

2016 Annual Report  
*of the*  
Tennessee Judiciary  
Issued January 2017



*Fiat Justitia Ruat Caelum - Let justice be done though the heavens fall*

# Tennessee Judiciary 2016 Annual Report Index

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# From Chief Justice Jeff Bivins

Every day, the judges of our great state seek to further the pursuit of justice for the citizens of Tennessee. From the perspective of the individual who finds himself or herself before the court, there is no such thing as a small case. Indeed, our judges know it is their duty to guarantee that Tennessee's citizens, regardless of financial status, color, creed, or religion, receive justice and equality before the law.

Throughout the past year, the court system has continued in that pursuit of justice by striving to make the judiciary more efficient, help those less fortunate receive adequate legal counsel, and provide the best possible services to the citizens of Tennessee. This report showcases those efforts and much more.

The poorest Tennesseans continue to be a main priority for the Court, making sure their voices are heard. We understand that "Justice for All" is not a talking point or something reserved only for those with financial means, but instead, it is our ultimate goal and purpose. That is why this past year, we set out on a statewide listening tour, listening to the needs in every community, and reviewing how we provide legal counsel to those who cannot afford it.

This year we have also focused on our youngest citizens in Tennessee. We have adopted uniform best practices and juvenile rules for the entire state so that the same rules are applied consistently to families and children. In addition, we have streamlined how complex business litigation is resolved through the continuation of a business docket in Davidson County. As the first pilot program of its kind in Tennessee, we will continue to assess how the utilization of this project can promote efficiency and economic development all across our state.

Finally, we are undergoing a top to bottom review of our technology department and integrating more statistical analysis so that data-driven decisions can be made that are the best for our great state.

In the coming year, we will continue our endeavor to work hand-in-hand with our counterparts in the executive and legislative branches to maintain the system of checks and balances envisioned by our founders. We have sworn in six new judges this past year, and we know their tasks will be challenging yet worthy of the effort. As we look with anticipation at the year before us, I am proud of our judiciary and each judge's tireless devotion to the cause of justice.



Jeff Bivins  
Chief Justice, Tennessee Supreme Court

# From the Administrative Office of the Courts

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In Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's words: "We don't accomplish anything in this world alone." And this year certainly is an example of the work accomplished across all three branches-together. From issues such as the expungement of records helping citizens get back to work, to providing consistent processes and procedures in every juvenile court from Mountain City to Memphis, to the first pilot project for complex commercial business litigation, we are working together for Tennessee.

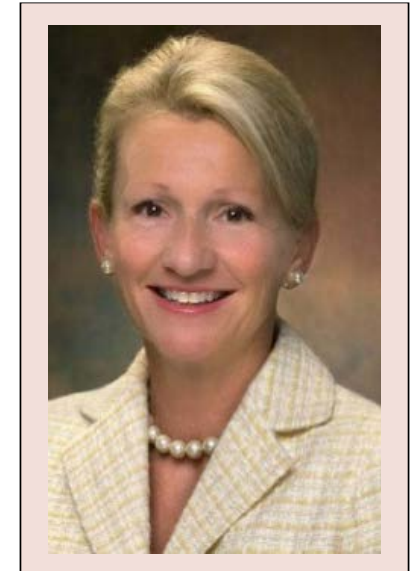
This report is full of statistics, resources and data, including a continued emphasis on Access to Justice for all Tennesseans, as Chief Justice Bivins described earlier, and the dawning of a new day for high-tech modernization of the court system.

We have expanded our efforts to improve legal resources for the 1.2 million Tennesseans living in poverty through partnerships with bar associations and nonprofits across the state through HELP4TN. Every dollar invested in legal assistance in the state produces a return of \$11.00; an overall estimated impact of \$188 million to meet basic legal needs in our communities.

This year marked the largest Supreme Court Advancing Legal Education for Students (SCALES) Project event in history, hosted by Cumberland University, where 1500 high school students had a front row seat to a Tennessee Supreme Court hearing. The Tennessee Supreme Court also received the national Sandra Day O'Connor Public Service Award for not only providing more than 32,000 students a real world civics lesson but also substantive curriculum about the cases; and even the opportunity to ask the participating attorneys live questions.

The General Assembly passed, and Governor Bill Haslam signed legislation to allow E-filing at the appellate level to start this year. We are providing technological innovations resulting in both cost savings and efficiency. We will be collecting and analyzing data as we build the first repository to capture general sessions data, where the largest number of Tennesseans are served.

Nationally, the Tennessee Judiciary serves as a leader and innovator, including the launch of the first Human Trafficking Court, and more than 50 specialty courts to serve the needs of veterans, as well as persons who suffer from mental challenges and those in recovery. While the judicial branch is embracing cutting edge best practices, we are also ensuring that the citizens of Tennessee continue to be provided open, transparent and impartial justice for all. I look forward to working with the other branches regarding improved data collection, top-notch training across the entire judicial system, and improving the safety of our courtrooms and all those we serve.



Deborah Taylor Tate  
Director, Administrative Office of the Courts

# Meet Your Tennessee Supreme Court



## **Justice Holly Kirby**

Justice Holly Kirby was appointed to the Supreme Court by Gov. Bill Haslam, and joined the Court in September 2014. Previously, Justice Kirby served for almost 19 years on the Tennessee Court of Appeals, and was the first woman ever to sit on that Court. She graduated from the University of Memphis School of Law in 1982, and then served as a federal law clerk for the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Justice Kirby then practiced law with the Memphis law firm of Burch, Porter & Johnson until her appointment to the TN Court of Appeals in 1995. Since then she has won five statewide elections. Justice Kirby lives in Memphis.

## **Justice Cornelia A. Clark**

Justice Clark, of Franklin, was appointed to the Supreme Court in September 2005, elected in 2006 and 2014, and served as Chief Justice from 2010 to 2012. Justice Clark received her B.A. degree from Vanderbilt University, M.A.T. from Harvard University, and J.D. from Vanderbilt University School of Law in 1979. She practiced law in Nashville and Franklin from 1979 until 1989. She served as circuit judge from 1989 to 1999 in the 21st Judicial District. She was director of the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts from 1999 to 2005.

## **Chief Justice Jeff Bivins**

Chief Justice Jeff Bivins was appointed by Gov. Bill Haslam to serve on the Supreme Court in 2014, and became chief justice in September 2016. He served on the Court of Criminal Appeals from 2011-2014. Prior to that, he served as circuit court judge for the 21st Judicial District from 1999-2000 and from 2005-2011. He previously served as Assistant Commissioner and General Counsel for the Tennessee Department of Personnel and in private law practice.

## **Justice Sharon G. Lee**

Justice Sharon G. Lee was appointed to the Supreme Court in October 2008, was elected in 2010 and 2014, and served as Chief Justice from 2014-2016. She received a law degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law. She engaged in the private practice of law in Madisonville from 1978-2004, during which time she served as Attorney for Monroe County, as City Judge for Madisonville, and City Attorney for Madisonville and Vonore. She was appointed to the Court of Appeals in 2004, and elected in 2004 and 2006.

## **Justice Roger A. Page**

Justice Roger A. Page was appointed to the Supreme Court in January 2016, and confirmed by the legislature in February 2016. He was a judge on the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals since his appointment by Gov. Bill Haslam in December 2011. He was previously elected to serve as a circuit court judge for the 26th Judicial District. Page was an assistant attorney general from 1991-1998. He was in private practice from 1985-1991, and a law clerk for a federal judge from 1984-1985. Page received his law degree from the University of Memphis School of Law.

# Tennessee Supreme Court



The Tennessee Supreme Court is the state’s court of last resort. The five Tennessee Supreme Court justices may accept appeals of civil and criminal cases from lower state courts. They also interpret the laws and constitutions of Tennessee and the United States. The Tennessee Supreme Court may assume jurisdiction over undecided cases in the Court of Appeals or Court of Criminal Appeals when there is a special need for an expedited decision. Attorneys present oral arguments before the Tennessee Supreme Court. Unlike trials in lower courts, there are no witnesses, juries, or testimonies in the Tennessee Supreme Court.

After the Tennessee Supreme Court justices have heard oral arguments and reviewed the attorneys’ written materials, or briefs, they issue written decisions, known as opinions. Tennessee Supreme Court opinions on federal constitutional issues can be appealed only to the United States Supreme Court, which exercises discretion regarding whether to consider the appeals. The Tennessee Supreme Court typically meets about 16 times per year and will hold sessions in Jackson, Knoxville and Nashville as required by the state constitution. The court also meets in other locations as necessary. A few times a year, the Tennessee Supreme Court takes their oral arguments on the road as part of the SCALES Project (Supreme Court Advancing Legal Education for Students).

The SCALES Project gives Tennessee high schools the unique opportunity to hear Supreme Court oral arguments and learn more about the judicial process. In 2016, the Court held the largest SCALES event in history at Cumberland University in Lebanon, in which 1500 students attended. SCALES was also held for Boys State at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, and at Lipscomb University in Nashville for Girls State. More than 2,600 total students participated in those events in 2016. In total, the program has reached more than 30,000 students in two decades.

## Supreme Court Caseload Data FY2015-16

	Filed	Dispositions
Appeals	937	927
Administrative	195	177
<b>Total</b>	<b>1132</b>	<b>1104</b>
<b>92 Supreme Court Opinions Filed</b>		
<b>Clearance Rate: 97%</b>		

## Tennessee Supreme Court Receives National Award



The Tennessee Supreme Court was recognized for its SCALES Project as the 2016 recipient of the Sandra Day O’Connor Award for the Advancement of Civics Education.

The SCALES Project is Supreme Court Advancing Legal Education for Students – a program that was founded by the Court in 1995 and designed to educate high school students about the legal system and the appellate court process.

Through the program, the Tennessee Supreme Court travels to several different locations throughout the state each year and holds court in local communities before hundreds of high school and college students.

# Court of Appeals



*Court of Appeals judges are (seated from left), Frank G. Clement, Jr., Charles D. Susano, Jr., J. Steven Stafford. (Standing from left) Arnold B. Goldin, Thomas R. Frierson II, Richard H. Dinkins, D. Michael Swiney, Andy D. Bennett, John Westley McClarty, Neal McBrayer, Brandon O. Gibson, and Kenny Armstrong.*

<b>Court of Appeals Caseload Data 2015-16</b>		
	Filed	Dispositions
Appeals	1029	1013
19 Discretionary Appeals Granted		
Clearance Rate: 98%		
628 Court of Appeals Opinions Filed		

Created by the General Assembly in 1925, the Tennessee Court of Appeals hears appeals in civil cases from trial courts and certain state boards and commissions.

The court has 12 members from the three grand divisions of the state. Panels of three judges hear cases in Jackson, Knoxville and Nashville.

All decisions made by the Court of Appeals may be appealed, by permission,

to the Tennessee Supreme Court. As in all three appellate courts, Court of Appeals hearings do not include witnesses, juries, or testimonies. Instead, attorneys may present oral and written arguments.

Court of Appeals judges are appointed by the governor, must be confirmed by the legislature, and are elected on a retention ballot every eight years.

# Court of Criminal Appeals



*Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals judges are (seated from left) Norma Ogle, Curwood Witt, Thomas Woodall, John Everett Williams, and Alan Glenn. (Standing from left) Timothy Easter, Robert Holloway, Kelly Thomas, Robert Wedemeyer, Camille McMullen, Robert Montgomery, and Ross Dyer.*

The Court of Criminal Appeals was created by the legislature in 1967 to hear trial court appeals in felony and misdemeanor cases, as well as post-conviction petitions.

The Tennessee General Assembly increased the membership of the court from nine to 12 on Sept. 1, 1996.

The composition, court sessions, appointments and elections are similar to the Court of Appeals, except the judges travel throughout the state to hear cases.

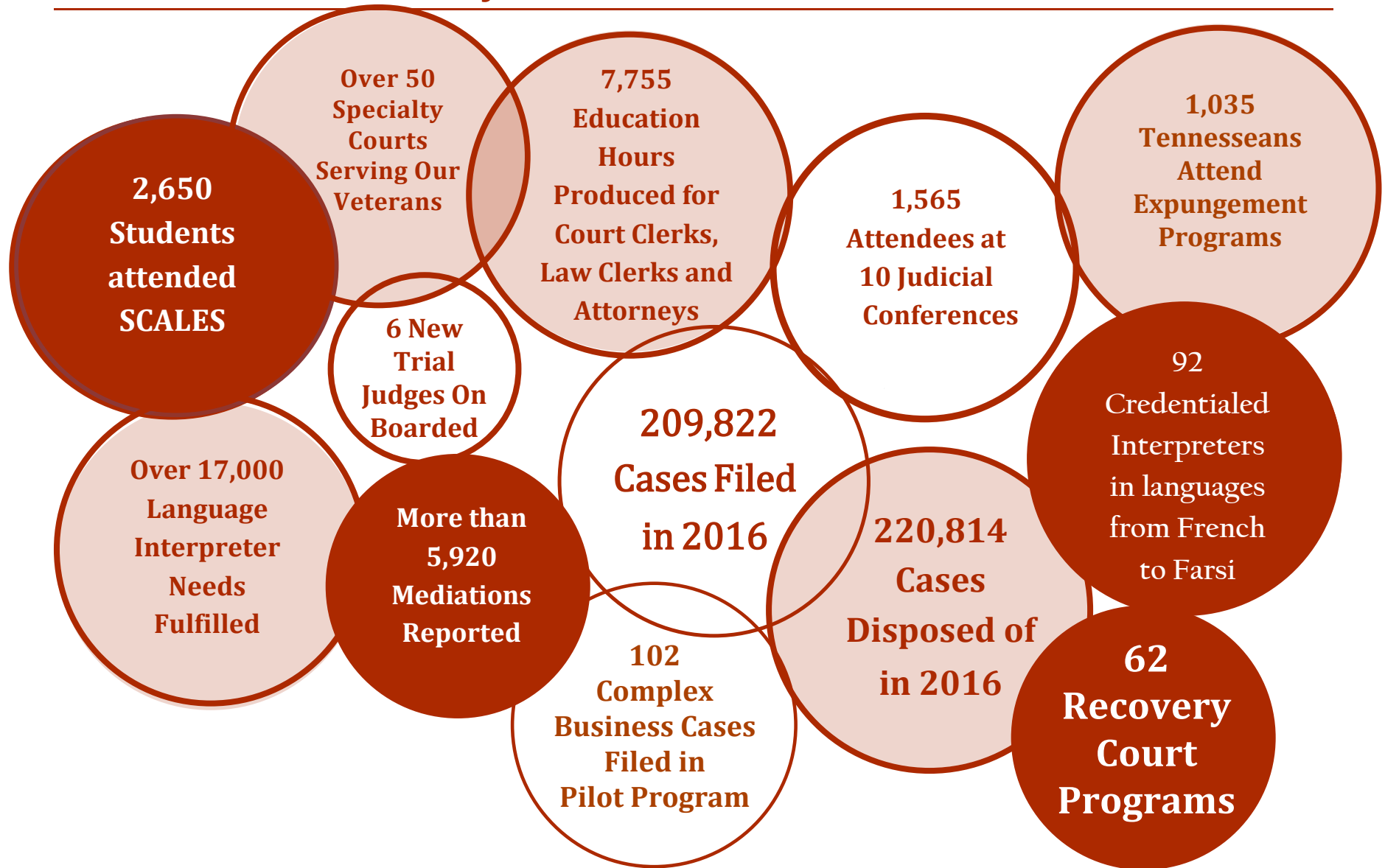
All Court of Criminal Appeals decisions may be appealed to the state Supreme Court by permission, except in capital cases, which are appealed automatically.

Court of Criminal Appeals Data 2015-16		
	Filed	Dispositions
Appeals	1294	1200
16 Discretionary Appeals Granted		
Clearance Rate: 92%		
937 Court of Criminal Appeals Opinions Filed		

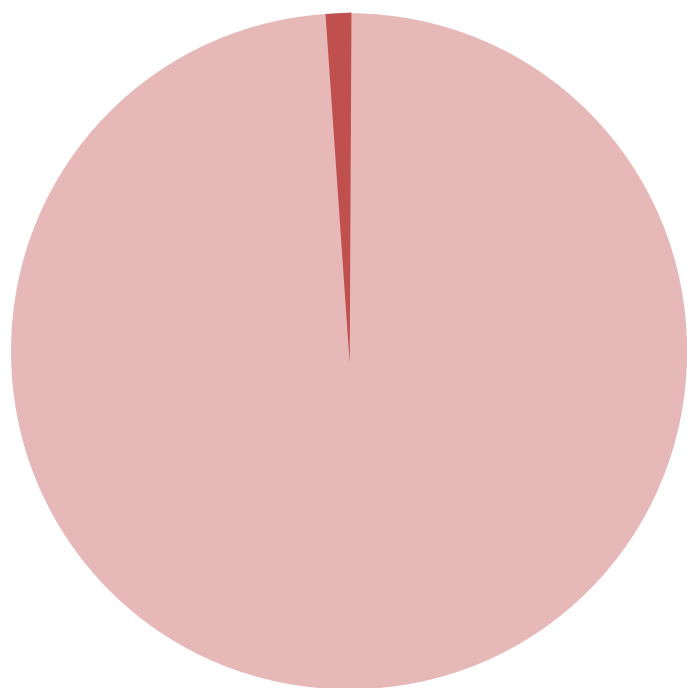


# Tennessee Courts by the Numbers

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# The Tennessee Courts Budget is Less than 1/2 of 1% of the Total State Budget



Tennessee Budget  
 Court System Budget

## Court System Budget

Appellate, Trial & Juvenile Courts	\$63,561,100
Indigent Representation	\$30,468,000
Administrative, Tech. & Facilities	\$18,970,000
Child Support & Guardian Ad Litem	\$ 8,747,600
Transcripts & Interpreters	\$ 6,386,800
Boards & Commissions	\$ 6,181,400
Civil Legal Representation Fund	\$ 3,327,900

### Funding Sources

State Appropriations	\$ 131,798,300
Federal Revenue	\$ 980,000
Current Services Revenue	\$ 1,251,600
Interdepartmental Revenue	\$ 5,045,000

# Welcome to the Judiciary

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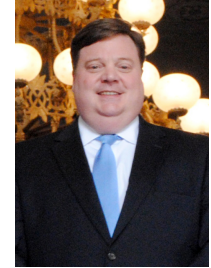
**William Edwin (Bill) Young** was appointed Chancellor for the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, in Davidson County, in September 2016. Young is a former Tennessee associate attorney general and former director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.



**JoDea L. Jenkins** was elected Chancellor for the 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, in Shelby County, in September 2016. Jenkins previously served as an administrator to the General Sessions Court Clerk's Office.



**J. Ross Dyer** was appointed to the Criminal Court of Appeals in March 2016. Previously, Dyer served as an attorney in Shelby County. He replaces the vacancy left by Roger Page, who became a Tennessee Supreme Court Justice in January 2016.



**Mary L. Wagner** was appointed to the Circuit Court for the 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, in Shelby County, in September 2016. Wagner previously worked as an attorney at Memphis law firm Rice, Amundsen & Caperton.



**Ted A. Crozier** was elected to the Circuit Court for the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in Montgomery and Robertson counties. Crozier previously served as Clerk & Master for the Chancery Court.



**Valerie L. Smith** was appointed to the Circuit Court for the 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, in Shelby County, in March 2016. Previously, Smith was an attorney at Nahon, Saharovich & Trotz.



## Access to Justice

The Tennessee Supreme Court declared Access to Justice its number one strategic priority in 2008, and appointed an Access to Justice Commission. The Commission makes recommendations for programs and initiatives to serve disadvantaged Tennesseans who have civil legal needs and are not able to afford an attorney. The Commission serves as the statewide coordinating arm for legal services and Access to Justice organizations. The Court recognizes that the civil legal needs gap in Tennessee is not shrinking. Indigent and working-poor families continue to experience more civil legal problems caused by family disputes, unemployment, predatory loans, uninsured medical bills, domestic violence, evictions, and foreclosures.

The Access to Justice Initiative continues to thrive due to the significant number of attorneys who volunteer their time to assist disadvantaged Tennesseans. Since 2010, Tennessee attorneys have reported over 3.2 million hours of pro bono services, and there are thousands more hours that are not reported.

### **In 2016, the Access to Justice Initiative:**

- Trained over 130 pro bono attorneys through bar associations and Tennessee Faith & Justice Alliance events.
- Served over 750 members of the public at eight events focused on expungement and re-entry issues.
- Distributed over \$76,000 to legal aid organizations from the Access to Justice Fund which consists of voluntary donations given by attorneys when they renew their law license.

## **Tennessee Pro Bono Hours Worth \$100 Million**

The Tennessee Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission's 2015 Pro Bono Report shows that Tennessee attorneys are donating more than 500,000 hours of their time annually, worth more than \$100 million.

For the calendar year 2014, nearly half of all attorneys reported doing some kind of pro bono work. The report shows that 7,615 attorneys practicing in Tennessee provided 568,170 hours of pro bono, an average of over 74 hours per reporting attorney. As of December 31, 2015, 42 percent of the 18,322 active attorneys licensed in Tennessee, with a primary address in Tennessee, reported participating in pro bono activity during 2014.

The majority of these hours (68 percent) were provided to persons of limited means without a fee or at a reduced fee. The second highest category of service was to non-profit organizations serving persons of limited means without a fee at 14 percent of the total hours.

The variety of projects attorneys participate in that provide free and reduced-rate legal services has expanded in recent years. The report includes law offices that have adopted pro bono policies, Pillar Law Firms that handle specific types of matters through referrals from Legal Aid, and attorneys who volunteer through the online virtual legal clinic TN Free Legal Answers (formerly Online TN Justice).

The Court's initiative has received national recognition for its success in the Access to Justice arena including the National Judicial College's Advancement of Justice Award in 2014. Members of the Tennessee Supreme Court are routinely featured at national conferences and have been involved in Senate briefings on the accomplishments of the Tennessee Access to Justice Initiative.

# COURT INITIATIVES

## Indigent Representation Task Force to Present its Report to the Tennessee Supreme Court in 2017

In late 2015, under the direction of then Chief Justice Sharon Lee, the Tennessee Supreme Court appointed judges, attorneys, and other stakeholders involved in the criminal justice system to the Indigent Representation Task Force to review practices regarding issues surrounding the delivery of representation and compensation for work with defendants unable to afford legal counsel.

The task force held an eight-city "listening tour" with stops in Memphis, Trenton, Nashville, Franklin, Cookeville, Cleveland, Knoxville, and Johnson City. The Task Force benefited greatly from the presentations and written submissions of the bench, Bar, and hundreds of interested citizens during the "listening tour."

Chief Justice Jeff Bivins has expressed the Court's continued support of the Task Force. "The Court has been very pleased with the work of this group," he said. "The Task Force is performing a great public service, and the members of the Court are united in our support of the Task Force."



Task Force Members: Judge Vicki Snyder, Rep. William Lamberth, Susan Mattson, Lela Hollabaugh, Jason Gichner, Judge Loyce Lambert Ryan, Dean William Koch, Torry Johnson, III, DarKenya Waller, Justice Sharon Lee, Dwight Tarwater, Mark Mesler

The Task Force is working diligently to present its report to the Tennessee Supreme Court on or before April 3, 2017.

The Task Force is chaired by Dean of Nashville School of Law and former Tennessee Supreme Court Justice William C. Koch, Jr. The other members include: Lela Hollabaugh, partner, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP; Judge Deanna Bell Johnson, Circuit Court Judge, 21st Judicial District; Susan L. Kay, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Clinical Professor of Law, Vanderbilt University Law School; Rep. William Lamberth, State House District 44; Susan Mattson, Principle Legislative Research Analyst, Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury Office; Mark A. Mesler, II, Attorney, Rosenblum and Reisman in Memphis; Judge Loyce Lambert Ryan, Shelby County General Sessions Court; Judge Vicki S. Snyder, Henry County General Sessions Court; Judge Barry A. Steelman, Criminal Court Judge, 11th Judicial District; Dwight Tarwater, General Counsel, office of Gov. Bill Haslam; Sen. John Stevens, State District 24; DarKenya Waller, Managing Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands.

# Nationally Honored

## Tennessee Ranks Top 10 in the Nation for Providing Access to Courts

Tennessee ranks ninth in the United States for providing access to its courts, according to the 2016 Justice Index, a nationwide study that ranks states according to their adoption of selected best practices for ensuring access to justice. Furthermore, Tennessee takes the No. 1 ranking in the Southeast.

The Tennessee Supreme Court deemed access to justice the No. 1 strategic initiative in 2008 and formed the Access to Justice Commission, which has since accomplished innovations such as JusticeforallTN.com, promoted pro bono work among lawyers, and developed plain language forms for self-represented litigants. As part of the Tennessee Supreme Court's initiative, the Administrative Office of the Courts has increased court interpreter availability, and helped coordinate expungement efforts to assist citizens in returning to the workforce. Now, the Tennessee court system is recognized as a national leader in guaranteeing equality in the courtrooms.

The Justice Index is an online resource that relies on data and other indicators to assess a state's ability to provide access to the civil legal system regardless of the ability to afford a lawyer, speak and understand English, or navigate the legal system without an accommodation. In the Self-Represented Index, Tennessee ranks among the top 13 states. Self-represented litigants are people who advocate on their own behalf in a case, such as evictions, mortgage foreclosures, child custody and child support proceedings, and debt collection cases.

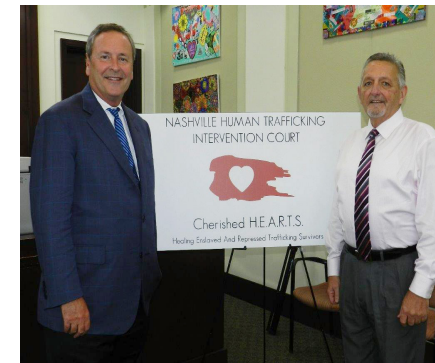
To aid the large number of Tennesseans who represent themselves before a court, the Tennessee Supreme Court-appointed Access to Justice Commission partners with the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services, the Tennessee Bar Association, and many statewide and regional legal service providers to create resources. In the nation, as many as two-thirds of the litigants represent themselves. In 2014, Tennessee's Access to Justice Commission developed an online curriculum in high-needs areas of law to assist self-represented Tennesseans. One of the most recent partnerships to assist Tennessee citizens is the Faith and Justice Alliance, with more than 50 faith-based organizations, and 160 individual volunteers to date participating.



### Improving Awareness of and Gaining Access to Expungements

Sen. Steven Dickerson (R-Nashville) and Rep. Harold M. Love, Jr. (D-Nashville), along with leaders in the judicial and legal communities announced an initiative to improve awareness of and access to expungements in Tennessee through a webpage, providing details on eligibility for expungements, links to local information, and resources to help people get started, as well as outlining what they can expect from the process.

Pictured: Legislators, Tennessee Supreme Court justices and members of the legal community launch the initiative



Davidson County launched the first-of-its-kind court in Tennessee aimed at addressing the issue of human trafficking.

Pictured: Davidson County District Attorney General Glenn Funk and Judge Casey Moreland at the Cherished HEARTS Human Trafficking Court graduation.

# EVENTS

## Nashville School of Law Views Supreme Court in Action

February 3, 2016

The Tennessee Supreme Court held oral arguments before several students at Nashville School of Law. Former Tennessee Supreme Court Chief Justice William C. Koch, Jr. is the Dean of Nashville School of Law.

## Supreme Court Brings Arguments to Girls & Boys State

May 25, 2016 & June 2, 2016

The Tennessee Supreme Court held oral arguments before hundreds of high school students as participants in Girls State at Lipscomb University & Boys State at Tennessee Tech University saw Tennessee's highest court in action.



(Front Row from left to right): Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Roger A. Page, Justice Holly Kirby, Justice Connie Clark, Justice Sharon Lee and Chief Justice Jeff Bivins, along with members of Girls State at Lipscomb University in Nashville on June 2, 2016.



For the 16th year in a row, the Tennessee Supreme Court justices hear oral arguments before 600 high school students at American Legion Boys State in Cookeville on May 25, 2016. Pictured: Chief Justice Jeff Bivins and Justice Connie Clark, along with members of Boys State.

## CCA Hears Cases on Union University Campus

February 17, 2016

The Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals visited the Union University campus and heard cases before Union University students as well as area high school students.

## Supreme Court Hosts Largest SCALES Event to Date

September 30, 2016

The Tennessee Supreme Court held oral arguments before 1500 students at Cumberland University in Lebanon. This Supreme Court Advancing Legal Education for Students event marked the largest to date since SCALES began 21 years ago.

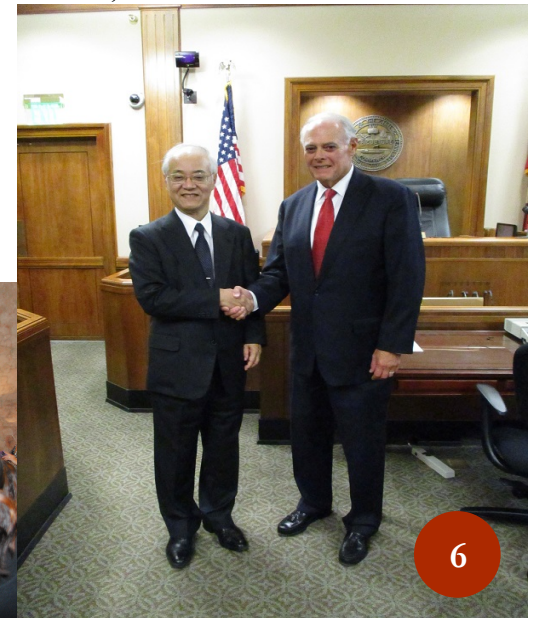
# The Year in Pictures



1. Judge David Patterson, Judge William Ailor, Judge Timothy Easter, Judge Forest Durard, Jr., and Chancellor Howard Wilson are all graduates of Nashville School of Law's Class of 1989 (Photo Credit: Nashville School of Law).
2. The lawyers and judges of Tennessee celebrated the tradition and the newly declared Seersucker Day “given the importance of establishing civility and fashion in the legal profession.”
3. Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Holly Kirby, Justice Sharon G. Lee, Nashville Mayor Megan Barry and AOC Director Deborah Taylor Tate attend Tennessee Lawyers' Association for Women Empowerment Conference.



4. Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Sharon G. Lee presents the Sharon G. Lee Award of Excellence to Judge R. Price Harris at the 2016 Municipal Judges Conference.
5. St. Edward School Student Field Trip to the Tennessee Supreme Court.
6. Circuit Court Judge Joseph P. Binkley welcomes Japanese Supreme Court Justice Toshimitsu Yamasaki to Nashville, Tennessee.





# AWARDS & HONORS

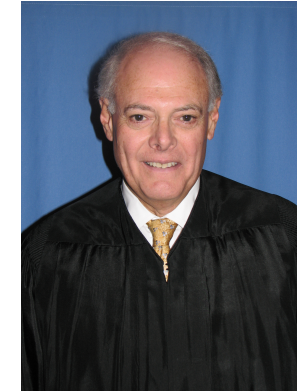
## Former Access to Justice Chair Lewis Receives National Pro Bono Award

June 1, 2016

George T. "Buck" Lewis III was awarded the William Reece Smith, Jr. Special Services to Pro Bono Award at the American Bar Association Equal Justice Conference. Lewis, a lawyer at Baker Donelson, was an inaugural member of the Access to Justice Commission, part of an ongoing Tennessee Supreme Court initiative to bring together stakeholders to remove barriers to civil justice for low-income and disadvantaged people in Tennessee.



George T. "Buck" Lewis



Judge Joseph P. Binkley



Judge Philip E. Smith

## Judges Honored by the Nashville Bar Association

December 15, 2016

Judge Joseph P. Binkley received the President's Award for his outstanding contributions to the Nashville Bar Association, and Judge Philip E. Smith and Judge Phillip Robinson received the CLE Excellence Award.

Judge Robert S. Brant, Judge Ben H. Cantrell, Judge Bill E. Higgins and Judge J. Randall Wyatt received the Emeritus Award honoring their more than 50 years of law practice as a member of the Bar.

## General Sessions Conference Honors Hardin County's Judge Smith with Ruben Award

September 22, 2016

The Tennessee General Sessions Judges Conference presented the annual Judge Leon Ruben Award in recognition of outstanding service and accomplishment by General Sessions judges to Judge Daniel L. Smith of Hardin County.

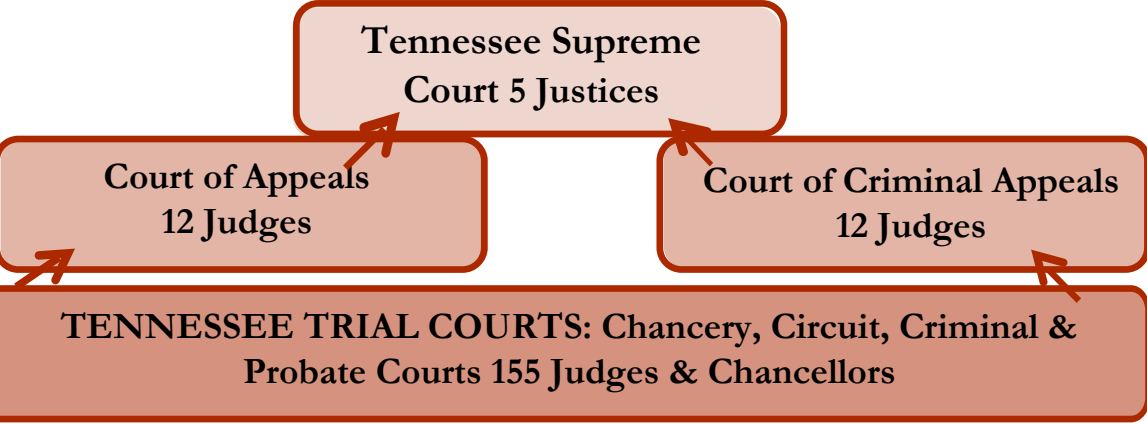
## Public Health Association Honors Judge Duane Slone

June 20, 2016

Fourth Judicial District Circuit Court Judge Duane Slone was presented the Tennessee Public Health Association's Visionary Award for the Eastern Division of the state of Tennessee. Judge Slone co-founded the 4th Judicial District Drug Recovery Court, and is a leader in addressing the Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (children born suffering withdraw symptoms due to the mother's use of opiates during pregnancy) epidemic.

# Tennessee Trial Courts

**CIRCUIT COURTS** are courts of general jurisdiction in Tennessee. Circuit Court judges hear civil and criminal cases and appeals of decisions from Juvenile, Municipal and General Sessions Courts. The jurisdiction of Circuit Courts often overlaps that of the Chancery Courts. Criminal cases are tried in Circuit Court except in districts with separate Criminal Courts established by the General Assembly. **CHANCERY COURTS** are a good example of the court system’s English heritage. The traditional equity courts are based on the English system in which the chancellor acted as the “King’s conscience.” Chancellors may, by law and tradition, modify the application of strict legal rules and adapt relief to the circumstances of individual cases. **CRIMINAL COURTS** were established by the legislature to relieve Circuit Courts in areas with heavy caseloads. In addition to having jurisdiction over criminal cases, Criminal Court judges hear misdemeanor appeals from lower courts. In districts without Criminal Courts, criminal cases are handled at the trial level by Circuit Court judges. **PROBATE COURTS** are created by the legislature and given jurisdiction over probate of wills and administration of estates. Probate judges also handle conservatorships and guardianships.



**Trial Courts Caseload Data 2015-16**

Trial Court Filings: 206,367

Dispositions: 217,497

Clearance Rate:  
105.39 %

# Tennessee Trial & Senior Judges

## 1<sup>ST</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Carter, Johnson, Unicoi, Washington)

### CHANCERY COURT

John C. Rambo

### CIRCUIT COURT

James Edwin Lauderback (Part I)

Jean A. Stanley (Part II)

### CRIMINAL COURT

Lisa Nidiffer Rice (Part I)

Stacy L. Street (Part II) \*

## 2<sup>ND</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Sullivan)

### CHANCERY COURT

E. G. Moody

### CIRCUIT COURT

John S. McLellan III (Part I) \*

R. Jerry Beck (Part II)

### CRIMINAL COURT

Jim Goodwin

## 3<sup>RD</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins)

### CHANCERY COURT

Douglas T. Jenkins

### CIRCUIT COURT

Alex E. Pearson (Part I)

Thomas J. Wright (Part II)

Beth Boniface (Part III) \*

### CRIMINAL COURT

John F. Dugger, Jr.

## 4<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Cocke, Grainger, Jefferson, Sevier)

### CHANCERY COURT

Telford E. Forgety, Jr. \*

### CIRCUIT COURT

Ben W. Hooper II (Part I)

Richard Robert Vance (Part II)

Rex Henry Ogle (Part III)

O. Duane Slone (Part IV)

## 5<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Blount)

### CHANCERY COURT

Telford E. Forgety, Jr.

### CIRCUIT COURT

Tammy M. Harrington (Part I) \*

David R. Duggan (Part II)

## 6<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Knox)

### CHANCERY COURT

John F. Weaver (Part I)

Clarence E. Pridemore, Jr. (Part II)

Michael W. Moyers (Part III)

### CIRCUIT COURT

Kristi Davis (1<sup>st</sup> Division)

William T. Ailor (2<sup>nd</sup> Division)

Deborah C. Stevens (3<sup>rd</sup> Division) \*

Greg McMillan (4<sup>th</sup> Division)

### CRIMINAL COURT

Steven W. Sword (Division I)

Bobby Ray McGee (Division II)

Scott Green (Division III)

## 7<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Anderson)

### CHANCERY COURT

Nichole Cantrell \*

### CIRCUIT COURT

Donald R. Elledge

## 8<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Campbell, Claiborne, Fentress, Scott, Union)

### CHANCERY COURT

Elizabeth C. Asbury \*

### CIRCUIT COURT

John D. McAfee

### CRIMINAL COURT

E. Shayne Sexton

## 9<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Loudon, Meigs, Morgan, Roane)

### CHANCERY COURT

Frank V. Williams III

### CIRCUIT COURT

Mike Pemberton

### CRIMINAL COURT

Jeffery H. "Jeff" Wicks \*

## 10<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

(Bradley, McMinn, Monroe, Polk)

### CHANCERY COURT

Jerri S. Bryant

### CIRCUIT COURT

Larry H. Puckett (Part I)

J. Michael Sharp (Part II) \*

Andrew M. Freiberg (Part III)

### CRIMINAL COURT

Sandra N. Donaghy

\*Denotes Presiding Judge of Judicial District

**11<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Hamilton)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Pam A. Fleenor (Part I) \*  
Jeffrey M. Atherton (Part II)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

J.B. Bennett (1<sup>st</sup> Division)  
Jeff Hollingsworth (2<sup>nd</sup> Division)  
L. Marie Williams (3<sup>rd</sup> Division)  
W. Neil Thomas III (4<sup>th</sup> Division)

**CRIMINAL COURT**

Barry A. Steelman (Division I)  
Tom Greenholtz (Division II)  
Don Wayne Poole (Division III)

**12<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Bledsoe, Franklin, Grundy, Marion,  
Rhea, Sequatchie)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Jeffrey Stewart

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Thomas W. (Rusty) Graham (Part I) \*  
J. Curtis Smith (Part II)  
Justin C. Angel (Part III)

**13<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Overton,  
Pickett, Putnam, White)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Ronald Thurman

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Amy V. Hollars (Part I) \*  
Jonathan Young (Part II)

**CRIMINAL COURT**

Gary McKenzie (Division I)  
David A. Patterson (Division II)

**14<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Coffee)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

L. Craig Johnson (Part I)\*  
Vanessa Agee Jackson (Part II)

**15<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Jackson, Macon, Smith, Trousdale,  
Wilson)

**CHANCERY COURT**

C. K. Smith

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Clara W. Byrd (Division I)  
John D. Wootten, Jr. (Division II) \*

**CRIMINAL COURT**

Brody Kane

**16<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Cannon, Rutherford)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Howard W. Wilson \*

**CIRCUIT COURT**

J. Mark Rogers (Division I)  
David M. Bragg (Division II)  
M. Keith Siskin (Division III)  
Royce Taylor (Division IV)

**17<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Bedford, Lincoln, Marshall, Moore)

**CHANCERY COURT**

James B. (J. B.) Cox

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Forest A. Durard, Jr. (Part I)  
Franklin Lee Russell (Part II) \*

**18<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Sumner)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Louis W. Oliver III

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Joe Thompson \*

**CRIMINAL COURT**

Dee David Gay

**19<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Montgomery, Robertson)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Laurence M. (Larry) McMillan, Jr.

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Ross H. Hicks (Part I)  
Bill Goodman (Part II) \*

Ted Crozier (Part III)

Jill Bartee Ayers (Part IV)

**20<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Davidson)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Claudia Bonnyman (Part I)  
William E. (Bill) Young (Part II)  
Ellen Hobbs Lyle (Part III)  
Russell T. Perkins (Part IV)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Hamilton Gayden, Jr. (Division I)  
Amanda McClendon (Division II)  
Phillip Robinson (Division III)  
Philip E. Smith (Division IV)  
Joseph P. Binkley, Jr. (Division V) \*  
Thomas W. Brothers (Division VI)  
David Randall (Randy) Kennedy  
(Division VII)  
Kelvin D. Jones (Division VIII)

**CRIMINAL COURT**

Steve R. Dozier (Division I)  
J. Randall Wyatt, Jr. (Division II)  
Cheryl A. Blackburn (Division III)  
Seth W. Norman (Division IV)  
Monte D. Watkins (Division V)  
Mark J. Fishburn (Division VI)

**21<sup>ST</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

(Hickman, Lewis, Perry, Williamson)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Woody Woodruff (Division I) \*  
James G. Martin (Division II)  
Michael Binkley (Division III)  
Deanna Bell Johnson (Division IV)

**22<sup>ND</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Giles, Lawrence, Maury, Wayne)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

David L. Allen (Part I)  
Russell Parkes (Part II) \*  
Robert L. (Bob) Jones (Part III)  
Stella L. Hargrove (Part IV)

**23<sup>RD</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Cheatham, Dickson, Houston,  
Humphreys, Stewart)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

David Wolfe (Division I) \*  
Larry J. Wallace (Division II)  
Suzanne M. Lockert-Mash (Division III)

**24<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Benton, Carroll, Decatur, Hardin,  
Henry)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Carma D. McGee

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Charles Creed McGinley (Part I)  
Donald E. Parish (Part II) \*

**25<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Fayette, Hardeman, Lauderdale,  
McNairy, Tipton)

**CHANCERY COURT**

William C. Cole (Part I) \*  
Martha B. Brasfield (Part II)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

J. Weber McCraw (Part I)  
Joe H. Walker III (Part II)

**26<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Chester, Henderson, Madison)

**CHANCERY COURT**

James F. Butler

**CIRCUIT COURT**  
Roy B. Morgan, Jr. (Division I)  
Donald H. Allen (Division II) \*  
Kyle Atkins (Division III)

**27<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Obion, Weakley)

**CHANCERY COURT**

W. Michael Maloan

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Jeff Parham \*

**28<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Crockett, Gibson, Haywood)

**CHANCERY COURT**

George R. Ellis \*

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Clayburn Peebles

**29<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Dyer, Lake)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Tony A. Childress (Part I) \*

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Russell Lee Moore, Jr. (Part I)

**30<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Shelby)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Walter L. Evans (Part I)  
Jim Kyle (Part II)  
JoeDea L. Jenkins (Part III)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Felicia Corbin-Johnson (Division I)  
James F. Russell (Division II)  
Valerie L. Smith (Division III)  
Gina C. Higgins (Division IV)  
Rhynette Northcross Hurd (Division V)  
Jerry Stokes (Division VI)  
Mary L. Wagner (Division VII)  
Robert Samuel Weiss (Division VIII)\*  
Robert L. Childers (Division IX)

**CRIMINAL COURT**

Paula L. Skahan (Division I)  
Glenn Wright (Division II)  
J. Robert Carter, Jr. (Division III)  
Carolyn Wade Blackett (Division IV)  
James M. Lammey, Jr. (Division V)  
John W. Campbell (Division VI)  
Lee V. Coffee (Division VII)  
Chris Craft (Division VIII)  
W. Mark Ward (Division IX)  
James C. Beasley, Jr. (Division X)

**PROBATE COURT**

Kathleen N. Gomes (Division I)  
Karen D. Webster (Division II)

**31<sup>ST</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
(Van Buren, Warren)

**CIRCUIT COURT and CHANCELLOR**  
Larry B. Stanley, Jr. \*

**SENIOR JUDGES**

William B. Acree  
Don R. Ash  
Robert E. Lee Davies  
Paul G. Summers

\*Denotes Presiding Judge of  
Judicial District