

Annual Report  
*of the*  
Tennessee Judiciary  
Issued February 2016



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

# Tennessee Judiciary 2015 Annual Report Index

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# From Chief Justice Sharon G. Lee

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As Judges, we see people at difficult times in their lives. They are involved in a disagreement with a neighbor or a business partner. They stand accused of a crime or are the victim of a crime. They are settling the estate of a departed loved one. They are having domestic troubles. In all these situations, people look to the courts to resolve their problems and they trust us to render fair and just decisions.

We are committed to serving Tennesseans by applying the United States Constitution, the Tennessee Constitution and the laws of this state and rendering a decision based on the law and facts of each case. Working closely with the executive and legislative branches of government, we maintain the proper balance as the third branch of government and strive to make Tennessee a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

We are dedicated to providing the highest level of services to Tennesseans. We believe that everyone deserves meaningful access to our system of justice. Justice is for all – not just those who can afford to hire a lawyer. We will continue to find ways to make legal representation available and affordable for everyone. We will take advantage of new technology to make our judiciary more efficient and effective. We will continue our review of the judicial branch to ensure that we are using best practices and being good stewards of our tax dollars.

In 2015, we introduced a specialized court docket to handle complex business cases. Our veterans courts have been expanded to better serve those who have made sacrifices for us. We have laid the groundwork for e-filing in Tennessee courts. It is now easier for attorneys who are military spouses to become licensed in our state. We launched a task force to study the delivery of legal representation for indigent individuals charged with crimes. And we have undergone an extensive review of our case management practices and are working to improve the efficiency and timeliness of our dockets. I invite you to read more about these initiatives in the following pages.

I am proud of what we accomplished in 2015. Looking ahead, we will continue to work hard every day to ensure the citizens of this great state are served by a court system that is fair, responsive, and efficient. The state of the judiciary is strong and will continue to improve in the coming year.



Sharon G. Lee  
Chief Justice, Tennessee Supreme Court

# From the Administrative Office of the Courts

Tennesseans see courthouses in large and small towns all across our state and at some point in life interact with the judiciary. Yet, most citizens are not aware of the work to ensure the efficient orderly administration of justice to over 6 million citizens. I am proud to serve as the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts where our staff provides legal, technical, educational, and financial support to all corners of Tennessee.

In this report, you will see details of how we provide thousands of hours of education to lawyers, judges, county court clerks and other officials as well as support for countless pieces of technology that our modern court system now utilizes. I also am delighted about the partnerships we have developed with the Governor and the General Assembly working on important issues that face our state. All of this we do with strict adherence to being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

The modernization of the entire judiciary continues to be a top priority. We envision transforming our courts just as the rest of the world has migrated to other devices and platforms. These technological improvements will streamline judicial process as well as increase transparency, access, and information for all citizens. We plan to begin e-filing in the appellate courts and are paving the way for e-filing at the trial level. The AOC is working to overhaul our indigent representation claims system so that attorneys can be paid promptly for their service to those who cannot afford an attorney. We are utilizing pilot projects and contract payments to ensure efficiencies in a system that grows with need.

Our state has become a crossroads for the plague that is human trafficking. Our legislature's leadership has placed Tennessee as a national model with the passage of over 30 pieces of tough legislation. The court system is taking an active role to combat this problem by investing time and effort into partnerships on a local, regional, and national basis.

Likewise, we have joined the Governor's important initiative – Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, and the need to address the toxic stress that has negatively impacted our children, from drug addiction, to mental illness, abuse, and other childhood trauma. Working with our state stakeholders, the courts can play an important part in making Tennessee a national model for prevention and create ways to instill resiliency in our children and keep them out of the system – or jail.

From launching faith-based programs, to providing much-needed interpreters in our increasingly diverse communities, to utilizing teen peer advocates to improve our foster care system, we are actively engaged in the issues – as well as the solutions of today.

I truly hope you find the information presented here helpful and informative. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you and our great State.

Deborah Taylor Tate  
Director, Administrative Office of the Courts

## Deborah Taylor Tate takes helm at Administrative Office of the Courts

The Tennessee Supreme Court appointed former FCC Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate director of the AOC at the beginning of



2015 to oversee the administrative functions of the state court system.

A former FCC Commissioner, Tate began her professional career in Tennessee state government. She served as assistant legal counsel and senior policy advisor to two former Tennessee Governors: Don Sundquist and Sen. Lamar Alexander.

Tate also served as both chairman and director of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority, led the health facilities commission and was a director at Vanderbilt University Institute of Public Policy.

# Meet Your Supreme Court

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## **Justice Holly Kirby**

Justice Kirby was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2014 by Gov. Bill Haslam. Justice Kirby, of Memphis, graduated from the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. She served as a federal judicial law clerk in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals from 1982-1983. She engaged in the private practice of law from 1983-1995. Justice Kirby was appointed to the Tennessee Court of Appeals in December 1995 by then-Gov. Don Sundquist and won statewide elections in 1996, 1998, and 2006.

## **Justice Cornelia A. Clark**

Justice Clark was appointed to the Supreme Court in September 2005, elected in 2006 and 2014, and served as Chief Justice from 2010-2012. Justice Clark received a law degree from Vanderbilt University School of Law in 1979. She also taught high school history and government for four years prior to law school. She practiced law from 1979 until 1989. She served as Circuit Judge from 1989-1999 in the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District. She was director of the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts from 1999-2005.

## **Chief Justice Sharon G. Lee**

Chief Justice Sharon G. Lee has served as Chief Justice since 2014. She received business and law degrees from the University of Tennessee. She practiced law in her hometown of Madisonville from 1978-2004, representing individuals and serving as Attorney for Monroe County, as City Judge for Madisonville, and as City Attorney for Madisonville and Vonore. She was appointed to the Court of Appeals in 2004, elected in 2004 and 2006. She was appointed to the Supreme Court in October 2008 and elected in 2010 and 2014.

## **Justice Jeffrey Bivins**

Justice Bivins was in private law practice from 1986-94 and again from 2002-05. He served as Assistant Commissioner and General Counsel for the Tennessee Department of Personnel from 1995-99 & 2000-02. He served as Circuit Court Judge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District during 1999 and 2000 and returned as Circuit Court Judge in 2005. He was appointed to the Court of Criminal Appeals in 2011 and elected to that position in 2012. He was appointed by Gov. Bill Haslam to serve on the Supreme Court in 2014.



# Supreme Court



The Tennessee Supreme Court is the state’s court of last resort. The five 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 Supreme Court may assume jurisdiction over undecided cases in the Court of Appeals or Court of Criminal Appeals when there is special need for an expedited decision.

Attorneys present oral arguments before the Supreme Court. Unlike trials in lower courts, there are no witnesses, juries, or testimonies in the Supreme Court. After 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 may or may not agree to consider the appeals.

The 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 Supreme Court takes their oral arguments on the road as part of the SCALES program (Supreme Court Advancing Legal Education for Students). The SCALES program gives Tennessee high school students the unique opportunity to hear Supreme Court oral arguments and learn more about the judicial process. In 2015, the Court held SCALES sessions in Greeneville and Lebanon as well as at Boys State and Girls State. Nearly 3,600 students participated in those events in 2015.

Supreme Court Caseload Data FY2014-15		
	Filed	Dispositions
Appeals	940	1018
Administrative	166	175
<b>Total</b>	<b>1106</b>	<b>1193</b>
<b>112 Supreme Court Opinions Filed</b>		
<b>Clearance Rate: 107%</b>		

## Judge Roger Page Appointed to Tennessee Supreme Court



Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam appointed Roger Amos Page of Madison County to the Tennessee Supreme Court on January 7, 2016.

Page, 60, has been a judge on the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals since his appointment by Haslam in December 2011. He previously served as a circuit court judge for the 26th Judicial District, which includes Chester, Henderson and Madison counties.

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. Prior to his legal career, Page was a pharmacist.

Page’s appointment is subject to confirmation by the Tennessee General Assembly.

# 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 2014-15</b>		
	Filed	Dispositions
Appeals	1011	1090
29 Discretionary Appeals Granted		
Clearance Rate: 107%		
728 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 McGee Ogle, James Curwood Witt, Jr., Presiding Judge Thomas T. Woodall, John Everett Williams, Alan E. Glenn; (standing from left) Robert H. Montgomery, Jr., Roger A. Page, D. Kelly Thomas, Jr., Robert W. Wedemeyer, Camille R. McMullen, Robert L. Holloway, Jr., and Timothy L. Easter.*

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.

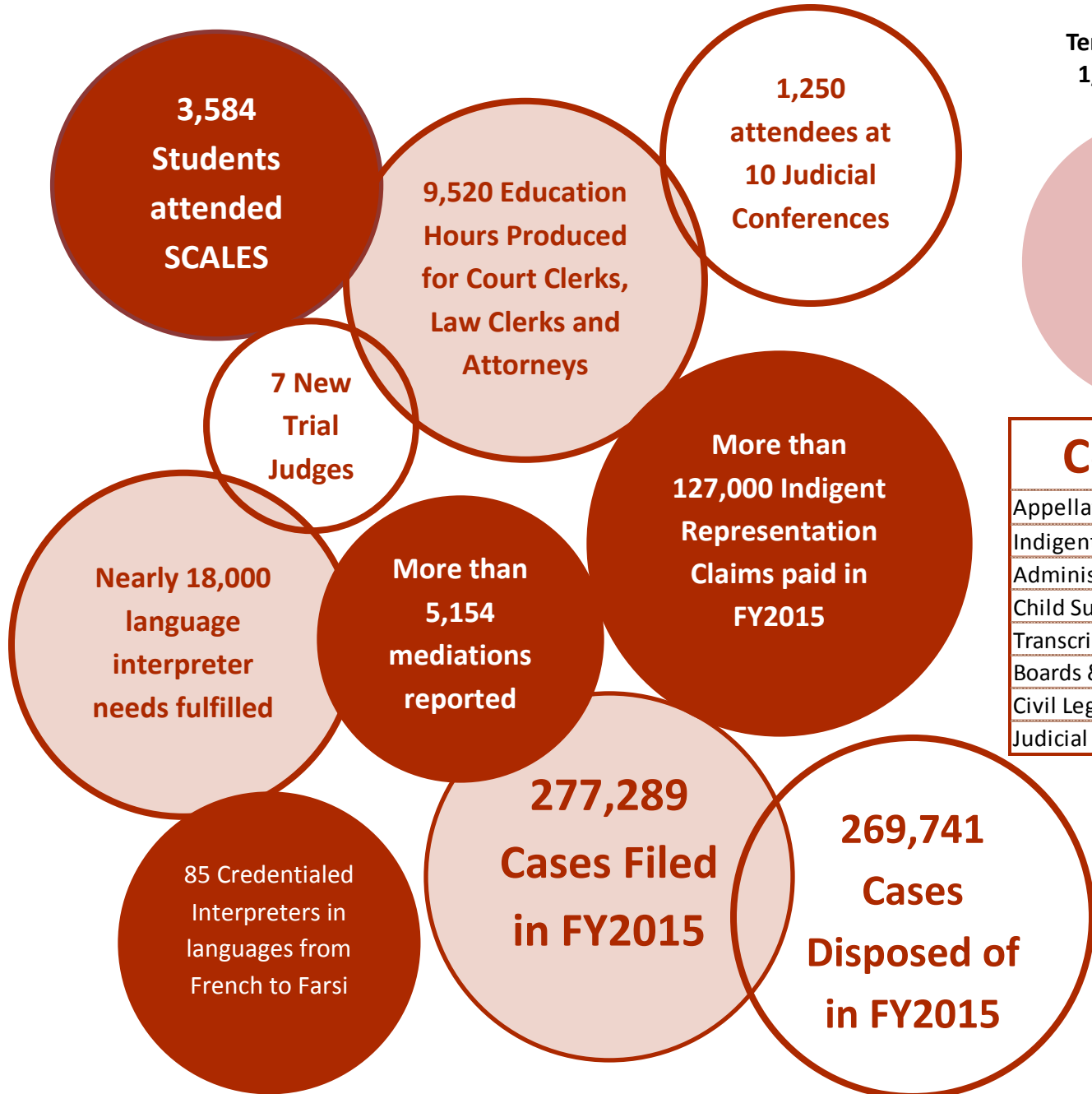
The composition, court sessions, appointments and elections are similar to the Court of Appeals, except the judges travel throughout the state to hear cases.

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

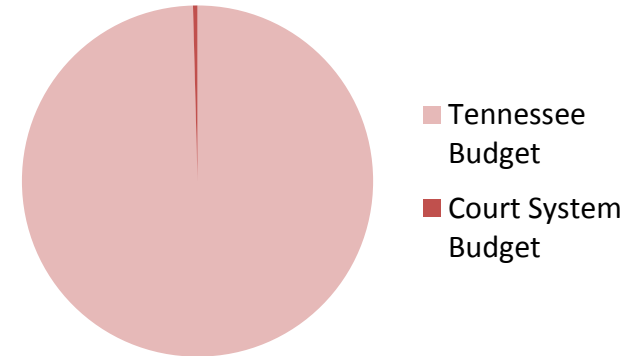
<b>Court of Criminal Appeals Data 2014-15</b>		
	Filed	Dispositions
Appeals	1228	1193
9 Discretionary Appeals Granted		
Clearance Rate: 97%		
947 Court of Appeals Opinions Filed		



# Tennessee Courts by the Numbers



Tennessee Courts budget is less than 1/2 of 1% of the total state budget



Court System Budget	
Appellate, Trial & Juvenile Courts	\$ 62,453,300
Indigent Representation	\$ 30,468,000
Administrative, Technology & Facilities	\$ 16,511,900
Child Support & Guardian Ad Litem	\$ 8,629,600
Transcripts & Interpreters	\$ 6,374,000
Boards & Commissions	\$ 5,965,800
Civil Legal Representation Fund	\$ 3,327,900
Judicial & Clerk Programs	\$ 1,432,100

# Welcome to the Judiciary

**David Allen** was appointed to the Circuit Court for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District in July 2015. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District includes Giles, Lawrence, Maury and Wayne counties. Allen previously was a sole practitioner in Lawrenceburg.



in private practice for four years and then served as magistrate in Hamblen County Juvenile Court. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District includes Greene, Hamblen, Hancock and Hawkins counties.

**Thomas C. Greenholtz** was appointed to the Criminal Court for the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in September 2015.



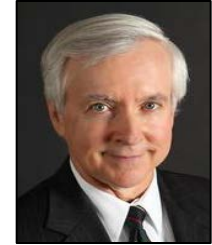
Greenholtz was a shareholder with the law firm Chambliss, Bahner & Stophel where he worked since 2006. The 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District is Hamilton County.

**James Edwin (Eddie) Lauderback** was appointed to the Circuit Court for the 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District in July 2015. Lauderback was a managing partner at Herndon, Coleman, Brading & McKee in Johnson City. The 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District includes Carter,



Johnson, Unicoi and Washington counties.

**James R. Newsom III** was appointed Chancellor for the 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in September 2015.



Newsom was a member of the Memphis law firm Harris Shelton Hanover Walsh, PLLC. The 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial District is Shelby County.

**Jeffery H. "Jeff" Wicks** was appointed to the Criminal Court for the 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in December 2015 to begin



serving January 1, 2016. Wicks previously served as General Sessions Court Judge in Roane County as well as an attorney in Kingston. The 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District includes Loudon, Meigs, Morgan and Roane counties.

**Jill Barte Ayers** was appointed to the Circuit Court for the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in October 2015. Ayers was a partner at the Batson Nolan law firm in Clarksville, where she had worked since 1993. The 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District includes Montgomery and Robertson counties.



**Beth Boniface** was appointed to the Circuit Court for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District in April 2015. She was



# Access to Justice

Access to Justice has been, since 2008, the Supreme Court's No. 1 strategic initiative. The Court-appointed Access to Justice Commission develops recommendations on how to better serve Tennesseans who have civil legal needs and are unable to afford representation. The Court recognizes that there is a growing legal-needs gap in Tennessee as indigent and working-poor families face



more legal problems caused by unemployment, predatory loans,

uninsured medical bills, domestic violence, evictions, and foreclosures.

A significant portion of this initiative is supported by attorneys who volunteer their time to assist individuals. In four years, Tennessee licensed attorneys reported more than 3 million hours of pro bono services, and there are thousands more hours that are not reported.

In 2015, the Access to Justice initiative:

- Hosted training for 104 attorneys with Pro Bono Clinic Luncheons
- Trained 323 lawyers as members of the faith-based community through the Tennessee Faith and Justice Alliance
- Brought together 35 students at the Law School Pro Bono Summit

## TN Pro Bono Hours Increase

The Tennessee Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission's annual report shows that attorneys in Tennessee increased the number of hours of free and reduced-rate legal services they provide to those in need. The report shows that the number of hours of pro bono service volunteered by attorneys in Tennessee went up by nearly 3,000 hours in the last reporting year.

Although fewer attorneys reported performing pro bono work, those that did reported an average of more than 78 hours in one year, an increase of nearly six percent. Forty-one percent of the 17,980 Tennessee attorneys reported participating in pro bono activity. The total number of hours the attorneys reported was more than 578,000. The report relies on data collected in 2014 for work done in 2013.

Attorneys serve pro bono hours in a variety of ways, including volunteering at organized legal clinics, providing legal services at a free or reduced rate, offering legal advice online at [OnlineTNJustice.org](http://OnlineTNJustice.org), and assisting those in their local or spiritual community with legal questions. Pro bono is a Latin term meaning "for the public good."

The Court's initiative has received national recognition for its success in the Access to Justice arena. In 2015, Chief Justice Sharon Lee spoke at a White House forum and was involved in a Senate briefing on what the Tennessee Access to Justice initiative has been able to accomplish in a short period of time.

See the full report [here](#).

# COURT INITIATIVES

## Supporting the Efficient Administration of Justice & Modernization of the Court System

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The AOC is actively working on a major project to replace the **indigent claims processing system**. The replacement system will combine three existing systems into one; allowing for more efficient and timely processing of payments to appointed attorneys, expert witnesses, and interpreters. • The Tennessee Supreme Court adopted a revised Rule 46, which will help pave the way for **electronic filing of cases** in the state appellate courts. E-filing will allow parties to submit documents via a web-based system, instead of delivering papers manually to the clerk's offices, saving time and money for lawyers, litigants and the judiciary. E-filing is widely used in federal courts, and only Shelby County Circuit and Chancery courts have e-filing in place today. Davidson County has plans to put e-filing in place next year as well. • The Court has actively and aggressively pursued the funding needed for the **general sessions data repository** and, with monies included in the Governor's 2016-17 budget proposal, we look forward to embarking on this much-needed project. This initiative will provide information to allow for smart decisions based on sound data for all levels of government. • The trial courts have launched a new initiative aimed at better managing aging cases and ensuring that there is **timely disposition of cases**. Judges are receiving reports with details about how long cases have been pending, and staff members are reaching out to parties to clear cases that no longer need to be on dockets. We have new tools in the hands of judges that allow them to better manage dockets for the most efficient administration of justice. • The Supreme Court and the entire judiciary continue the support of the **Access to Justice initiative** to ensure that justice is for all, not just those who can afford it. • Our judges are continuing to employ innovative ideas to make the justice system work for everyone, including initiating **problem-solving courts** that address the specific needs of our veterans, the mentally ill, and those with dependency problems.



# Court Initiatives

## Supreme Court Appoints Task Force to Study Indigent Representation Funding in State

The Tennessee Supreme Court appointed judges, attorneys, and others with ties to the criminal justice system to the Indigent Representation Task Force to review practices regarding how attorneys are compensated for work with defendants unable to afford legal counsel.

The task force will review the current indigent representation system, including indigency determinations, the delivery of services, and the administration of the indigent representation fund. Their charge is to guarantee that the system is addressing the needs of its recipients as well as benefiting the taxpayers of Tennessee.

Currently, the judicial system's budget provides for an expenditure of approximately \$19 million in criminal indigent representation, \$12.5 million in child welfare and child support representation, and several more million for judicial hospitalizations, as well as experts and investigators who work on criminal cases. That's about \$36 million each year.

Dean of Nashville School of Law and retired Tennessee Supreme Court Justice William C. Koch, Jr. is chair of the task force. The other members are: Lela Hollabaugh, partner, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP; Judge Deanna Bell Johnson, Circuit Court Judge, 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District; Susan L. Kay, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Clinical Professor of Law, Vanderbilt 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, 11<sup>th</sup> 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 Cumberland.



Members of the business and legal community join Justice Jeffrey Bivins, Chief Justice Sharon Lee and Chancellor Ellen Lyle for the launch of the business court.

### New Docket Opens Opportunity for Business

The Tennessee Supreme Court created a Business Court docket to better meet the needs of business litigants and help Tennessee attract and retain business and create jobs. The docket is in Davidson County Chancery Court and was established at no additional cost using existing resources. After opening the door in May, 34 cases have been transferred to the docket and 11 cases were resolved by the end of 2015. The docket has been overwhelmingly successful.



Chancellor and Business Court Judge Ellen Hobbs Lyle, Nashville Mayor Megan Barry, and Chief Justice Sharon Lee.

# EVENTS

## East Tennessee Students See Supreme Court in Action

February 7, 2015

High school students from 11 Greeneville-area schools participated in SCALES and had the opportunity to study a real case before the Supreme Court and hear oral arguments.

## Supreme Court Brings Arguments to Boys & Girls State

May 21, 2015

The Tennessee Supreme Court held oral arguments before hundreds of high school students as participants in the Girls and Boys State programs saw Tennessee's highest court in action.

## SCALES Comes to Cumberland University

October 1, 2015



Justice Holly Kirby, Chief Justice Sharon Lee, Justice Cornelia Clark, and Justice Jeffrey Bivins visited Cumberland University in October to hear cases.

The Tennessee Supreme Court brought Court to the campus of Cumberland University in Lebanon last fall as more than a thousand Middle Tennessee high school and college students participated in SCALES.



Court of Criminal Appeals judges Roger Page, Tim Easter, and John Everett Williams hear cases at UT Martin.

## CCA Hears Cases on UT Martin Campus

October 14, 2015

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

## CCA Brings Experience to High School Students

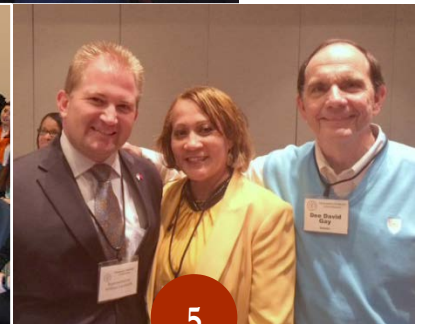
November 12, 2015

About a thousand students from across the East Tennessee region got a rare glimpse of the Tennessee Criminal Court of Appeals proceedings when the court took their docket to Greeneville.



# The Year in Pictures

1. Belmont University College of Law Dean Alberto Gonzales spoke to the Tennessee Judicial Conference at their June Conference in Memphis.
2. Court of Appeals Judge Richard Dinkins introduces his law clerk to be sworn in before the Supreme Court in November.
3. Justice Bivins and Justice Kirby took part in a Judicial Perspectives panel discussion at Belmont University College of Law in February.
4. Chief Justice Lee speaks to legislative interns in January.
5. Representative William Lamberth of Sumner County, Judge Gina Higgins of Memphis, and Judge Dee Gay of Sumner County at the Judicial Conference.
6. Justice Bivins, House Speaker Beth Harwell and Chief Justice Lee at the Legislative breakfast.
7. Justice Clark swears in the Governor's Council on Judicial Nominations.
8. Justices Clark and Bivins, and Chief Justice Lee help sort food for the hungry.



# AWARDS & HONORS

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## Justice Clark Receives Advocacy Group Pioneer Award

November 12, 2015

Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Cornelia A. Clark was the keynote speaker at the Vision 2020's Conference when the group met in Nashville for their Vision 2020 Fifth National Congress and presented her with their Pioneer Award.

## Judge Smith Honored with 'Good Guy' Award

October 29, 2015

Circuit Court Judge Philip E. Smith was honored by the Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee as one of four men to receive the 2015 Good Guys Award.

## Belmont Law Recognizes Judge Bennett

August 27, 2015

Tennessee Court of Appeals Judge Andy D. Bennett was honored by the Belmont University College of Law American Inn of Court for his work as a mentor to the law school's students.

## Tennessee Justice Center Honors Justice Kirby as "Community Mother of the Year"

May 11, 2015

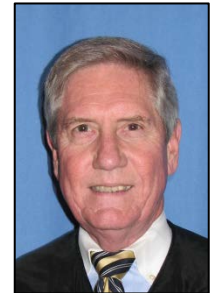
The Tennessee Justice Center, a non-profit public interest law and advocacy firm serving families, honored Tennessee Supreme

Court Justice Holly Kirby as a Community Mother of the Year for her dedication to her family and families across Tennessee.

## TBA Honors Chancellor Butler

July 16, 2015

Chancery Court Judge James F. "Jimmy" Butler was honored with the Tennessee Bar Association's Justice Frank F. Drowota III Outstanding Judicial Service Award for his outstanding and dedicated service to the courts and the legal community.



## AWA Memphis Chapter Honors Justice Kirby

January 26, 2015

The Association for Women Attorneys (AWA) of Memphis honored Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Holly Kirby with the Marion Griffin-Frances Loring Award at their annual banquet. The award goes to one who has exhibited outstanding achievement in the legal profession.

## Judge Robert Burch Honored for Service to 23rd District

January 14, 2015

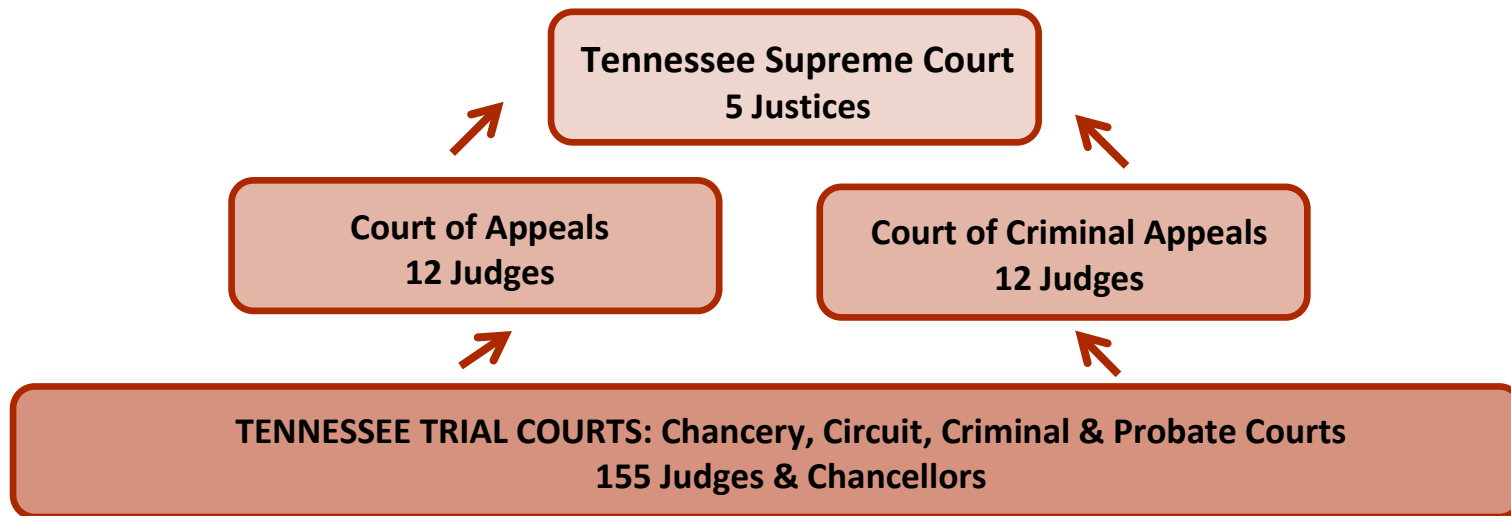
The Tennessee Association of Drug Court Professionals honored retired Circuit Court Judge Robert E. Burch for his 14 years of service to drug courts.



# Tennessee Trial Courts

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**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.



# 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)

**VACANT (Part III)**

Jill Barte Ayers (Part IV)

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

(Davidson)

**CHANCERY COURT**

Claudia Bonnyman (Part I)  
Carol L. McCoy (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 Peeples \*

**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)  
James R. Newsom III (Part III)

**CIRCUIT COURT**

Felicia Corbin-Johnson (Division I)  
James F. Russell (Division II)  
Vacant (Division III)  
Gina C. Higgins (Division IV)  
Rhynette Northcross Hurd (Division V)  
Jerry Stokes (Division VI)  
Donna M. Fields (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  
Ben H. Cantrell  
Paul G. Summers

\*Denotes Presiding Judge of  
Judicial District