



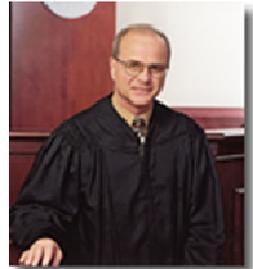
The Bench and Beyond

C L A Y T O N J U D I C I A L C I R C U I T

M E S S A G E F R O M T H E B E N C H

What if a tornado strikes the courthouse, ripping off its roof, flooding its paper records, and destroying all communications and computer capabilities? What if the Swine Flu hits with epidemic strength, causing half or more of our employees to be out sick for days and perhaps weeks? What would we do with the presumptively innocent people languishing in jail? How and where would we hold critical court proceedings? What in the world would we do?

These are the questions that are being addressed by judges, the Sheriff, court clerks, prosecuting attorneys, court administrators, and information managers as a Business Continuity Taskforce, which I have had the honor to chair. This committee has been meeting once each month for the purpose of identifying absolutely essential functions of the Courts and discovering ways to keep them functioning during emergency conditions.



State Court Chief Judge
Harold G. Benefield

The challenges range from establishing procedures to ensure the safety of courthouse employees and the public, to locating remote locations at which court proceedings can be held, to transporting prisoners to safe and secure facilities. At the heart of all of these problems lies the challenge of managing vast and diverse information. So far, each department has been tasked with examining its individual circumstances and processes. Ultimately, the Task Force will create and articulate a unified plan that will coordinate, as much as possible, all of these parts into one functioning, if somewhat crippled, whole – until the emergency has passed.

This is an extremely large and complex task. The Court Information Technology Coordinator, Karen Adams, has done an admirable job in coordinating all our efforts. We will continue with our labors until the job is done.

Do you have an article or information that you would like included in The Bench and Beyond? Send it to andrea.saxon@co.clayton.ga.us . ♦

D R U G C O U R T H O L D S S T A K E H O L D E R S M E E T I N G

The Clayton County Adult Felony Drug Court held its first stakeholders meeting on June 25 at the Clayton County Performing Arts Center. The meeting served three purposes: explain the program to the public, recognize current community stakeholders, and discuss needs for additional services.



Stakeholders and community members

Superior Court Judge Albert Collier, who will preside over Drug Court, gave the welcome and committee introductions. The Drug Court Team explained each of their roles in the program. The team is composed of a representative from each of the following offices: District Attorney, Circuit Public Defender, Police, Sheriff, and the Georgia Department of Corrections. The Clayton Center and Clayton State University's Department of Psychology also have a seat on the team.

The Adult Felony Drug Court will provide alternatives to prison sentences for eligible individuals. Defendants with substance abuse problems who do not have a history of violent offenses will be able to participate in the program. Participants

(Drug Court, Continued on page 2)



Pictured (l-r): Court Administrator Yolanda Lewis, Drug Court/Superior Court Judge Albert Collier, Court Programs Coordinator Ashley Arnold

(Drug Court, Continued from page 1)

will undergo outpatient or residential substance abuse treatment, submit to drug tests, and report to court throughout the eighteen-month program. During the program, participants will also be required to maintain employment and complete community service.

The Drug Court already has a number of community stakeholders. Current partners include recreation centers, career centers, childcare services, dental services, and churches. The meeting acknowledged these services, and also explained the need for other ancillary services.

For more information on the program or how to get involved, please call Ashley Arnold, Court Programs Coordinator, at 770-477-3412. ♦

P I D P O F F E R S S E C O N D C H A N C E S

G A R Y D U B O S E , P R O G R A M S D I R E C T O R , D . A . ' S O F F I C E

The Pre-trial Intervention & Diversion Program (PIDP) provides an opportunity for first time non-violent offenders to receive a second chance. We all make mistakes and some of those affect us the rest of our lives. For instance, if you are convicted of a felony, simple things like getting a student loan, renting an apartment, and getting into the military can prove difficult. A felony also limits some of your basic constitutional rights including the right to vote and the right to carry a firearm.

The Pre-trial Intervention and Diversion Program is an alternative to going to trial. The program is designed to help defendants make better decisions in life and keep them on the right path. Successful completion of this pro-

gram guarantees the case dismissal, and the case may be eligible for expungement (which removes/seals the arrest record).

This program has four primary focus areas that are aimed at providing the first time, non-violent, felony offenders the opportunity to correct foolish and often immature mistakes. The focus areas are Substance Abuse & Education, Mental Health, Theft & Shoplifting Prevention, and Education Intervention & Life Skills. The District Attorney understands that there are good people that make stupid mistakes, and good people that make bad mistakes, and those people are our focus. ♦

**C O U R T S I D E
E V E N T S**

September 25
CPR/AED Training
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Contact Court Administration
770-477-3413

October 1-2
Criminal Law Seminar
Holiday Inn, Stockbridge
Contact Lister & Holt, LLC
770-471-9000

Every Day
Law Library Book Sale
Court Administration
3rd Floor
Harold R. Banke Justice Center

C P R T R A I N I N G

There will be a CPR/AED class offered on Friday, September 25. The class will be held at the Banke Justice Center from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Training will be given by Clayton County Emergency Management.

Anyone interested in attending should reserve a spot by contacting Karen Adams at 770-477-3413. ♦

**C O U R T A D M I N I S T R A T O R S E L E C T E D
F O R T W O P R O G R A M S**

Court Administrator Yolanda Lewis has been appointed to serve on the Georgia Commission on Interpreters. Ms. Lewis will be serving a term of five years. This is the first year that a court administrator has been appointed to the Commission.

The Commission on Interpreters was created in 2003. The primary purpose of the Commission is to ensure that the rights of non-English speaking persons are upheld in the court environment by providing them access to professional licensed interpreters. The Commission also develops training and certification programs for court interpreters, and establishes conduct standards. Members of the Commission include judges, lawyers, legislators, and interpreters.

(Court Administrator, Continued on page 3)

FOR THE RECORD ***SUPERIOR COURT**

- 928 criminal filings
- 1,442 domestic relations filings
- 324 general civil filings

STATE COURT

- 2,811 civil filings
- 2,761 criminal filings
- 8,226 traffic filings

DUI COURT

- 42 participants in Phase I
- 19 participants in Phase II
- 18 participants in Phase III
- 7 participants in Phase IV
- 4 participants graduated

INTERPRETERS

- 420 interpreter hours billed
- \$23,910 billed
- 9 languages used

ADR MEDIATION

- 260 cases closed
- 38% cases mediated
- 54% reached full or partial agreement

ADR PARENTING

- 6 seminars held
- 135 cases referred
- 195 seminar attendees

*for 2nd quarter of 2009

(Court Administrator, Continued from page 2)

Ms. Lewis has also been accepted to Leadership Clayton, sponsored by the Clayton County Chamber of Commerce. The program's Advisory Board selected her after an application and interview process.

Leadership Clayton is a nine-month leadership development program that provides participants with the skills to enhance their leadership abilities, address community issues, and utilize available resources to resolve those issues. Participants also gain knowledge from the current area leaders who dedicate their time to this program. ♦

COURT INTERPRETER SCHEDULING PROGRAM

If you need a foreign or sign language court interpreter, you can now schedule one online. Court Administration has created an interpreter scheduling system that will allow you to place your interpreter request up to 24 hours in advance for Spanish or 48 hours in advance for other languages.

The online program requires that you register before you can begin scheduling interpreters. To do so, please visit the **Court Interpreter Scheduling Program** link under the "Courts" section of the Clayton County website.

As always, these interpreters should only be scheduled for a person who is hearing impaired or for foreign language indigent clients. Court Administration will be happy to provide you with contact information for interpreter services if you are a retained attorney. Please contact Court Administration at 770-477-3414 if you have any questions. ♦

DISTRICT COURT ADMINISTRATOR ON NACM BOARD

Will Simmons, the Sixth Judicial District Court Administrator, has been named to the National Association for Court Management's (NACM) Board of Directors. He was appointed as the Large Court Director for a term of three years.

NACM is an organization for court management professionals that consists of members from the local, state, and federal levels of court. NACM provides continuing education and training programs, either in conjunction with its conferences or by providing assistance at a local level. It recognizes court and technology improvements within the court systems by presenting annual rewards for justice achievement and merit.

Mr. Simmons became the district's court administrator in 2008, after serving as the Clayton County Superior and State Court Administrator. He is also currently the president of the Georgia Council of Court Administrators. ♦

LAW LIBRARY EMPLOYEE SELECTED FOR GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP

Congratulations to Betty Jo Grossnickle, Principal Secretary in the Law Library. Ms. Grossnickle has been selected to attend Clayton County's Grassroots Leadership Institute. This community-sponsored twelve-week program provides training for future leaders of Clayton County. Ms. Grossnickle and the other participants will attend weekly sessions to help them become active leaders in the Clayton County community. Sessions include training on teambuilding, leadership, and problem solving. ♦

Superior Court

Chief Judge Matthew O. Simmons
Judge Deborah C. Benefield
Judge Albert B. Collier
Judge Geronda V. Carter

State Court

Chief Judge Harold G. Benefield
Judge John C. Carbo
Judge Linda S. Cowen
Judge Morris E. Braswell

Court Administrator
Yolanda L. Lewis

Editor

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C L A Y T O N J U D I C I A L C I R C U I T

F O C U S O N : K A R E N A D A M S

Karen Adams is the new Information Technology Coordinator for Superior and State Court. She began her new position with the county in April 2009.

Karen provides technology support for the superior and state court judges and their staff members. Her responsibilities are not limited to supporting the audio and evidence viewing equipment in the courtrooms; she is also responsible for directing and coordinating process improvements based on technology advances. One of her major focuses with Court Administration is also to develop and implement a Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Plan. Karen is also diligently working to bring new and innovative technology to Court Administration.

Karen has a degree in electrical engi-

neering from Howard University. She is currently working towards an MBA with a specialty in Technology Management from the University of Phoenix. Karen formerly worked at HP and ATT, where she received awards for outstanding contributions to her teams.

Karen was born in Louisiana, and moved to Atlanta in 1968. Her husband, Darrell, is a real estate tax analyst, and they have two wonderful children - Lena, twelve, and DJ, ten.

Karen has many interests. She enjoys biking, swimming, walking 5Ks, and reading. She is a member and volunteer with school PTA, a volunteer with Cities in Schools, and is involved in community development projects. She recently became a member of the Clayton County Community Emergency

Response Team (CERT).

What have you found to be the best way to relieve tension?

Laugh. Laugh at yourself, others, situations, events, anything and everything - find the humor.

What is the strangest job you have ever had?

The summer of my freshman year of college I worked at a Keebler bakery. I learned I'm not cut out for assembly line work.

Do you own an iPod? If so, what songs are in your playlist?

Frankie Beverly and Maze, Maxwell, Mariah Carey, Michael and Janet Jackson, Boney James, Kenny G, Luther, Earth Wind & Fire, Prince, all old school. ♦



Pictured: Karen Adams, Court IT Coordinator, gave a demonstration of the evidence viewing system on June 25. Present were representatives from the Solicitor and District Attorney's offices. ♦



**L E G A L
L I N G O**

"Appeal"

To ask a higher court to reverse the decision of a lower court.