

SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI



2012
ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM L. WALLER, JR.

Two thousand twelve was a demanding yet successful year for the Mississippi Judiciary. Four seats on the Supreme Court of Mississippi were on the ballot November 6. Presiding Justice George C. Carlson, Jr., retired, leaving District 3 (Northern), Place 3, as an open seat. Josiah D. Coleman was elected to fill that seat. Recently appointed Justice Leslie D. King was unopposed for District 1 (Central), Place 2. Chief Justice William L. Waller, Jr., District 1 (Central), Place 1, and Presiding Justice Michael K. Randolph, District 2 (Southern), Place 3, both were opposed but were re-elected. The Court of Appeals had one contested position, which resulted in the election of Ceola James to District 2, Place 2. Judge Eugene L. Fair Jr. was unopposed in District 5, Place 1. Despite these challenges, we have continued to dispose of matters expeditiously and to advance administrative initiatives that will improve our justice system.



The Judiciary recognizes that, as a separate, co-equal branch of government, it must perform its distinct functions while cooperating with the Legislative and Executive branches at the same time. Each branch has a unique role in providing justice and good government for the citizens of Mississippi. With the support of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives, and most members of the House and Senate, a judicial salary realignment bill was passed. The pay increase, which is in excess of thirty percent, will be implemented over four years and is funded by filing fee assessments. This legislation provides a measure of judicial independence by requiring the Legislature to review judicial salaries every four years based upon recommendations from the State Personnel Board. Furthermore, the funding source for the raises is independent of general fund appropriations.

At any given time, there are between 1,650 and 1,700 cases pending in some stage before the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. This year, the Clerk's Office filed 911 notices of appeal, 2,014 briefs, and 5,819 motions; it processed 7,058 orders and notices.

In 2012, Mississippi appellate courts decided 964 appeals and numerous petitions for certiorari, petitions for interlocutory appeal, petitions for mandamus, and more than 6,000 motions of various types, all within the established time limits. And for FY 2012, circuit and chancery courts disposed of 112,153 civil cases, and the circuit courts disposed of 24,917 criminal cases. All of this was accomplished using less than one percent of the state's general fund appropriations.

Recognizing that the cost of litigation too often bars those with limited means from bringing matters before the courts, we have distributed more than \$634,000 to civil legal assistance for the underprivileged. These funds were raised from special assessments that are designated for improving access to justice.

We have continued development of Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC). MEC is operating in nine counties and 3,518 practicing attorneys—more than fifty percent of the Bar—are now utilizing the system. Code revisions necessary to enable the system to process criminal cases are scheduled for completion in early 2013. When that occurs, the system will be fully developed for our trial courts, and we anticipate rapid expansion toward the goal of a statewide, unitary e-filing system.

Access to drug courts increased significantly in 2012. The last four non-participating circuit court districts voluntarily joined the state's drug court program. The program is now officially statewide.

The Court's internal committees are working on other projects, including Uniform Rules for Criminal Practice and Procedure. The Mississippi Model Jury Instructions Commission submitted its recommended revisions to the Court on October 24, 2012. And the Commission on Children's Justice is completing its study focused on improving the delivery of judicial and welfare services.

Much of our success is due to the dedication of judges, the leadership of the Mississippi Bar, attorneys, and career staff who have devoted themselves to the judiciary's sole purpose—providing a forum for the fair, efficient, and independent administration of justice. To all of these individuals, I give my personal thanks.

As Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Mississippi, I will do all within my power, with the assistance of my colleagues on the Court, to continue to improve our judicial system.

William L. Waller, Jr.
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Mississippi



SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI

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MISSISSIPPI JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The Mississippi Judiciary is made up of Justice and Municipal Courts at the most basic level; County, Chancery, and Circuit Courts comprising the trial courts of record; and two appellate courts, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court, Mississippi's court of last resort.

There are 82 Justice Courts with 197 judges. Justice Courts have jurisdiction over civil actions involving sums of \$3,500 or less and misdemeanors. They also hold preliminary hearings in felony cases. Appeals from the Justice Courts may be taken to circuit courts, or county courts if available, and the cases appealed are tried de novo.

There are 226 Municipal Courts with 227 judges. They have limited criminal jurisdiction and jurisdiction over violations of municipal ordinances. Appeals from the Municipal Courts may be taken to County or Circuit courts, and the cases appealed are tried de novo in the appellate court.

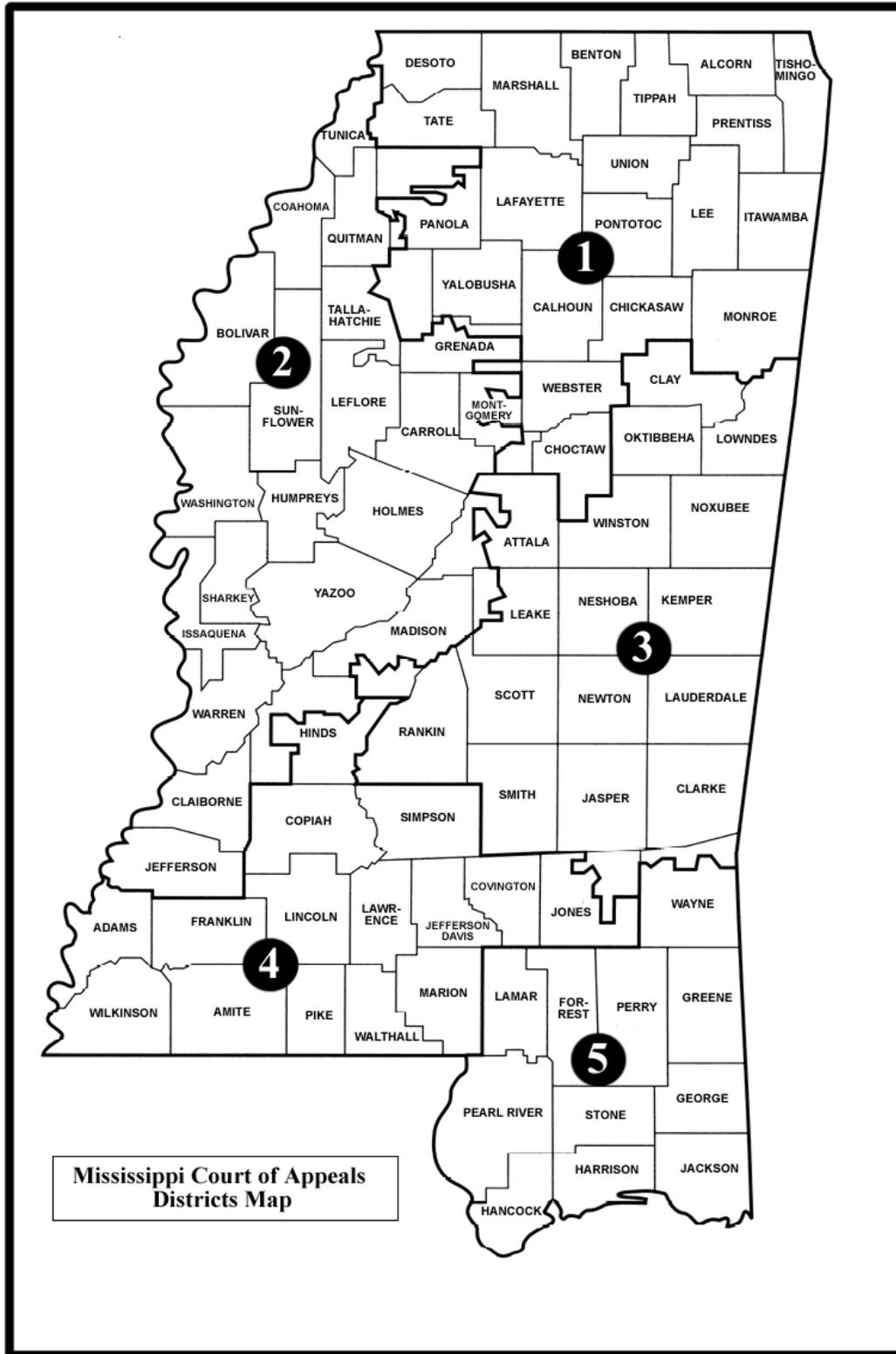
There are 21 County Courts with 30 judges. These courts have concurrent civil jurisdiction with the Chancery and Circuit Courts in suits involving \$200,000 or less. They also have limited criminal jurisdiction and appellate jurisdiction from the Justice Courts and Municipal Courts. In counties with County Courts, the Youth Courts function as a division of the County Courts handling juvenile matters.

There are Chancery Courts in each county which are organized into 20 districts with 49 chancellors. They have jurisdiction over matters of equity, domestic relations, land disputes, estates, guardianships, and mental commitments. In counties without County Courts, the Chancery Courts handle Youth Court functions. They also receive appeals on the record from County Courts in matters over which the two courts have concurrent subject matter jurisdiction.

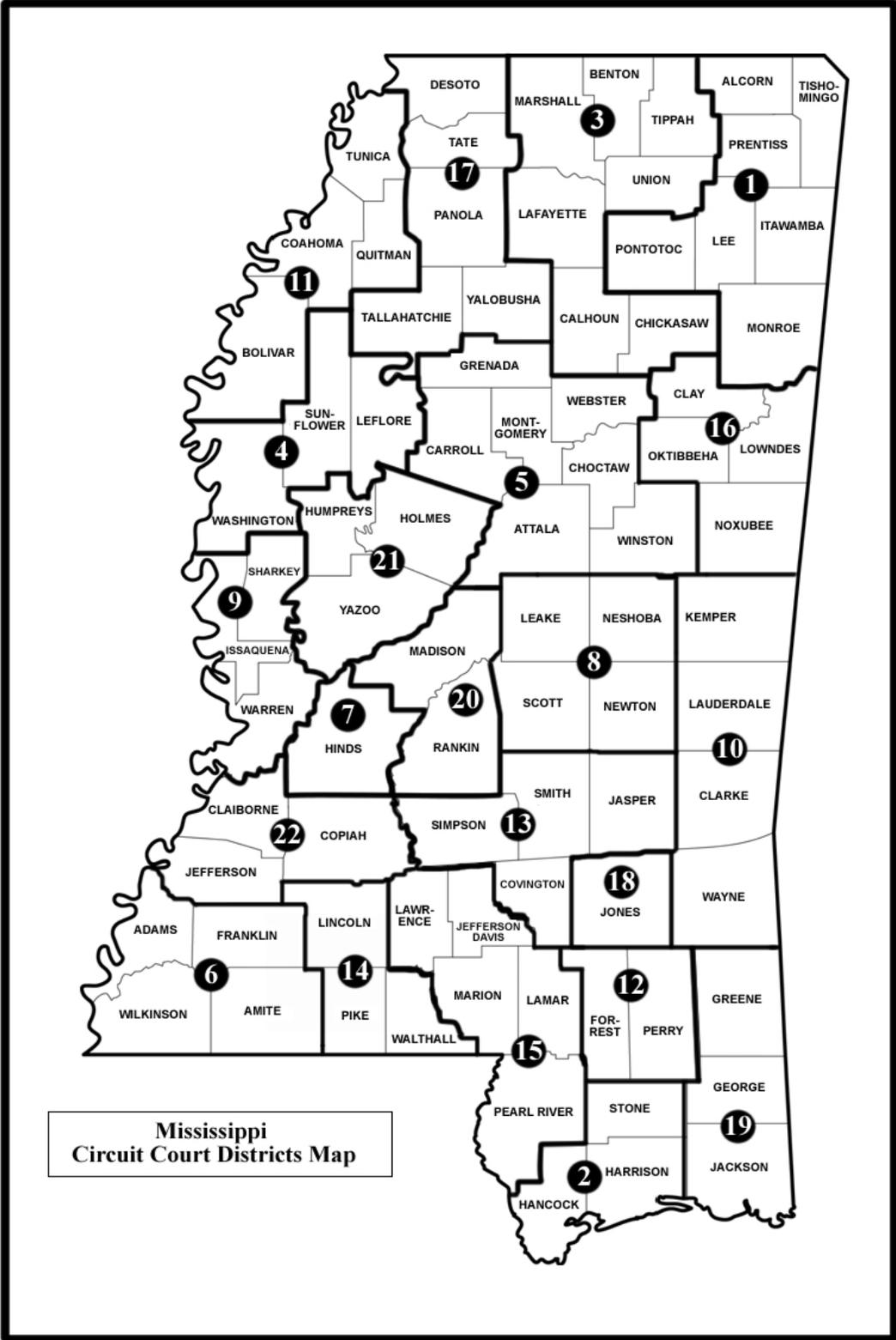
The Circuit Courts are the general jurisdiction trial courts in Mississippi. There are Circuit Courts in each county, organized into 22 districts with 53 judges. They have jurisdiction of all civil actions at law seeking recovery in excess of \$200 and of all criminal cases under state law. They receive appeals de novo from the Justice Courts and on the record from County Courts.

Appeals from the Chancery, Circuit, and, in limited situations, the County Courts are taken to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court may either retain the appeal or assign it to the Court of Appeals. Generally, the Supreme Court retains cases involving issues of first impression and cases involving interpretation of the Constitution, statutes or regulations. There are also a few categories of cases which the Supreme Court retains, such as death penalties, utility rates and annexations. The Court of Appeals typically hears cases in which the issues are ones of error correction, such as whether the judgment is supported by the

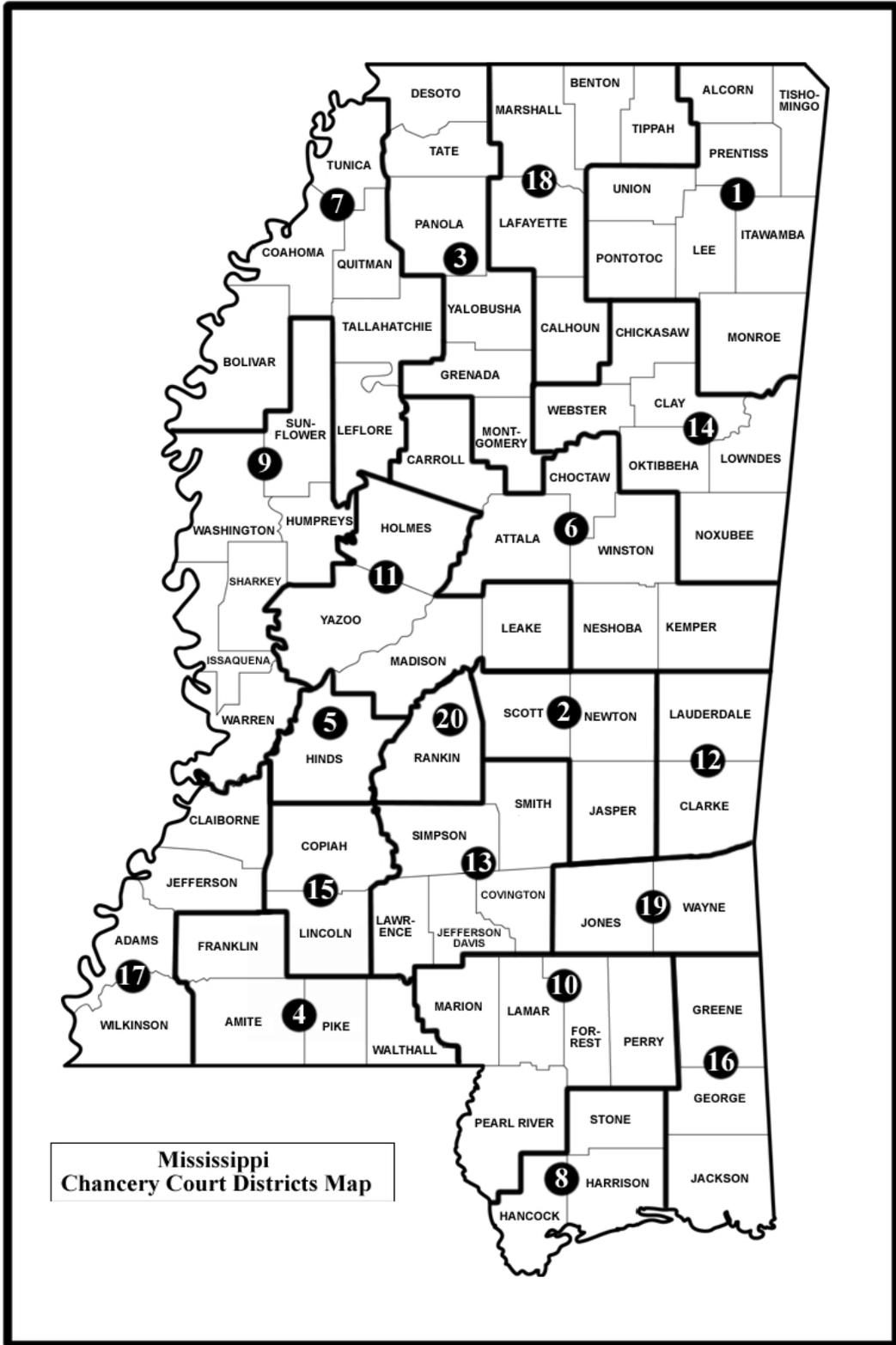
COURT OF APPEALS DISTRICTS



CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICTS



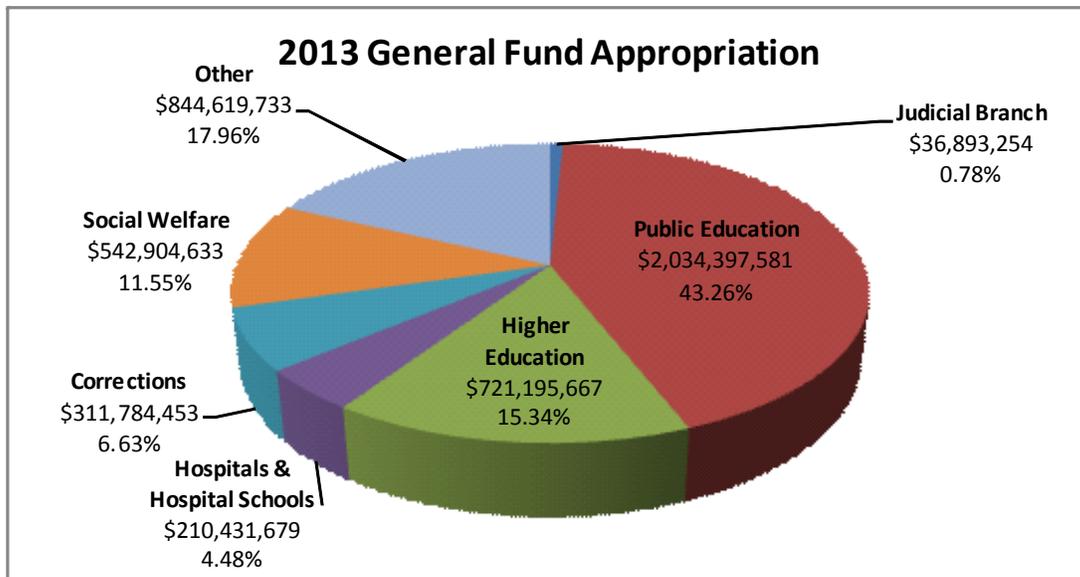
CHANCERY COURT DISTRICTS



FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURTS

The state judiciary is funded primarily by general fund appropriations with additional funding for specific mandates by way of grants and special funds.

For fiscal year 2013, the entire general fund appropriations for all three branches of state government was \$4,702,227,000. The appropriation for the Administrative Office of Courts and all courts of record in the state (the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the 82 circuit courts, the 82 chancery courts, and the 21 county courts) was \$36,893,254. This represents performance of all judicial functions by these courts for less than one per cent of the general fund expenditures.



Judicial Compensation

The Mississippi Legislature approved compensation realignment for judges and prosecutors in 2012, the first pay adjustment in nine years. Gov. Phil Bryant signed House Bill 484 on April 13, 2012. A \$40 increase in trial court civil filing fees and a \$100 increase in appellate filing fees funded the compensation realignment. The revisions under Mississippi Code Section 25-3-35 (1) went into effect January 1, 2013. Incremental raises will follow in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

From and after January 1, 2019, and every four years thereafter, the annual salaries of state judges are to be adjusted to the level of compensation recommended by the State Personnel Board according to the board's most recent report on judicial salaries, as required

under Section 25-9-115, to the extent that sufficient funds are available. The annual salaries fixed in accordance with this provision shall not become effective until the commencement of the next immediately succeeding term of office.

Judicial salaries effective January 1, 2013, are:

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.....	\$126,292.50
Presiding Justices of the Supreme Court...	\$123,600.75
Associate Justices of the Supreme Court...	\$122,460.00
Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.....	\$117,992.00
Associate Judges of the Court of Appeals..	\$114,994.25
Chancery and Circuit Judges.....	\$112,127.50
District Attorneys.....	\$103,322.00.



OUTREACH AND INNOVATION

Throughout 2012, the Supreme Court continued its efforts to make the courts more accessible to the public and to enhance the ability of the courts to effectively use technological advancements.

Access to Justice

The Access to Justice Commission was created by the Mississippi Supreme Court in 2006, to develop a unified strategy to improve access to the civil courts for the poor. The Commission draws together organizations concerned with providing legal services to the poor in Mississippi. Co-Chairs are Chancery Judge Denise Owens and former Mississippi Bar President H. Rodger Wilder. The Commission includes members of the judiciary, a representative of the Governor, legislators, business and community leaders, and clergy. Representatives of entities which provide legal services to the poor are ex-officio members.

The Commission, which meets quarterly, develops and recommends policies, programs, and initiatives to assist the judiciary in meeting needs for civil legal services to the poor. Commission recommendations adopted by the Mississippi Supreme Court in 2011 encourage lawyers to provide pro bono service at clinics as well as on an individual basis. Rule amendments addressed limited scope representation, also known as unbundling of services, in an effort to encourage lawyers to provide some services to clients who cannot afford full service representation. The Court also adopted a rule intended to encourage lawyers to provide volunteer services to legal hotlines and clinics without fear of creating conflicts of interest. The Commission presented a session on unbundling during the 2012 Summer School for Lawyers and the Mississippi Bar Annual Meeting. Similar presentations have been made at other Continuing Legal Education seminars and legal organization meetings.

Rule changes and the exchange of ideas at Commission meetings and other access to justice forums have encouraged growth of local programs which assist the poor. Washington

County Chancery Court since 2010 has conducted quarterly pro se clinics. The Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLP) and local attorneys give legal advice and assist unrepresented litigants in drafting pleadings and correcting pleadings. University of Mississippi School of Law students assist under the supervision of attorneys. Lee County Chancery Court in 2012 modeled their pro se assistance program on that of Washington County. Lee County Chancery Court partnered with the Mississippi Bar Young Lawyers Division and MVLP to conduct its first guardianship legal clinic on July 20, 2012, to assist grandparents and other relatives in establishing guardianships so that they could enroll children in school. Hinds County held its fifth annual guardianship clinic on July 26, 2012. Family law clinics to deal with divorce, custody, child support and other family law issues were held on Oct. 18, 2012, in Oxford and on Oct. 25, 2012, in Hattiesburg. The Hattiesburg clinic also dealt with record expungements to assist participants in attaining jobs. Harrison County in September 2011 began offering form pleadings to assist pro se litigants and continued to offer those forms at the Harrison County Law Library in 2012.

Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice Jess H. Dickinson, a member of the Access to Justice Commission, participated in the White House Forum on the State of Civil Legal Assistance on April 17, 2012, at the White House. The forum focused on access to civil justice, benefits of legal aid for the judicial system, and the effect on courts when they risk being overwhelmed with unrepresented litigants.

Civil Legal Assistance Fund

The Supreme Court during 2012 distributed more than \$634,000 for civil legal assistance to the underprivileged. This distribution was from special assessments on court filings and from fees charged to out-of-state attorneys appearing *pro hac vice* and does not come from general fund appropriations.



Court Interpreter Credentialing Program

The Mississippi Court Interpreter Credentialing Program works toward creation of a statewide program to provide credentialing of language interpreters for court proceedings. The Administrative Office of Courts started a registry of interpreters who are qualified to assist in court proceedings involving parties who have limited understanding of English. The AOC program can provide judges in all state courts with the resource of a list of language interpreters who have demonstrated proficiency in oral interpretation and written translation of court proceedings. Interpreters are not employees of the AOC. It is up to the individual courts, attorneys or agencies to provide compensation for the court interpreter.

AOC in 2012 hosted three workshops for prospective language interpreters. The workshops introduce participants to interpreting in a courtroom setting. The participants are schooled on Mississippi's court system as well as legal vocabulary. Through interactive exercises, the prospective interpreters are taught correct courtroom decorum. Workshops outline the requirements to achieve credentialing as a registered or certified courtroom interpreter.

The workshops are the first step in a program which will train, certify, and test individuals who wish to serve as interpreters in Mississippi courtrooms. Language interpreters may be included on the list after having completed the AOC's credentialing program. The credentialing program includes registered and certified levels. Rules for interpreters require a court to use a certified court interpreter if one is available. If no certified court interpreter is available, a registered interpreter may be used. Interpreters must have a high level of mastery of two languages, be highly skilled in all modes of interpreting, and understand and be able to explain court terms and procedures. Written and verbal testing as well as background checks are required.



Drug Courts

Drug court programs reached statewide coverage in late 2012. All 22 Circuit Court districts have drug courts, with the final district organizing its program in 2012 and being ready to accept participants in early 2013. Four circuit court judges agreed to start a drug court program in districts that previously did not have one. New drug court programs were implemented in the 5th, 13th, 18th, and 22nd Circuit Court Districts. From January through December 2012, the number of programs statewide increased from 41 to 45. In addition to the 22 Circuit Court programs, the state had 11 County Court youth programs, four referee court youth programs, six misdemeanor programs, and two family court pilot programs. Drug court enrollment grew by 7.29% from 3,126 participants to 3,354, and 584 participants graduated from drug court program statewide.

The 19th Circuit Drug Court expanded its program to include a Veterans Court program to address the needs of military veterans in Jackson, George and Greene counties. The 19th Circuit was the third state trial court to develop a program for veterans. The 12th Circuit Court of Forrest and Perry counties started a separate Veterans Court in November 2011. The 8th Circuit Court of Leake, Neshoba, Newton and Scott counties started a veteran's component within that Drug Court in August 2010.

Drug courts are designed to hold drug-using offenders accountable for their actions. In 2012, drug court participants paid more than \$2.2 million in fines and fees. At the same time, drug courts save the state approximately \$38 million a year in incarceration costs by placing suitable candidates under intense supervision and allowing them to work and support their families rather than being imprisoned. Drug court requires participants to be employed and, if they dropped out of school, to work toward obtaining a GED. Among participants, 28% saw an increase in their educational level, and 33% saw an increase in their employment level. Women enrolled in drug courts across the state gave birth to 59 drug-free babies.

Drug court programs offer a collaborative effort from the court, probation officers, substance abuse treatment providers, and others. This “team” approach is used to provide the drug court participants with the most effective plan in dealing with their addiction. The program involves court-ordered treatment, random and frequent drug testing, intensive supervision, the use of sanctions and incentives, and numerous face-to-face appearances before the judge. The philosophy of drug court programs is that this model will result in higher recovery rates from addiction, reduced criminal behaviour, lower recidivism rates, and an overall return to productive citizenship.

The first felony adult drug court was established in 1999 in the 14th Circuit District. In 2003, the Mississippi Legislature adopted the Alyce Griffin Clarke Drug Court Act, which created the necessary framework for expansion of the drug court model throughout Mississippi. Since its passage, more than 4,000 Mississippians have benefited from this effective alternative in dealing with the problems of substance abuse. The State Drug Courts Advisory Committee deserves special recognition for its leadership and commitment to meaningful solutions to the problems of the criminal justice system.

Court Administration – Electronic Filing and Case Management

The Supreme Court, working with the Administrative Office of Courts, the State Department of Information Technology Services and state trial courts, is implementing a major long-range initiative to provide a uniform electronic case filing and court management system for distribution to the chancery and circuit courts and their respective clerks’ offices.



The Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC) program is adapted from the electronic filing system used in federal district courts. Attorneys and their staffs may file and view documents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Judges using MEC can access documents at any time and location via the Internet, allowing them to prepare for hearings and draft orders and opinions without waiting for paper files. The public will have easier access to court records.

Planning for MEC began in 2004, and recent years were spent in the development stage. Work has now shifted to implementation, with tremendous growth in 2012. Currently, 3,518 attorneys (50.6% of active practicing attorneys in the state) are using MEC. More than 1,000 non-attorneys have registered to use the system.

E-filing expanded to all trial courts in Harrison County, and e-filing is mandatory in those courts. E-filing is also mandatory in all courts in Madison and Warren counties and DeSoto County Chancery Court. In addition, implementations began in Hinds and Rankin Chancery Courts.

The demand for the Mississippi Electronic Courts system continues to increase. Plans were made to expand the system into an additional 15 courts by the end of 2013. In order to keep up with that growing demand, MEC added four key personnel to the organization: application developer, programmer analyst, systems administrator, and help desk specialist.

Development of the criminal component and accounting module began in 2012. In addition, MEC began work toward inter-agency exchange of data. MEC is collaborating with both Mississippi Department of Human Services regarding the collection of child support data and Mississippi State Department of Health in the collection of vital statistics.

Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS)

A longstanding technology program for Youth Courts began in 1999. In 2012, the Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS) was operating in 81 Youth Court and Referee Courts and in the City of Pearl Municipal Youth Court. MYCIDS is designed to help Youth Courts organize their work and records efficiently and save staff time and other resources. The MYCIDS system includes electronic docketing and record keeping. Case tracking features assist court staff in scheduling all hearings and other events required by law to occur within a specific time frame. Judges and court staff are able to track juveniles' encounters with multiple jurisdictions. Computer hardware, staff training and a help desk are provided by the Supreme Court at no charge to local Youth Courts. This successful case management system is highly regarded nationally.

Information Technology

The Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of Courts function with a technology staff of a director, two systems administrators, one software development project manager, four programmer analysts, one web master/support specialist, and one business systems analyst. These staff members distribute and maintain all computer hardware and software in the trial courts and appellate courts, distribute and install MYCIDS, and train, develop and maintain the appellate court case management system with e-filing (CITS) and the AOC Statistical System (SCATS), maintain the Judicial Branch web site, and advise the Court on future technology initiatives.



THE APPELLATE COURTS OF MISSISSIPPI

All appeals from the Circuit, Chancery and Youth Courts of the state come to the Supreme Court. Appeals from the Justice Courts go to the Circuit Courts or to the County Courts where available. County Court appeals are to either the Circuit Courts, the Chancery Courts, or the Supreme Court, depending on the subject matter and type of case.

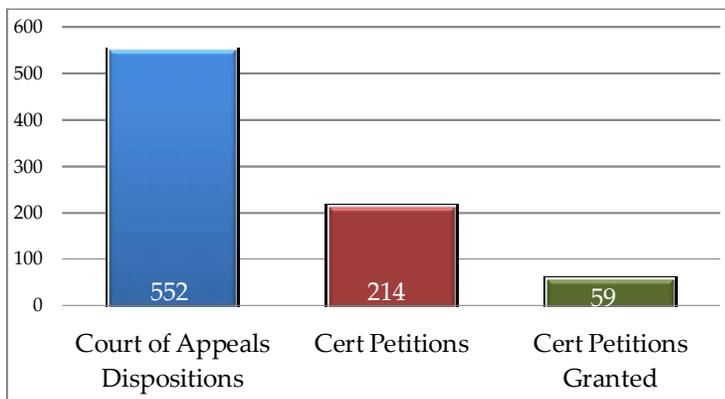
Certain appeals are, as a class, retained and decided by the Supreme Court; others may be assigned by the Supreme Court to the Court of Appeals. In deciding whether to retain a case, the Supreme Court considers the uniqueness of the case, the likelihood that its decision will be of important precedential value, whether it raises issues of first impression or interpretation, and the relative workloads of the two appellate courts.

In addition, the Supreme Court retains certain categories of cases, including those which involve:

- (a) the imposition of the death penalty;
- (b) utility rates;
- (c) annexations;
- (d) bond issues;
- (e) election contests;
- (f) a trial court's holding a statute unconstitutional;
- (g) bar discipline matters;
- (h) judicial performance matters; and
- (I) certified questions from federal court.

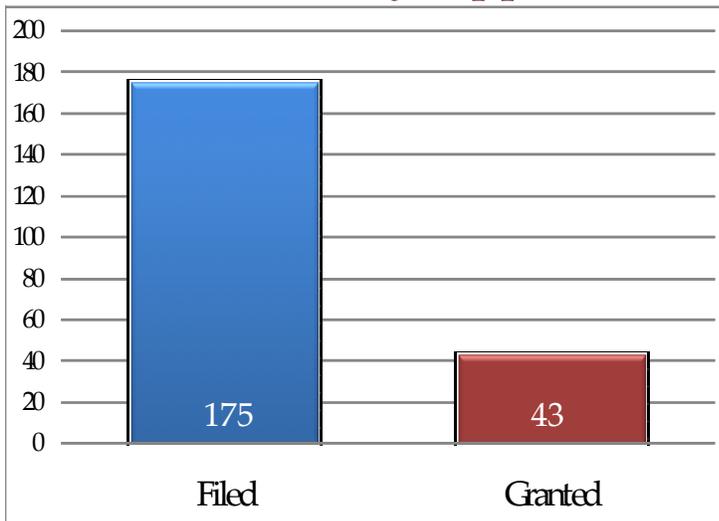


Petitions for Certiorari



assigned to the Court of Appeals are referred to as error correction cases. These cases deal with evidentiary issues which arose during the course of the trial, and with the weight and sufficiency of the evidence supporting the judgment. Additionally, by rule, all Workers Compensation cases are referred to the Court of Appeals.

Interlocutory Appeals



In addition to its workload of retained cases, the Supreme Court also decides nearly all interlocutory appeals and all petitions for writ of certiorari from the Court of Appeals, and has significant administrative responsibilities such as rule making obligations ranging from rules of procedure to Bar admissions.

The Court of Appeals does an outstanding job of deciding a high level of direct appeals. Typical cases assigned to the Court of Appeals are referred to as error correction cases. These cases deal with evidentiary issues which arose during the course of the trial, and with the weight and sufficiency of the evidence supporting the judgment. Additionally, by rule, all Workers Compensation cases are referred to the Court of Appeals.

Since July 2004, both appellate courts have decided cases within 270 days following completion of briefing, and, in most cases, decisions are made even more expeditiously. All petitions for writ of certiorari from the Court of Appeals are either granted, denied or dismissed by the Supreme Court within 90 days following the filing of the responses to the petitions, and all cases on

review by certiorari are decided within 180 days after the petitions are granted. Petitions for interlocutory appeal are generally granted, denied, or dismissed within 45 days after the responses are filed.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY FOR APPELLATE COURTS

Case Filings

Notices of Appeal, General	920
Death Penalty PCR Applications	11
Bar Discipline Cases	4
Bar Discipline Appeals	1
Bar Reinstatement Cases	0
Judicial Performance Cases	3
Election Contests	1
Interlocutory Appeals Granted	43
Certiorari Petitions Granted	59
Workers' Comp Appeals	45
Utility Rate Cases	1
Total New Cases Filed	1091

	Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Courts Combined
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Case Dispositions

Dismissed by Clerk's Rule 2 Notice	86	34	120
Dismissed by Order of Court	121	13	134
Certiorari Petitions Dismissed after Grant	5	0	5
Decided by Published Opinion	184	505	689
Per Curiam Affirmed	5	0	5
Decided by Order	11	0	11
Total Case Dispositions	412	552	964

In 2012, the Supreme Court heard oral argument in 32 cases, while the Court of Appeals heard oral argument in 59 cases.

In addition, the appellate courts addressed 6,239 motions: 3,203 by the Supreme Court and 3,036 by the Court of Appeals. These included:

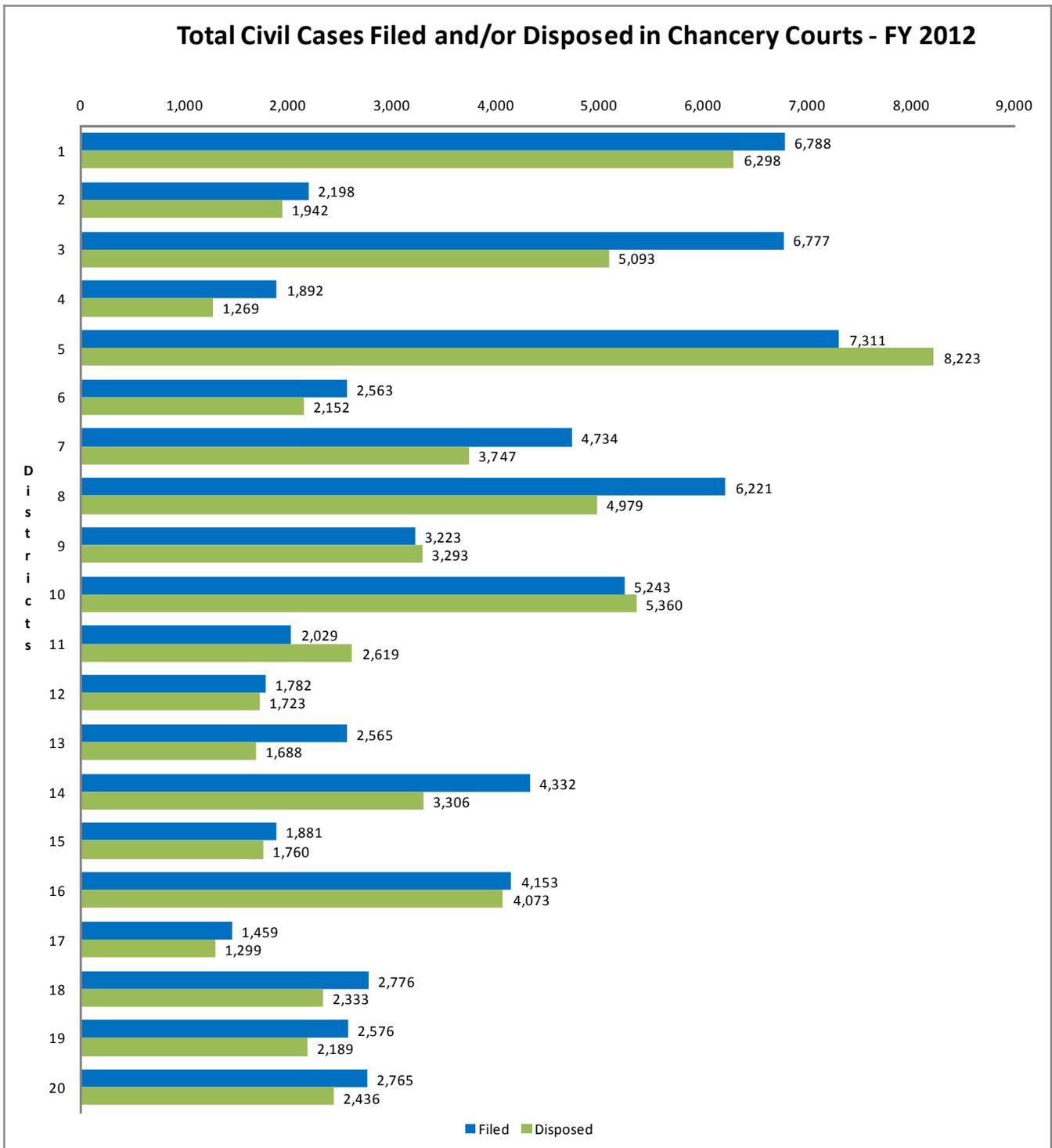
	Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Courts Combined
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Motions for Rehearing	73	251	324
Petitions for Interlocutory Appeal	175	0	175
Petitions for Certiorari	214	0	214

MISSISSIPPI TRIAL COURTS OF RECORD

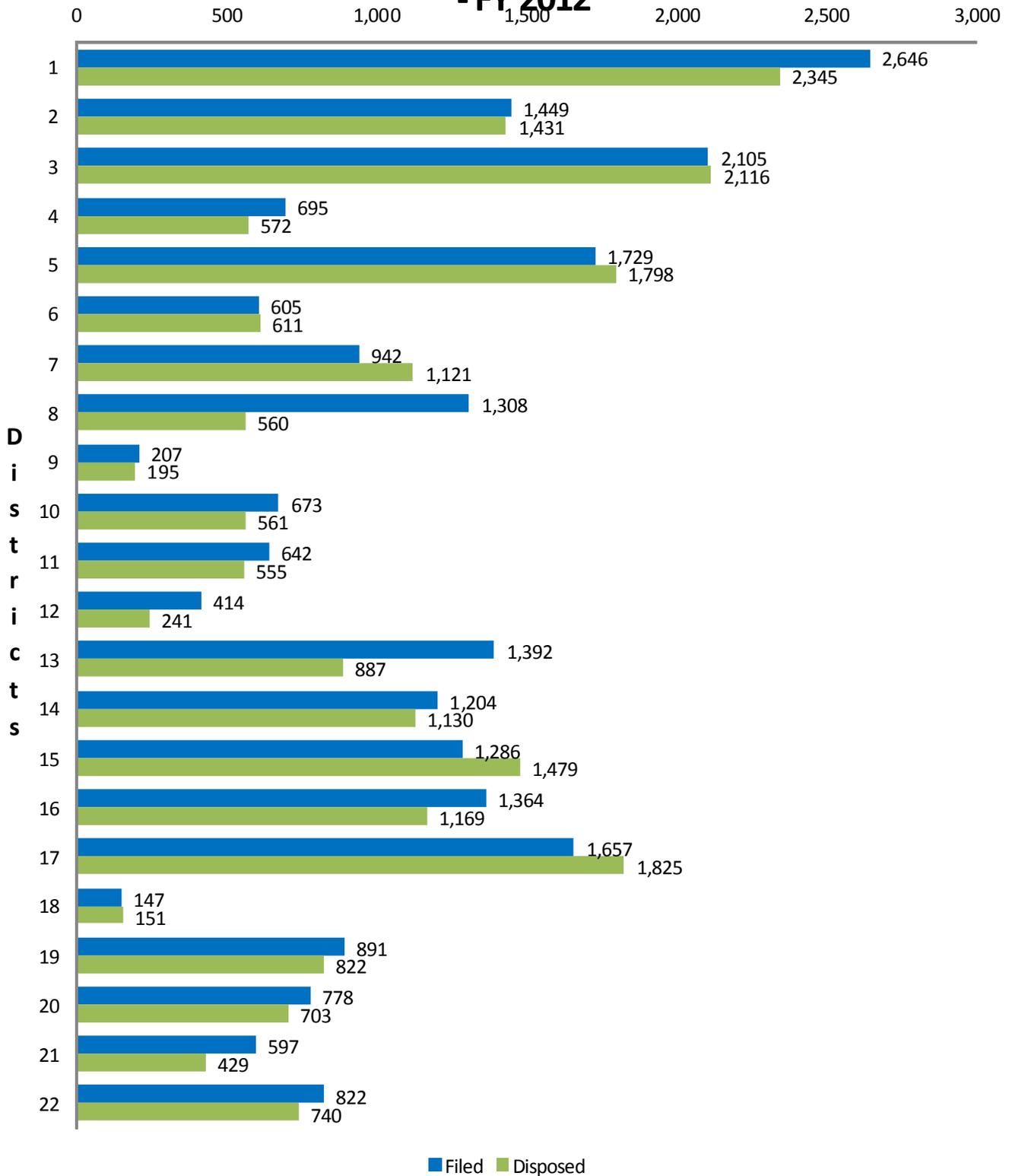
The trial courts in Mississippi without jurisdictional limits on the amounts in controversy are the Chancery and Circuit Courts. The state is divided into 20 Chancery Court Districts and 22 Circuit Court Districts. Each district has from one to four judges, depending on the size of the district and its case load. The courts are served by independently elected chancery and circuit clerks in each county. The chancery and circuit clerks for each district are required by law to report the activities of the courts to the Administrative Office of Courts. The data, as reported, reflect the following:

CHANCERY COURTS

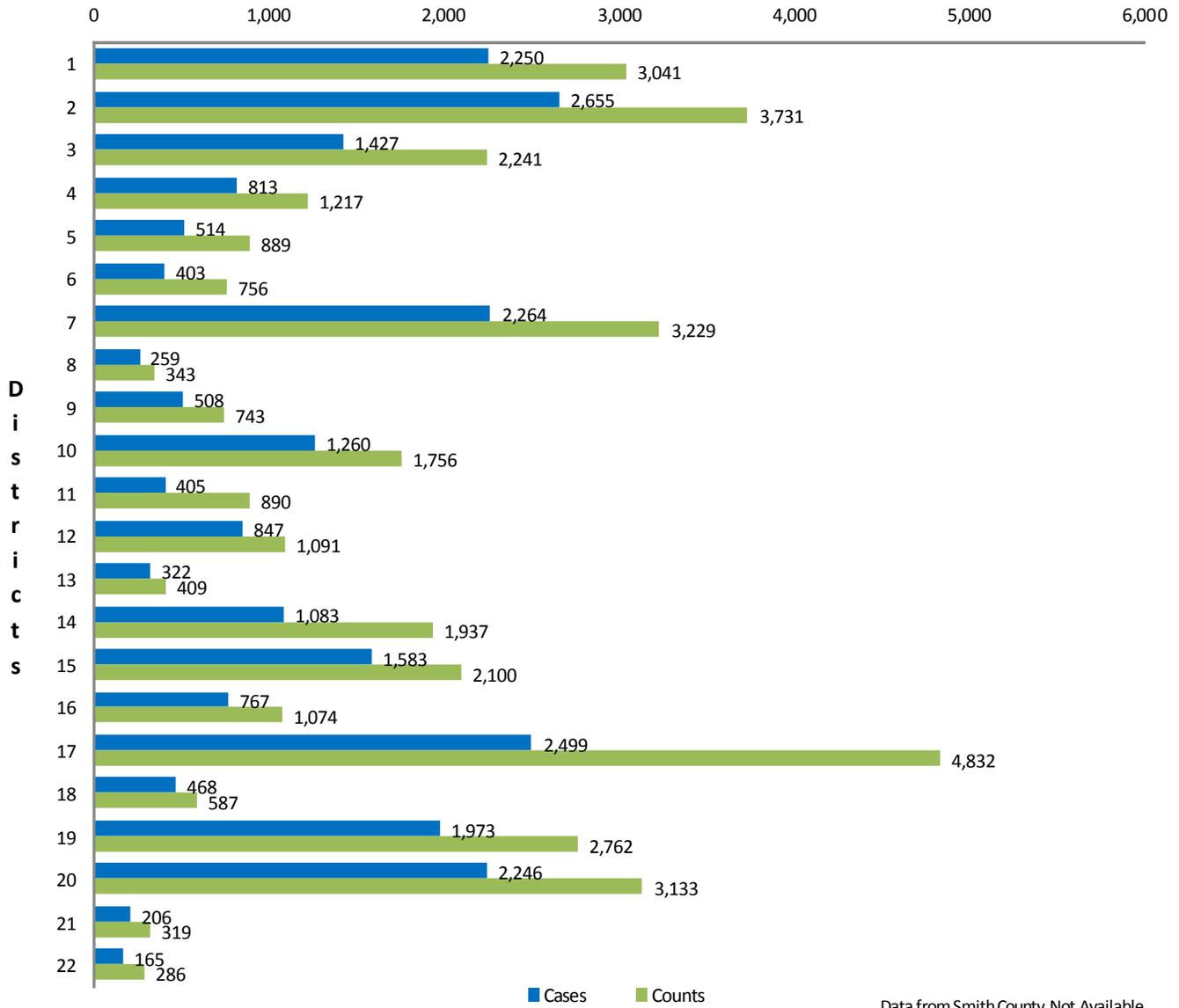


CIRCUIT COURTS

**Total Civil Cases Filed and/or Disposed in Circuit Courts
- FY 2012**



Circuit Courts - Criminal Cases / Counts Disposed in FY 2012

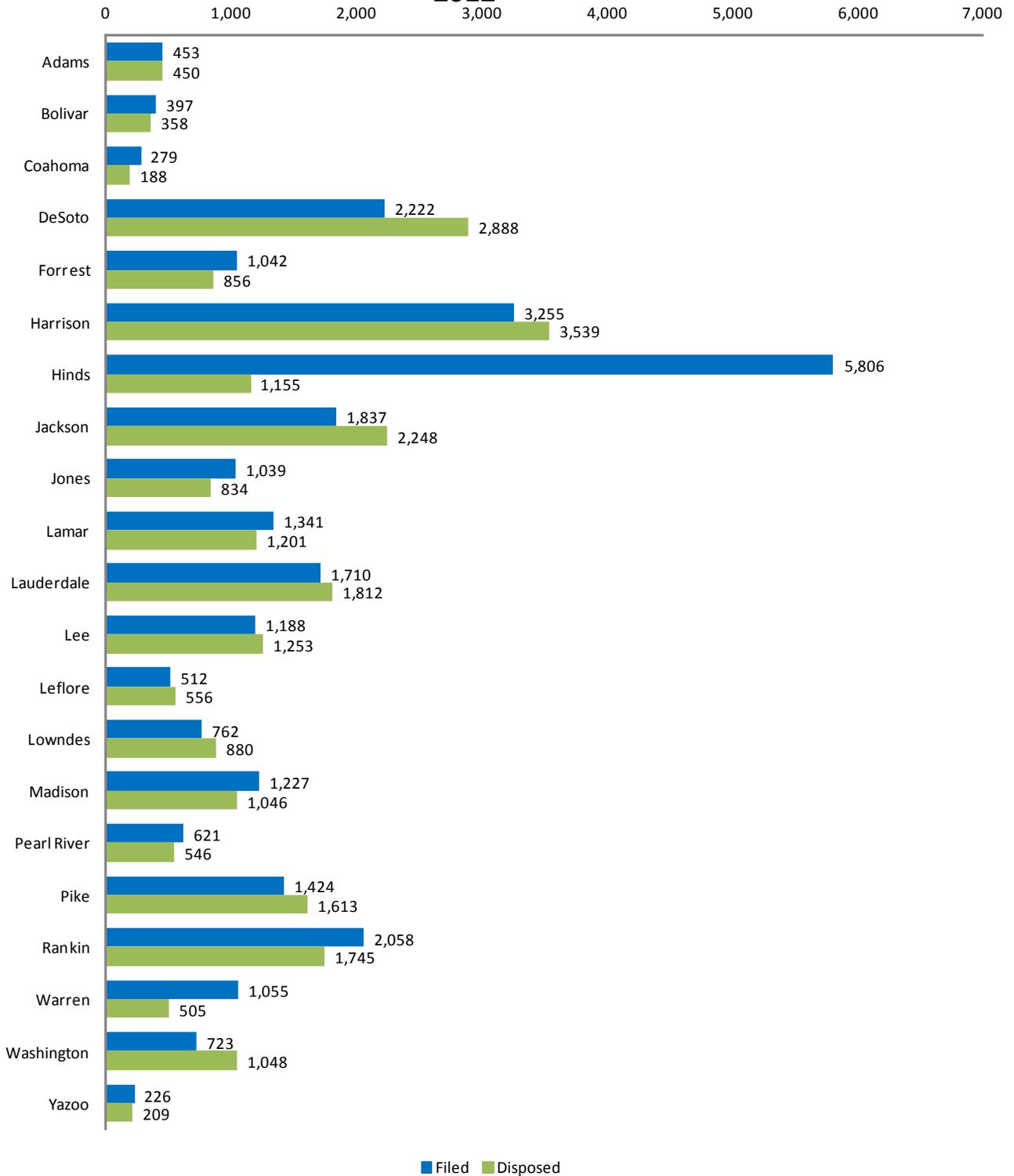


Data from Smith County Not Available

COUNTY AND YOUTH COURTS

Total Civil Cases Filed and/or Disposed in County Courts - FY

2012



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS

The Administrative Office of Courts was created on July 1, 1993, to support the judicial system by providing efficient administration of the non-judicial business of the state's courts. The AOC offices are located in Jackson in the Carroll Gartin Justice Building at 450 High Street. The duties of the AOC, specified in Miss. Code Ann. §§ 9-21-1, -3, -9, -29 (Rev. 2002), are:

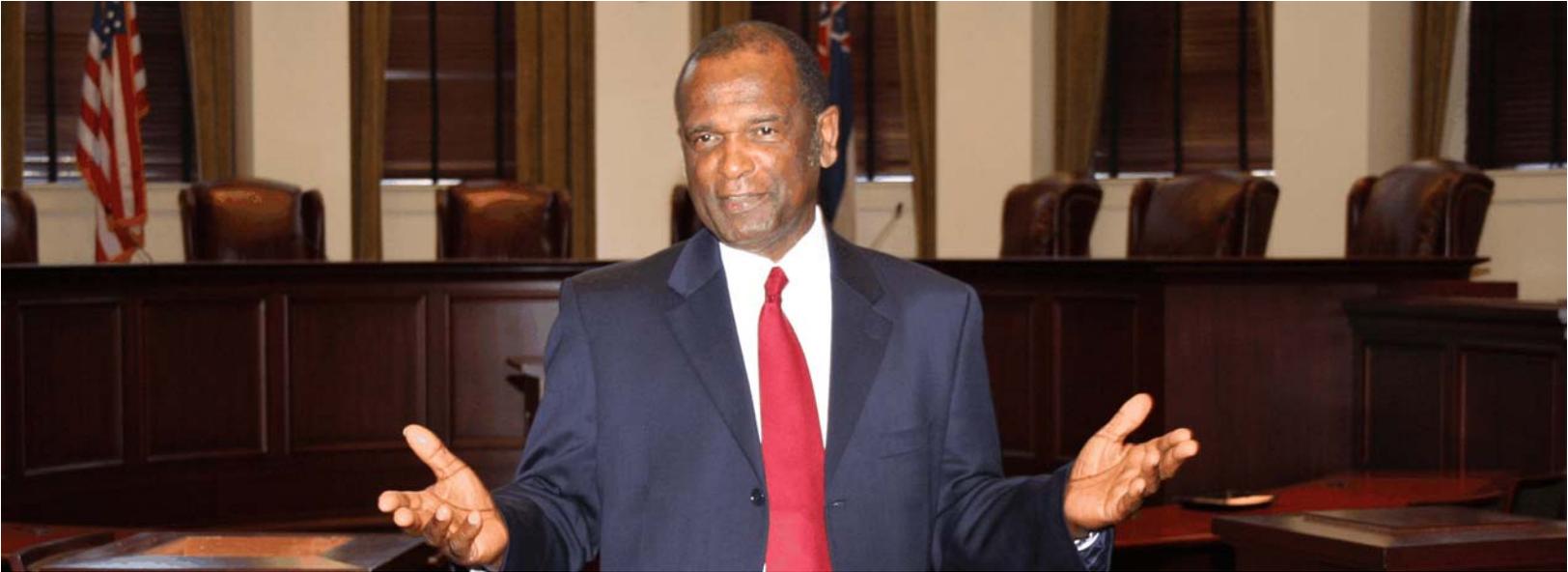
- To assist the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with his duties as the chief administrative officer of all of the courts in the state;
- To assist in the prevention of unnecessary delay in the conduct of trials of the state courts;
- To promulgate standards, rules and regulations for computer and/or electronic filing and storage of all court records and court-related records maintained throughout the state in courts and in offices of circuit and chancery clerks;
- To collect case statistics from all civil, criminal and youth courts in the state;
- To coordinate and conduct studies and projects to improve the administration of justice;
- To support the Judicial Advisory Study Committee, including research and clerical assistance;
- To require the filing of reports and the collection and compilation of statistical data and financial information;
- To make recommendations regarding the state of the dockets and the effective number of judges and other court personnel;
- To prescribe uniform administrative and business records, forms, and systems;
- To devise and promulgate youth court tracking forms;
- To prepare and submit budget recommendations necessary for the maintenance and operation of the judicial system;
- To develop and implement personnel policies for non-judicial court employees;
- To procure, distribute, exchange, transfer and assign equipment, books, forms, and supplies as are acquired for the court system;
- To prepare and submit an annual report on the work of the judicial system;
- To take necessary steps in the collection of unpaid fines and court costs; and
- To perform any additional administrative duties assigned by the Supreme Court.

The AOC processes payroll for the support staff of the Chancery and Circuit judges, as well as the official court reporters; administers the office and rent allowances for the trial judges; maintains inventory records for equipment purchased with state funds; approves the trial judges' travel reimbursements for in-state and out-of-state travel; collects statistical data from the Chancery, Circuit, County, and Youth Courts; collects data on cases handled by family masters; administers special funds for civil legal assistance, comprehensive electronic

court systems, drug courts, and the Board of Certified Court Reporters; and oversees several federal grants awarded to the AOC for the benefit of the judiciary.

The AOC works closely with study groups created to improve the administration of justice. Groups and their work are as follows:

- The Mississippi Judicial Advisory Study Committee, created in 1993, is a statutory body which meets quarterly. The Study Committee makes policy recommendations to the Supreme Court and the Mississippi Legislature to promote improvements to the administration of justice and the operation of the courts. The Study Committee focused most of its 2012 meeting discussions on allocation of judicial resources.
- The State Drug Courts Advisory Committee oversees the development and operation of Mississippi's drug courts. The Advisory Committee was established by the Mississippi Legislature in 2003 to recommend improvements to drug court policies and procedures. The Advisory Committee sets funding formulas for drug courts, and is responsible for developing statewide evaluation plans and models for monitoring critical aspects of drug court operations. The Advisory Committee in 2012 continued to push for expansion of drug courts, reaching the 2008 legislatively directed goal of statewide coverage of drug courts. At the same time, the Advisory Committee grappled with funding issues; growth neared the point at which programs would outpace funding. The funding mechanism is a \$10 special assessment on criminal fines and traffic violations. The special assessment generates about \$4.3 million per year, but operational costs of the programs exceed \$7 million a year.
- The Court Improvement Program (CIP) Workgroup was established in 2007 as a collaborative effort with the Department of Human Services-Division of Family and Children's Services. In 2012, CIP was instrumental in providing parent representation training for Youth Court judges, attorneys and child welfare personnel. Youth Courts in Adams, Forrest, Harrison and Rankin counties implemented pilot programs which provide free legal representation for low-income parents in Youth Court hearings in which allegations of abuse or neglect could result in court-ordered removal of children from parents' custody. Casey Family Programs funded three of the sites, and CIP contributed to establishing the fourth site. CIP worked with Casey Family Programs, the American Bar Association Center for Children and the Law, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the University of Mississippi School of Law and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Legal Services Department in the parent representation training program. CIP also helped present the second annual Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) training conference. The program was a collaborative effort among CIP, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Division of Family and Children's Services and the Mississippi Judicial College.



MISSISSIPPI JUDICIAL ADVISORY STUDY COMMITTEE

The same legislation which created the Administrative Office of Courts also created the 21-member Mississippi Judicial Advisory Study Committee. Its members are appointed by various entities as directed by statute. The chairs of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees are non-voting members. The Committee is required by statute to meet not less than quarterly and has appointed consulting groups in areas of particular concern to develop recommendations to be made to the Legislature, the Supreme Court, and the Administrative Office of Courts. The Committee has submitted its detailed, mandated report to the Legislature by a separate document.

COMMISSION ON CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The Mississippi Commission on Continuing Legal Education (CLE) has the primary responsibility to exercise general supervisory authority over the administration of the Rules for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education and to adopt, repeal, and amend regulations consistent with these rules. The objective of the Mississippi Commission on CLE is to ensure that each member of the Bar complies with the rules and regulations established by the Commission and meets the mandatory CLE requirements in a timely and efficient manner. Twelve (12) hours of approved instruction are required annually of every attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Mississippi.

The Commission strives to meet the needs of the members of the Mississippi Bar regarding continuing legal education by keeping abreast of national changes in programming formats and topics. Members of the Commission and its administrator are active in the national organization of regulatory CLE boards, CLereg.

In 2012 the Mississippi Commission on CLE approved for credit 459 live programs that were held in the state of Mississippi, 2,782 live programs held outside the state of Mississippi, and 4,783 programs that were given by satellite, teleconference or online through live webcasts and on-demand programs.



BOARD OF BAR ADMISSIONS

The Board of Bar Admissions has the primary obligation to administer the laws and rules governing admission to practice law in the State of Mississippi. The Board's efforts are primarily directed at the preparation, administration and evaluation of Bar Admission examinations in February and July of each year and the investigation and evaluation of the character and fitness of each person seeking admission to practice law in the State of Mississippi.

In 2012, the Board received and processed the following number of applications:

Applications for Registration as a Law Student - 69;
Applications for Examination - 426.

The total applications processed/being processed in 2012 were 495.

In 2012, the Board tested the following number of applicants:

February 2012 bar exam - 108;
July 2012 bar exam - 231.

The total number of applicants tested in 2012 was 339.

Overall passing percentage for the two 2012 bar examinations was 73.5 percent.