2-year-old testified, “He was five days old and I said yes, and we’ve been together ever since....I feel like the one who was blessed.”

Another adoptive mother recounted getting the call 11 years ago. “I’ve had her since she was 4 days old. She’s everything to us.”

Two sets of adoptive grandparents, including grandparents who drove down from St. Louis, were in the courtroom to celebrate the adoption of a granddaughter. The 5-year-old has been part of the family since she was 5 months old, her adoptive father testified.

When they took a family portrait in the courtroom, the child held a painted sign that said, “For 2,069 days I’ve shared



## Judge Carlton congratulates teen drug intervention court graduates

Mississippi Court of Appeals Presiding Judge Virginia Carlton congratulated three teens who graduated from the Pike County Juvenile Intervention Court.

Judge Carlton was the keynote speaker on April 5 at the Intervention Court's graduation ceremony at the Courthouse in Magnolia.

Judge Carlton told the graduates and their family members, "You should be proud of all that you have accomplished." She said, "The support of the families is critical to the success of drug court."

She told the graduates, "Don't let drug court graduation be your last accomplishment. Keep doing what you have been doing

that got you to this point. Ask for help when you need help. Set goals and reach them. Your future is yours. It is what you make of it!"

Pike County Court Judge John Price, who presides over the Juvenile Intervention Court program, said, "They had worked hard to complete our program."

Most participants stay in the program for a year or more, although it's possi-



Judge Virginia Carlton speaks at drug intervention court ceremony April 5.

ble to complete the program in six months. Time spent in the program depends on a participant's compliance with program

requirements.

Judge Carlton said, "Drug courts are a way that the judiciary serves the people, families, the community, and the State. Drug courts require that judges step outside of their traditional roles and work in partnership with the participants to guide them to success. Drug court guides participants to successfully overcome their addiction, substance abuse, and ensuing chaos."

Judge Carlton said, "When one person rises out of addiction, substance abuse, and chaos, we all rise. When the intergenerational cycle of addiction and substance abuse is broken, we all rise. When youth can overcome substance abuse, addiction and chaos, they can have a better future, and we all rise."

Fourteen counties have juvenile drug intervention courts. There are 42 drug intervention courts at all levels, including three family courts, 22 adult felony courts and three adult misdemeanor programs.

### Adoption ceremony, *continued from page 6*

their love & home. As of today I now also share their last name."

A 9-year-old boy was adopted by the foster family who had him since he was 10 weeks old. He has been in foster care most of his life: 3,285 days. He and his adoptive parents and siblings wore matching t-shirts that said, "Heaven sent. Court approved. Forever loved." The date the family bonds became official was at the bottom – Dec. 13, 2021.

Hinds Youth Court Judge Carlyn Hicks handed out commemorative face masks which said, "It's official. 12/13/21."

Resident Jurist John N. Hudson, who handled many of the cases as an appointed Special Judge in Hinds County Youth Court, said that the families who opened their arms

and their homes are heroes. "They are parents who filled the gap at a time of greatest need. They are the safety net that protects our children....They didn't have to do any of this. They took this on when those children were in greatest need."

Judge Hicks and Judge Hudson worked with the Department of Child Protection Services to achieve permanency for the children and families. Judge Hudson was appointed by the Supreme Court to deal with older Hinds County cases so that Judge Hicks could keep up with a heavy docket of recently filed cases.

Judge Hicks said after the ceremony, "We are delighted to see this day come for these children and their forever families." She noted that many of

them had spent years in foster care.

Department of Child Protection Services Commissioner Andrea Sanders told the crowd that she is pushing to improve accountability so that children can achieve permanency sooner. Sanders said, "No matter how good we get at our jobs, state agencies will always be a poor substitute for a family, so getting children into families with permanency has to be our highest priority."

Sanders was adopted as an infant. She said that she was born to a young single mother who couldn't afford to care for her. Her adoptive parents had adopted another child before her, then later had two biological children. "I'm here to tell you that family matters," Sanders said.

## Seven judges inducted as Fellows of Mississippi Bar Foundation



**Justice Josiah D. Coleman**



**Judge Latrice A. Westbrook**



**Chancellor Tiffany P. Grove**



**Judge Toni Walker Terrett**



**Judge Thomas H. Broome**



**Judge Veldore Young Graham**



**Justice David A. Chandler**

Judges inducted as Fellows of the Mississippi Bar Foundation in 2022 include Justice Josiah D. Coleman, Court of Appeals Judge Latrice A. Westbrook, Hinds Chancery Judge Tiffany P. Grove, Circuit Judge Toni Walker Terrett, Rankin County Court and Youth Court Judge Thomas H. Broome, Lauderdale County Court and Youth Court Judge Veldore Young Graham, and retired Justice David Anthony Chandler.

Names of 20 Fellow inductees were announced on April 14 during the annual meeting of the Mississippi Bar Foundation.

Attorneys inducted as Bar Fellows are Jenny Tyler Baker, Renee Harrison Berry, Michael Carr, Edderek L. Cole, Ricky J. Cox, Linda M. Dixon, Donna Powe Green, Katherine L. Kerby, Patricia B. Marshall, Keith D. Obert, Crymes M. Pittman, Tiana Hill Raby and Jamie D. Travis.

Induction as a Fellow, the highest honor bestowed by the Bar Foundation, is peer recognition of the highest level of professionalism, competence and leadership.

Justice Coleman was sworn in Jan. 7, 2013. He practiced law for 12 years in Tupelo and Oxford. He

ern Mississippi, and earned a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law.

Judge Terrett took office in January 2019. She was Vicksburg Municipal Judge 2013-2018. She was a drug court public defender and worked for Legal Services. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Tougaloo College, a Master of Arts in journalism from University of Memphis, and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law.

Judge Broome became Youth Court Judge in January 2003. He has leadership roles in numerous efforts to improve the lives of children, including being a director of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Co-Chair of the Mississippi Commission on Children's Justice and Chairman of the Mississippi Council of Youth Court Judges. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering from Mississippi State University, and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law.

*Continued on page 10*



## Supreme Court makes appointments to Rules Advisory Committee



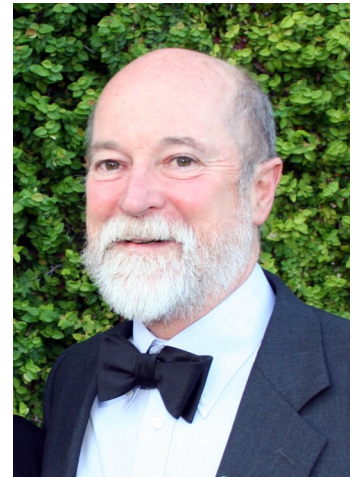
**Judge Kevin Adams**



**Judge Jack L. Wilson**



**Judge Ashley Hines**



**Chancellor Carter Bise**



**Jimmy B. Wilkins**



**Justin T. Cook**



**Cynthia I. Mitchell**



**Edward J. Currie Jr.**

Three judges and four attorneys have been reappointed to serve on the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules, and one new judge has been appointed.

Leflore County Court Judge Kevin Adams of Greenwood is the new appointee to the Advisory Committee, replacing Rankin County Court Judge Kent McDaniel, who retired Sept. 30.

Those reappointed to the Advisory Committee are Court of Appeals Presiding Judge Jack L. Wilson of Madison, Circuit Judge W. Ashley Hines of Greenville and Chancellor Carter Bise of Gulfport as

well as attorneys Jimmy B. Wilkins of Jackson, Justin T. Cook of Jackson, Cynthia I. Mitchell of Clarksdale and Edward J. Currie Jr. of Jackson.

Chief Justice Mike Randolph signed the appointments order Nov. 17.

Judge Adams was nominated by the Conference of County Court Judges. He previously served on the Committee on Continuing Judicial Education. He has served as Leflore County Court Judge since April 2008.

Judge Wilson was renominated by Court of Appeals Chief Judge Donna M. Barnes. He was appointed to the Court of

Appeals on July 1, 2015, and was elected in November 2016.

Judge Hines, renominated by the Conference of Circuit Judges, has served as chairman of the Advisory Committee on Rules for the past six years. He has served the Fourth Circuit Court of Leflore, Sunflower and Washington counties since January 1996.

Judge Bise, renominated by the Conference of Chancery Court Judges, has served the Eighth Chancery Court since January 2002. The Eighth Chancery includes Harrison, Hancock and Stone counties.

Wilkins, renominated

by the Mississippi Bar, is a member of the Watkins and Eager law firm in Jackson. His practice includes tort law defense, product liability, premises litigation and personal injury litigation.

Cook was renominated by the Mississippi Public Defenders Association, for which he serves as president. He has been an assistant state defender in the Mississippi Office of the State Public Defender for more than 10 years. He previously served for three and a half years as a staff attorney in the Mississippi Office of Indigent Appeals.

*Continued on Page 10*

## Jackson hosts American College of Business Court Judges conference



**Chancellor Denise Owens, outgoing President of the American College of Business Court Judges, speaks at the conference in Jackson.**

Hinds Chancery Judge Denise Owens hosted about 50 judges from across the country at the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the American College of Business Court Judges Oct. 27 - 29, 2021, in Jackson. Judge Owens served as 2021 president of the organization.

The annual conference attracted judges from coast to coast, and one from Hawaii. The conference featured speakers on civil rights and entertainment law.

“It was an opportunity to show off our state, our rich culture and our advancements in civil rights. We

still have a ways to go.” Judge Owens said. “It was good to have judges to come to Mississippi.”

Former Gov. Haley Barbour gave the opening address at the Westin Inn. Blues legend Bobby Rush gave the Thursday morning welcome, singing and playing harmonica in a bit

of improv.

The conference explored the business law of music, royalties, trademark and copyright with panels of distinguished professors and entertainment law experts. One of the case studies was the long running legal disputes over the estate of legendary blues artist Robert Johnson, who died penniless, but produced music that generated royalties worth millions. Presiding Justice Jim Kitchens, who in private practice represented his longtime friend Claud Johnson in the litigation, talked about the successful legal fight to have his client recognized as the only son and heir of Robert Johnson.

Authors Jerry Mitchell and Curtis Wilkie discussed the cost of the search for truth. Celebrated cartoonist, author and radio host Marshall Ramsey gave a luncheon address. Participants also heard from experts in studies about racial bias in artificial intelligence, the debate over competing interests of shareholder wealth maximization vs. Environmental, Social and Governance measures, and the challenges which the pandemic created for courts.

The American College of Business Court Judges was founded in 2005 to provide continuing professional education programs to aid judges who navigate increasingly complex business issues. The organization is hosted by the Law and Economic Center of the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University.

### Bar Fellows, *continued from page 9*

Judge Young Graham joined the Lauderdale County Court in January 2007. She served for seven years as assistant district attorney and two years as a public defender for the Tenth Circuit Court District. She is secretary of the Conference of County Court Judges and secretary-treasurer of the Council of Youth Court Judges. She earned an undergraduate degree from Xavier University, a Bachelor of Law degree from Oxford University and a Juris Doctorate from Mississippi College School of Law.

Justice Chandler served for six years on the Mississippi Supreme Court, eight years on the Court of Appeals and two years as Weir Municipal Judge. He was Commissioner of Child Protection Services for a year and a half. He was an educator and administrator for 20 years. He earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in education from MSU, a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi and a Master of Laws from the University of Virginia School of Law.

### Rules Advisory,

*Continued from page 9*

Mitchell, renominated by the Mississippi Association for Justice, is with the law firm of Merkel & Cocke, P.A. Her practice, spanning almost 40 years, includes personal injury, commercial litigation and medical malpractice.

Currie, renominated by the Mississippi Defense Lawyers Association, is a partner in the firm of Currie Johnson & Myers. His 45 years of practice covers a range of insurance defense matters.

## Court makes appointments to Commission on Children’s Justice

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 appointed new members and reappointed members on Sept. 30, 2021.

The Supreme Court created the Commission on April 26, 2006, and 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 public trust and confidence in the child welfare system.

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 appointed to 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



**Justice Dawn Beam**

Welfare; Shannon Rush-ton, Deputy Administrator for Human Capital; and Shaquita Mallett, Deputy Administrator for Child Welfare.

Legislators include Sen. Brice Wiggins, Rep. Jansen Owen, Rep. Kent McCarty and Rep. Angela Cockerham.

Other new members are 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.

Members reappointed are Chief Justice Kevin Briscoe of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Choctaw Tribal Youth Court Judge Holly Den-



**Judge Thomas Broome**

son; 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;



**Chancellor Rhea Sheldon**

David Calder, Director of Children’s Advocacy Clinic, University of Mississippi School of Law; Shirley Kennedy, Director of Children’s Advocacy Program, Mississippi College School of Law; Angela Robertson, Associate Director and Research Professor at Social Science Research Center, Mississippi State University; Dr. Lisa Nored, Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Southern Mississippi; Dr. Scott Benton, Professor of Pediatrics, Director, 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, 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.

## Chancellors Clark, Martin and Little elected as Conference leaders



Conference of Chancery Judges officers elected Oct. 28 during the Trial and Appellate Judges Conference are, left to right, Chancellor Jennifer Schloegel, Committee on Continuing Judicial Education; Chancellor Carter Bise, Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules; Chancellor Gerald Martin, conference vice-chair; Chancellor Robert G. Clark III, chairman; and Chancellor Larry Little, secretary-treasurer.

Chancellor Robert G. Clark III of Lexington was elected Oct. 28 as chair of the Conference of Chancery Court Judges. Chancellor Gerald Martin of Raleigh was elected vice-chair, and Chancellor Larry Little of Oxford was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

Chancellor Carter Bise of Gulfport was re-nominated to serve on the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules, and Chancellor Jennifer Schloegel of Gulfport was nominated to the Committee on Continuing Judicial Education.

Judge Clark previously served as vice-chair of the Conference of Chancery Court Judges. He has served on the bench of the 11<sup>th</sup> Chancery District since January 2015. The district includes Holmes, Leake, Madison and Yazoo counties. He served as Holmes County Youth Court Referee 2004-2014.

He was Lexington Municipal Judge 2005-2014.

Judge Martin has served on the 13<sup>th</sup> Chancery Court since January 2015. The district includes Covington, Jefferson Davis, Lawrence, Simpson and Smith

counties. He was a court appointed mediator in Circuit and Chancery courts, and a special master in Circuit Courts.

Judge Little took office in January 2019 in the 18<sup>th</sup> Chancery Court, which

includes Benton, Calhoun, Lafayette, Marshall and Tippah counties. He was district attorney for the Third Circuit for 10 years, and was Oxford Municipal Judge for 19 years.

## County judges re-elect Hannan, Johnson, Young Graham



**Judge Edwin Hannan**

County Court Judges re-elected Madison County Court Judge Edwin Hannan as chairman, Washington County Court Judge



**Judge Vernita King Johnson**

Vernita King Johnson as vice-chair, and Lauderdale County Court Judge Veldore Young Graham as Conference secretary.



**Judge Veldore Young Graham**

Judge Hannan has served as chairman of the Conference since 2015. Judge Johnson has been

*Continued on page 13*

# Five judges appointed to Committee on Continuing Judicial Education



**Justice James D. Maxwell II**

Chief Justice Mike Randolph reappointed Supreme Court Justice James D. Maxwell II of Oxford and Court of Appeals Judge Deborah A. McDonald of Fayette to the Committee on Continuing Judicial Education.

Circuit Judge Toni Walker Terrett of Vicksburg, Chancellor Jennifer Schloegel of Gulfport and County Court Judge Lisa J. Howell of Meridian were selected by their fellow



**Judge Deborah A. McDonald**

judges to serve on the Committee. Chief Justice Randolph signed an order on behalf of the unanimous Court on Nov. 3 formalizing all appointments.

The Committee on Continuing Judicial Education exercises general supervisory authority over the administration of the Rules and Regulations for Mandatory Continuing Judicial Education and recommends rule changes to the Supreme Court.



**Judge Toni Walker Terrett**

Justice Maxwell has served on the Committee on Continuing Judicial Education since March 2, 2017. He was appointed to the Mississippi Supreme Court on Jan. 1, 2016. He previously served as a judge of the Mississippi Court of Appeals for almost seven years. Before he came to the bench, he was an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Mississippi.

Judge McDonald has been a member of the Committee on Continuing Judicial Education since Feb. 28, 2019. She has served on the Court of Appeals since January 2019. She was Fayette Municipal Judge for 23 years. She represented clients in state and federal courts, including extensive civil rights litigation.

Judge Terrett has served as a judge of the Ninth Circuit Court since January 2019. The district includes Warren, Sharkey and Issaquena counties. She was Vicksburg Municipal Judge for six years, and was Vicksburg judge pro tempore and Community Court judge for four years. She was a faculty member at Alcorn State



**Chancellor Jennifer Schloegel**



**Judge Lisa J. Howell**

University in the Department of Mass Communications.

Judge Schloegel has served as a chancellor of the Eighth Chancery Court since January 2011. She practiced law for 19 years in business law, estate planning, wills and probate matters.

Judge Howell has served as a Lauderdale County Court Judge since Nov. 1, 2017. She was an assistant district attorney for the Tenth Circuit Court District for more than 20 years. She also worked in private practice handling domestic law matters, and was a public defender for Lauderdale County Youth Court.

## County Conference officers, *continued from page 12*

vice-chair since October 2004. Judge Young Graham began her service as Conference secretary in April 2012.

Judge Hannan, of Madison, became Madison County Court Judge in January 2007. He was appointed as an alternate member of the Commission on Judicial Performance on Nov. 1, 2021. He previously served for more than nine years as Madison Municipal Judge.

Judge Johnson, of Greenville, has served as Washington County Court Judge since 1999. She was

Hollandale Municipal Court Judge 1986-1994, Arcola Municipal Court Judge 1992-1998, and Greenville Municipal Court Judge 1996-1998.

Judge Young Graham, of Meridian, has served on the Lauderdale County Court bench since January 2007. She previously presided over the 10th Judicial District Drug Court and served on the State Intervention Courts Advisory Committee. She served for seven years as assistant district attorney, and for two years as a public defender.

## Supreme Court makes appointments to Bar Complaint Tribunal



**Judge Robert Fant Walker**



**Alicia S. Hall**



**Robert E. Quimby**



**Judge Joseph H. Loper Jr.**



**Prof. Donald E. Campbell**



**James E. Lambert III**

The Mississippi Supreme Court appointed three new members to the Bar Complaint Tribunal and reappointed three. New members are Gulfport Municipal Court Judge Robert Fant Walker and attorneys Alicia S. Hall of Jackson and Robert E. Quimby of Tupelo. Reappointed to the Tribunal are Circuit Judge Joseph H. Loper Jr. of Ackerman, Mississippi College School of Law Associate Professor Donald E. Campbell and attorney James E. Lambert III of Gulfport. Judge Loper, Campbell and Lambert have served on the Tribunal since January 2019.

New terms began Jan. 1.

Chief Justice Mike Randolph signed the appointment order Nov. 5.

Judge Walker has been Gulfport Municipal Judge for 12 years. He was an assistant district attorney



**Jerry Bustin**

in the Second Circuit.

Hall is a member of Entergy's legal regulatory team, representing Entergy Mississippi in matters before the Public Service Commission. She previ-

ously was in private practice for seven years.

Quimby practices law with Mitchell, McNutt, & Sams. His practice includes litigation, government and corporate representation and estate planning. He was Hernando Municipal Court Judge 2014-2020.

Judge Loper has served as Circuit Judge of the Fifth Judicial District since Feb. 10, 1993. He previously was Mayor of Ackerman.

Campbell teaches ethics and professional responsibility, property, wills and estates, land use and planning, and construction law. He coauthored *Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Mississippi Lawyers and Judges*, published *Professional Responsibility & Ethics: Readings, Notes & Questions*, and is an editor of the *Encyclopedia of Mississippi Law, 2nd Edition*.

Lambert practices law with Balch and Bingham. His defense practice includes medical malpractice, personal injury, excessive force, employment discrimination and commercial and construction disputes.

### Municipal Judge Jerry Bustin died April 15

Retired Forest Municipal Judge Jerry Lee Bustin died on April 15 at his home after a lengthy illness. He was 79. A memorial service was held on April 21.

He served as Municipal Judge 1969-1981 and 1985-2011, about 38 years. He also served as an appointed special chancellor.

He taught history and

coached football at Mosselle High School while working his way through the former Jackson School of Law at night. He began practicing law in 1968, doing criminal defense, personal injury and family law.

He enjoyed writing legal fiction. His novel *To Kill a Viper* was published in 2001, as was his essay "The Coon Hunt."

## Circuit Judge George Mitchell of Eupora died April 19



**Circuit Judge George M. Mitchell Jr.**

Circuit Judge George M. Mitchell Jr. of Eupora died April 19 at a hospital in Northport, Ala. after surgery on April 18. He was 77.

Funeral services were held April 26 at Walthall Baptist Church. The decorated military veteran was buried at North Mississippi Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Kilmichael.

Judge Mitchell served for more than six years as a state Circuit Judge of the Fifth Circuit Court District that includes Attala, Carroll, Choctaw, Grenada, Montgomery, Webster, and Winston counties. He was appointed to a vacancy on the court and took office Jan. 1, 2016. He was elected in November 2016 and re-elected in November 2018.

Gov. Tate Reeves is expected to appoint a judge to the unexpired term, which will end in December.

Judge Mitchell was unopposed in the non-partisan general election scheduled for Nov. 8. The

candidate qualifying deadline passed on Feb. 1. Mississippi's election statute regarding the death of the sole qualified judicial candidate, Mississippi Code Section 23-15-977 (4) says:

"If only one (1) person files his or her intent to be a candidate for a judicial office and that person later dies, resigns or is otherwise disqualified from holding the judicial office after the deadline provided for in subsection (1) of this section but more than seventy (70) days before the date of the general election, the Governor, upon notification of the death, resignation or disqualification of the person, shall issue a proclamation authorizing candidates to file their intent to be a candidate for that judicial office for a period of not less than seven (7) nor more than ten (10) days from the date of the proclamation."

Senior Circuit Judge Joseph Loper of Ackerman worked closely with Judge Mitchell. Judge Loper

said, "I'm just heartbroken by the news."

Judge Loper said, "His entire life was one of service. He retired as a Brigadier General in the Mississippi Air National Guard. He was at an age when most men would have thought about retiring, but he had a desire to continue service to the public. He was a dedicated public servant all of his life."

Judge Loper said he and Judge Mitchell consulted often about matters in the seven-county district. Judge Mitchell arrived at work early and stayed late. "He was a very hard worker, just a real workhorse."

Under a gruff exterior was a kindhearted soul, Judge Loper said. "He did a lot of things for a lot of people."

Former Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr., like Judge Mitchell, has an extensive military background, retiring at the rank of Brigadier General from the Mississippi Army National Guard. He called Judge Mitchell "the ultimate citizen soldier who sacrificed his personal time in the service of our country in the Air National Guard."

They were friends since law school. They met in 1975 in Moot Court. "I knew then he was a tireless student of the law, a protector of ethics and a zealous advocate for justice," Justice Waller said. "He upheld these principles as a member of the Bar and carried them with him as a Circuit Court Judge." Justice Waller gave him the oath of office after Judge

Mitchell won his first election.

A January 2013 fire destroyed the Webster County Courthouse in Walthall. Court was held in other facilities until a new courthouse was completed in 2019. Justice Waller said that Judge Mitchell called from time to time to let him know about the alternative venues that were used to keep the docket moving. "His model for hard work and open courts as a judge is one for all to emulate."

Justice Waller said, "He loved his family and his church. His life made a difference."

Judge Mitchell was a Vietnam War veteran with 32 years of military service. He served as a Judge Advocate in the Mississippi Air National Guard and a Judge on the Mississippi Court of Military Appeals. His many military honors included the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, the Mississippi Magnolia Cross and the Air Force Legion of Merit.

Judge Mitchell practiced law in Eupora for 32 years. He was Webster County Prosecuting Attorney 1986-2004. He was city attorney and city prosecuting attorney for the town of Maben and served as the Webster County School Board attorney.

He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Mississippi State University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law. He served as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Robert P. Sugg.

## Retired Circuit Judge Robert Kenneth Coleman died Jan. 25

Retired Circuit Judge Robert Kenneth Coleman of New Albany died on Jan. 25 at Magnolia at the Commons in Oxford. He was 85.

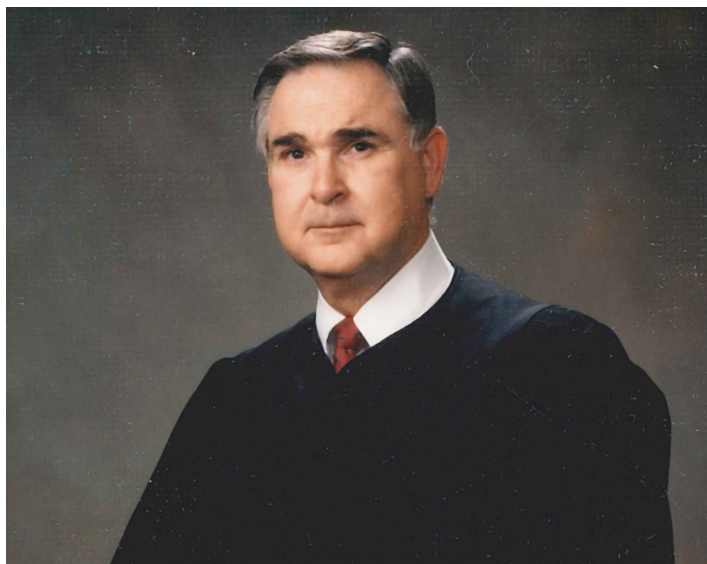
A funeral service was held Jan. 28 at First Baptist Church in New Albany.

Gov. Bill Allain appointed Judge Coleman to the Third Circuit Court in 1986. Judge Coleman retired Dec. 31, 2001. He continued to hear cases as a senior status judge by appointment of the Supreme Court until 2016.

He served as District Attorney for the Third District for 10 years before he was appointed to the bench. The Third Circuit includes

Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Lafayette, Marshall, Tippah and Union counties. He was in private practice and served as Okolona city attorney and attorney for Okolona Municipal Separate School District before becoming district attorney in 1976. He served as President of the Mississippi Prosecutors Association and on the Board of Directors of the National District Attorneys Association.

Robert Kenneth "Ken" Coleman was born Sept. 8, 1936, in Montpelier in Clay County, the son of Robert W. Coleman and Maurine Anderson Coleman. The family operated



**Retired Circuit Judge R. Kenneth Coleman**

a cotton gin in Okolona. He graduated from Okolona High School and attended Itawamba Junior College. He later was elected to the Itawamba Junior College Hall of Fame. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Mississippi and a Juris Doctor degree from the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University. He served in the Mississippi Army National Guard and Reserves, reaching the rank of Sergeant First Class.

Retired Circuit Judge John Gregory of Okolona, who gave the funeral eulogy, said Judge Coleman was a lifelong friend and mentor.

"He influenced me to go to law school. He was a mentor to me and a friend, like my brother," Judge Gregory said. After working as a law clerk at the Supreme Court, Gregory served as an assistant district attorney while Coleman was District Attorney. "He taught me how to try cases. We tried a lot of cases back then....He never

asked me to do anything that he would not do himself. Doing the right thing – there was no other way to do it." Judge Gregory said that after he himself became a judge, he again looked to Judge Coleman for advice. "I was blessed to have him to guide me, teach me."

Judge Coleman told the *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal* at the time of his 2001 retirement that his main goal was always to preserve the integrity of the trial system. "I'd like to think that everyone came away from the experience feeling that they were treated fairly," he said. "That's what makes the system work – people having confidence in it."

Retired Circuit Judge Andrew Howorth was appointed to the Third Circuit vacancy when Judge Coleman retired, and practiced law before him. "He liked to take care of business," Judge Howorth said, but he was affable on and off the bench. He was a story teller, bursting out in laughter in his oft-told humorous accounts.

## Retired Chancellor Don Grist died Feb. 23



**Retired Chancellor Don Grist**

Retired Chancellor William LaDon (Don) Grist of Oxford died Feb. 23 at his son's home in Alexander, Arkansas. He was 83. A funeral service was held Feb. 28 at Parker Memorial Funeral Home, followed by a graveside service at Bruce Cemetery.

Judge Grist served for eight years as a chancellor of the 18th District, retiring in December 1998.

The district includes Benton, Calhoun, Lafayette, Marshall and Tippah counties. He previously served for 15 years in the Mississippi House of Representatives in District 23.

Judge Grist was born on April 8, 1938, in Sarepta, Mississippi. He was the son of the late William V. Grist and the late Clara Logan Grist. He graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He worked for Goodyear, where he developed rubber seals for the NASA space shuttle program. In 1973, he earned his Juris Doctor from the Jackson School of Law, now Mississippi College School of Law. He is survived by his sons William Monte Grist of Alexander, Ark., and Tony Grist of Plano, Texas. He is also survived by three grandchildren.