



# Transition from Bar to Bench

Presented by:

Judge Steven Stafford (Court of Appeals)

Senior Judge Don R. Ash



# The Best and Toughest Job in Your Lifetime !

“ The Judges, therefore, should be men (and women) of **learning and experience in the laws, of exemplary morals, great patience, calmness, coolness and attention.** Their minds should not be distracted with jarring interest. They should not be dependent on any man or body of men.”

- Thomas Jefferson



# Why Do We Wear Robes ?

“It is well judges should be clothed in robes, not only that they who witness the administration of justice should be properly advised the function performed is one different from, and higher than, that which a person discharges in the ordinary walks of life; but, also, in order to impress the judge individually with the constant consciousness that they serve as the high priest in the temple of justice and is surrounded with obligations of a sacred character that requires the utmost care, attention, and self-suppression.” – William Taft



# Initiation and Resolution (First Five Years)

- ◆ **Initial adjustment –Must resolve role conflict (You are not the best or brightest legal mind in the community).**
- ◆ **Reality shock – Coping with isolation, decision making, and lack of unbiased feedback.**
- ◆ **Self-concept change and role definition – transition and decision to remain on the Bench.**

# How to be Happy and Successful with the New Job !

- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Judicial Conference
- ◆ Demeanor
- ◆ Work- Ethic
- ◆ Role in the Community
- ◆ Continuing Education
- ◆ Preparation
- ◆ Financial Decisions
- ◆ Lifestyle Choices





# Relationships



- ◆ **Build a judge to judge support system – make a point to meet at least weekly.**
- ◆ **Share your stress – talk to someone.**
- ◆ **Meet regularly with different group of attorneys to discuss local legal issues.**
- ◆ **Never hesitate to call another judge for help on a difficult case or issue.**

# Tennessee Judicial Conference



- ◆ Call the President of the Conference and get involved in a committee.
- ◆ Attend every conference you can.
- ◆ Treat the staff at the AOC with respect. They will make life easier for you.

# Demeanor



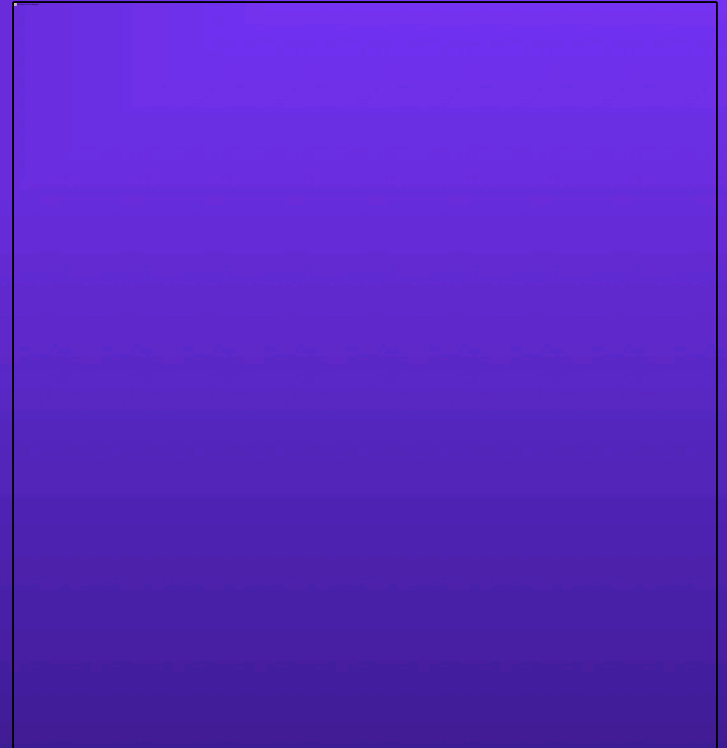
- ◆ **Be Kind and Patient**
- ◆ **Be Dignified**
- ◆ **Don't be seduced by the power of the Bench.**
- ◆ **Don't take yourself too seriously.**
- ◆ **Use your common sense.**
- ◆ **Humor is best left off the Bench.**
- ◆ **Take a recess if angry.**





# Work - Ethic

- ◆ A lazy judge is a poor one. ( 8:00 – 4:30).(minimum).
- ◆ There are no unimportant cases – just ask the parties.
- ◆ Don' t be dismayed when reversed.
- ◆ The Public is watching you constantly.



# Role in the Community

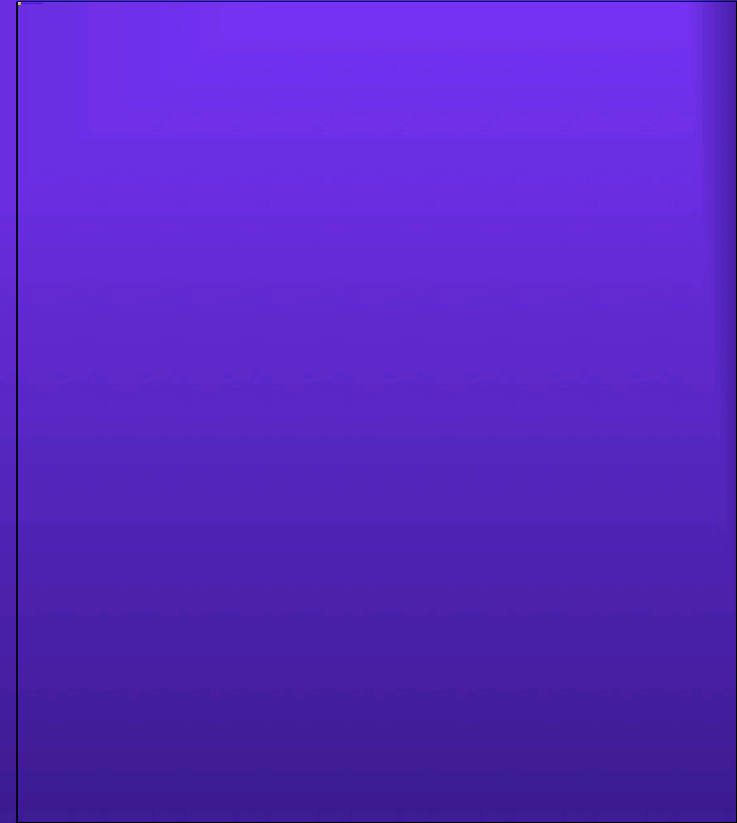


- ◆ You are the legal voice for your community.
- ◆ Develop an idea which will improve the administration of justice.
- ◆ Have a relationship with lawmakers. (contribute to their campaigns)
- ◆ Speak regularly to civic groups, graduations, etc.



# Continuing Education

- ◆ You are entering a new level of education.
- ◆ Read Canons of Judicial Conduct, TAM, Family Law Letter, Tennessee Tort Law Letter, Advance sheets, etc.
- ◆ Attend courses at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada.
- ◆ Learn how to do legal research on your computer.



# Preparation

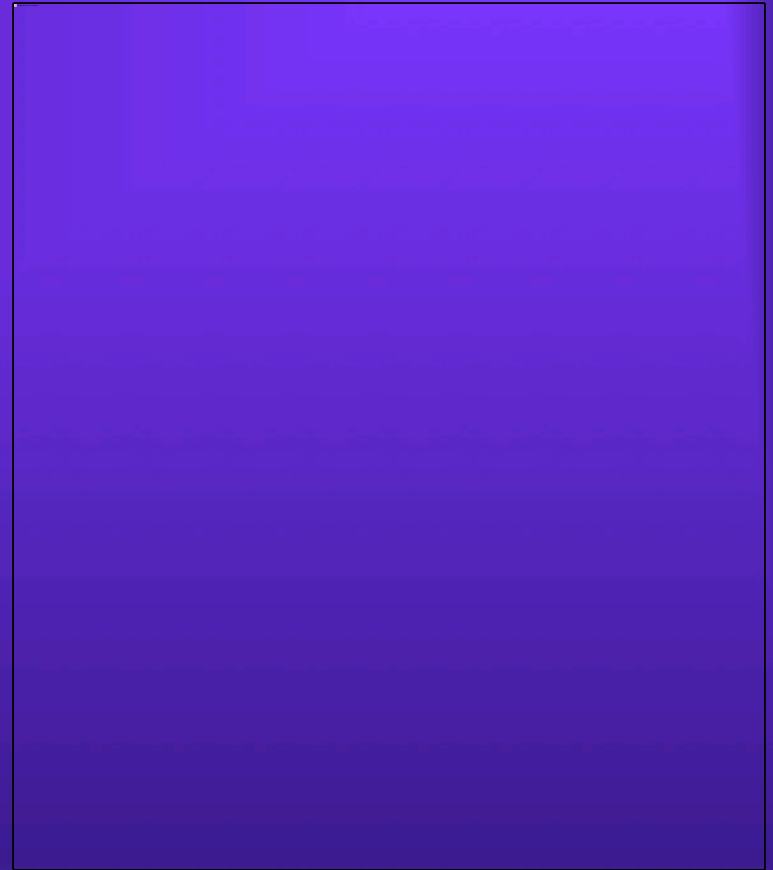


- ◆ Study all the pleadings and briefs before court if possible.
- ◆ Try to do research on issues you are not knowledgeable with.
- ◆ This will help you avoid the pitfall of taking cases under advisement.



# Financial Decisions

- ◆ Most judges who get in trouble have money problems.
- ◆ Live a conservative lifestyle.
- ◆ Contribute as much as you can to the state 401(k) and 457 plan **(NOW!) – Ask Debbie McFarland.**



# Lifestyle Choices



- ◆ **Every two to four weeks schedule a paperwork day.**
- ◆ **Exercise regularly**
- ◆ **Keep your weekends and evenings for your family.**
- ◆ **Devote time each day to meditate or pray, and reflect.**
- ◆ **Make time for fun.**
- ◆ **Be involved in various activities.**



# Priorities



- ◆ **Keep your Family First.**
- ◆ **This is only a job !**
- ◆ **Enjoy everyday !**
- ◆ **Accept this is a journey and there will be valleys and mountaintops.**



# This is Your Opportunity !

- ◆ To be a better spouse, parent, friend, and person.
- ◆ To be the kind of judge people want to practice in front of.
- ◆ To be kind and respectful to those who have never been treated in such a manner.
- ◆ To improve the court system.
- ◆ To make a positive difference in a person's life.
- ◆ This is a great gift – take advantage of the opportunity.

# Service above Self !!

**GEORGE H.W. BUSH**

- ◆ SERVE TO HONOR

**NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI**

- ◆ IT IS NOT TITLES THAT HONOR MEN & WOMEN, BUT MEN & WOMEN THAT HONOR TITLES !



## 24/7 – Call Anytime !!!!

- ◆ Don Ash – (615) 533-7066,  
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- ◆ TEAM EFFORT !!!!!



