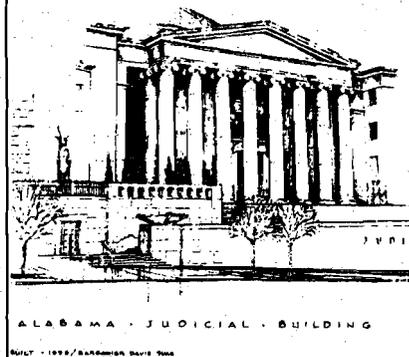


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# Alabama Court News

Fall-Winter 1996



Vol. IV No. 4

Newsletter of the Unified Judicial System

## First Monday in October

by Lynne Kitchens

Monday, Oct. 7, 1996, marked the official opening of Alabama's 1996-1997 court term. For 23 years, Alabama courts have begun the new court year with a special ceremony—the Red Mass at St. Peter's Parish, a historic Montgomery landmark, followed by the opening of court session in the supreme court courtroom.

The Red Mass, so named for the color of the vestments worn by the priests as well as that of the judges' robes of centuries ago, dates back to the Middle Ages in Great Britain



Circuit Judge Ferrill McRae, 13th Judicial Circuit, remembers those judges and lawyers who passed away during the last year.

and Europe. According to tradition, the Red Mass, celebrated in cities all over the United States, is offered on behalf of judges and lawyers of all faiths to seek divine guidance in the administration of justice.

In our nation's capital, the annual Red Mass, sponsored by the John Carroll Society, is celebrated in the historic Cathedral of St. Matthew and attended by the justices of the United States Supreme Court, government officials,

(See "First" next page)

## Does BC/BS Pay For Flu Shots?

Blue Cross/Blue Shield will pay the cost of the flu shot provided it is not given in conjunction with an office visit, said Ms. Janice Foreman, representative at the State Employees' Insurance Board. Otherwise, there will be a \$20 co-pay for the office visit.

Ms. Foreman recommends calling the office of a Preferred Medical Doctor (PMD) and requesting a flu shot. In this manner, the administration by the nurse will be covered by BC/BS at no cost to the employee.

Employees covered by HMO's should contact their Primary Care Physician.

## Alabama Judicial System Study Commission Holds Conference

The Alabama Judicial System Study Commission held its annual conference on Oct. 3-4, 1996, at the Judicial Building in Montgomery. A total of 61 commission members, presenters, guests and staff attended the conference. Chief Justice Perry O. Hooper Sr., commission chairman, presided over the meeting.

Frank W. Gregory, administrative director of courts, gave an overview of the Alabama Judicial System and

a charge to the commission. Joyce Bigbee, director of the Alabama Legislative Fiscal Office, presented an overview of funding for the state government.

The conference agenda included jury issues, a review of Alabama's court structure, development of a state sentencing philosophy and rationale, review of a guide to sentencing DUI offenders, and fairness in the courts. Several other issues surfaced during the conference including domestic violence protection

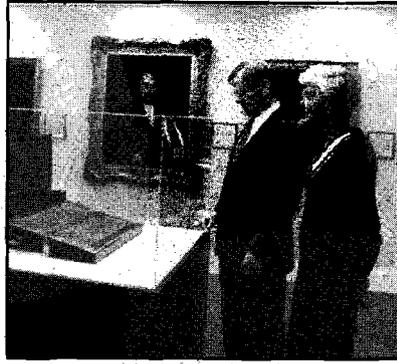
(See "Commission" next page)

("First" Continued)

foreign diplomats and other guests.

Former Chief Justice Howell Heflin began the tradition in Montgomery in 1974. Several judges take part in the service each year. Judicial participants in Alabama's twenty-third annual Red Mass included Chief Justice Perry O. Hooper Sr. and Associate Justice Terry Butts, Court of Criminal Appeals judges Sue Bell Cobb and Frank Long, Court of Civil Appeals Judge John Crawley, and appeals courts clerks Lane Mann and John Wilkerson.

Following the service, the tradition continued in the supreme court courtroom with all three appellate courts meeting in special session for the opening of court ceremony. Chief Justice Hooper welcomed the guests and summarized the caseload statistics for the past year. State Law Librarian Tim Lewis acknowl-



Judge John Crawley, Court of Civil Appeals, and Mrs. Martha Houston admire an antique lap desk in the Gallery of the Antebellum Court.

edged the many donations to the judicial museum and archives and recognized the descendants of those whose artifacts and manuscripts were displayed in the newly created Gallery of the Antebellum Court on the third floor of the judicial building.

The session ended with the recognition of members of the bench and bar who had passed away during the 1995-1996 court year.

("Commission" Continued)

orders and ex parte requests, neutrality and court referral officers, and use of driver education programs in lieu of prosecution. The commission voted to study each issue presented, and several committees will be established to conduct the studies requested.

Angelo Trimble, director of the Judicial System Study Commission, coordinated the meeting. Mr. Trimble said, "The Commission's decisions and actions during this meeting set the stage for several years of intensive study of a number of important issues, including some things we may be able to complete within the first year."

The Judicial System Study Com-

mission is comprised of representatives of each of the three branches of government.

Additionally, several ex officio and appointed advisory members have been designated to serve by Chief Justice Hooper.

The commission is charged to continuously study the judicial system of the state, the courts of the state, the administration of justice in Alabama, criminal rehabilitation, criminal punishment methods and procedures and all matters relating directly or indirectly to the administration of justice in Alabama and make recommendations pertaining thereto.

### ... Court Briefs ...

**Birth Announcements** Congratulations! Ellen Earls, deputy clerk for Jackie Calhoun, Baldwin County, delivered triplets on September 17. The two girls and one boy are all born healthy and doing well.

**Holloway honored as top boss by Redbook** Judge Denny Holloway is selected to be fair in the courtroom, but also a Dothan judge's fairness with employees which helped him to be named as one of the top five bosses of working moms. Twentieth Judicial Circuit Judge Denny Holloway was given the honor in the September issue of Redbook magazine after being recommended by his court reporter, Debbie Van Horn. Redbook selected Holloway as the top boss who entered a contest in the magazine about the kind of boss he took when she found out her youngest son, Brannon, had been born in 1989.

**Vince Schilleci elected AG at Alabama Boys State** Vince Schilleci of Hoover was recently elected attorney general at American Indian Boys State. The Hoover High School student, son of Judge Vincent Schilleci, is president of the SHS Key Club. He plans to attend The University of Alabama and pursue a career in law.

**First Place** Diane Wiggins, Montgomery County, specialist II, came in first in the Montgomery Track and Running Club's Bessie and Mountain Toll Run on October 1. She ran the 13.1 miles in 2 hours and 17 minutes. She has been running for only 1 1/2 years. Ms. Wiggins said she hasn't always been a runner. "I first started I couldn't even walk a block without getting winded."

**Blue Ribbon** Melissa Rittenour, Montgomery County, clerk, Court deputy clerk, won a blue ribbon for her entry in the Alabama State Fair. Ms. Rittenour's prize-winning entry was a cross-stitched alphabet.

## Facing the Canons of Judicial Ethics:

### Inquires about the Judicial Inquiry Commission

By Eric L. Locke

How do judges avoid impropriety, or the appearance of impropriety in all of their activities, perform duties of their office diligently, impartially, in a dignified and courteous manner always conducting themselves in a demeanor befitting the office, but at the same time, regulate their extra-judicial activities to minimize the risk of conflict with their judicial duties, and, at the same time, refrain from political activities inappropriate to their judicial office?

Moreover, how do they still maintain the clarity of mind and thought to regularly hear cases, coherently interpret the law, and sustain the emotional stamina necessary to peacefully coexist when, on that rare occasion, they have the opportunity to personally interact with family members and friends, and not violate any of the Canons of Judicial Ethics?

#### Is it possible?

Although the Judicial Inquiry Commission (JIC) reports that it receives more than 200 complaints a year, the vast majority of inquiries (approximately 75%) are dismissed without investigation for lack of jurisdiction because they fail to specifically allege that any of the Canons of Judicial Ethics have been violated. Typically, these complaints are the result of adverse rulings which should be heard by a higher court on appeal--but not by the JIC. Take comfort that the JIC also reports that its yearly 200-plus



complaint intake is on par with the national average.

#### Common Complaints

Some of the more typical complaints that fall within the jurisdiction of the JIC and warrant investigation and subsequent advisory opinions are mentioned below. For example, most injuries involve Canon 3, which mandates that a judge should be unbiased or impartial in rendering his or her decisions. In this regard, the Commission has ruled that a judge is not disqualified from hearing a case merely because he becomes aware that a party to that proceeding has filed a complaint against him with the JIC (92-447), nor is a judge disqualified merely because a party to a proceeding attends the judge's church or attends the same Sunday school class (95-541). However, a judge is disqualified from hearing cases in which he or she, as a beneficiary of a trust, has personal knowledge of an evidentiary matter where the bank/trustee is a party (95-554), where a judge comments upon a case pending in his or her court during a political campaign under Canons 3 and 7 (95-575), or where a judge may become a material witness in a case over which he or she presides (92-453).

A judge may send, at his or her own expense, letters of commendation to jurors at the end of the jury term, provided the court stationary, stamps and personnel are not used, and such letters are sent to jurors

(See "Canons" next page)

#### The Judicial Inquiry Commis-

**sion** receives complaints and conducts investigations regarding any judge of a court of the judicial system of Alabama. Should a majority of the members of the Judicial Inquiry Commission decide that a judge has violated any canon of judicial ethics or is mentally or physically incapable of performing his or her duties, the commission must file a complaint with the Court of the Judiciary. The Court of the Judiciary is authorized to conduct a hearing and may sanction the judge according to law, and such decision may be appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court.

#### Judicial Inquiry Commission

One appellate court judge appointed by the Alabama Supreme Court who cannot be a justice of the Supreme Court

Two circuit judges appointed by the Alabama Association of Circuit Judges

One district judge appointed by the lieutenant governor (subject to senate confirmation) (Note: On Jan. 1, 2005, this appointment reverts to the governor, subject to senate confirmation)

Two members of the State Bar selected by the governing body of the Alabama State Bar

Three non-lawyers appointed by the governor (subject to senate confirmation)

#### Court of the Judiciary

One appellate court judge appointed by the Alabama Supreme Court (who cannot be a justice of the Supreme Court)

Two circuit judges appointed by the Alabama Association of Circuit Judges

One district judge appointed by the Alabama Association of District Judges

Two members of the State Bar selected by the governing body of the Alabama State Bar

Two non-lawyers appointed by the governor (subject to senate confirmation)

One Person appointed by the lieutenant governor (subject to senate confirmation)

(Note: On Jan. 1, 2005, this appointment reverts to the governor, subject to senate confirmation)

## Life on the Outside

by Marvin Cherner

While I officially retired in January 1995, here I am, over 1<sup>o</sup> years later, still working as a circuit judge. I ask myself why I have this compulsion to stay and continue working. Working as a judge has been both difficult, stressful and time-consuming. It's not an easy job.

However, I consider it a worthwhile endeavor. There's a lot of personal satisfaction to be gained from using your best efforts to reach the best possible decision. Speaking philosophically, respect for law and the persons who apply it is an important part of the fabric of our society. I like to think that I have helped to foster that respect.

I hate to admit that I actually enjoy my work. How could anyone really like listening to testimony and lawyers' arguments which sometimes seem to last hours and even days longer than necessary? My advice to young lawyers now is to keep it short

("Canons" Continued)

who have actually participated in a proceeding over which that judge presided (95-552). Also, a judge may submit a letter to the State Bar Grievance Committee which comments on the performance of counsel before his or her court in support against an ineffective assistance of counsel claim (90-390).

Additionally, a judge may teach law-related courses on a part-time basis (91-433) may serve on a task force on victims' rights under Canon 4 (87-294) and appear on public service announcements containing drug abuse prevention messages, as long as the names of any sponsoring hospitals are not included in the announcement (87-

and simple and get to the point. Even conscientious judges and juries do not have unlimited attention spans.

So here I am for a while longer. One important lesson of retirement is humility. If any judge thinks he is indispensable, he will learn upon retirement that new judges take over without missing a beat. The judicial process continues as though the retired judge had never been there.

I do find, however, that I have not been entirely forgotten yet. People still recognize me when they pass me in the hall.

I'm still planning to start doing something new or different. However, my wife says that the only way I will leave is feet first.

*Marvin Cherner served as a circuit judge of Jefferson County, 10th Judicial Circuit, December 1976-January 1995. "Life on the Outside" is an on going column by retired UJS judges and clerks.*

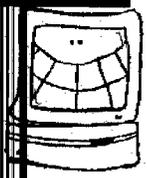
295).

Of course, these are just a few examples of the types of situations for which the JIC releases advisory opinions. Keep in mind also that on rare occasions, the JIC will file a complaint against a judge after investigation for a full hearing to be held by the Court of the Judiciary.

If any judges are engaged or planning to engage in a practice which they believe could cast doubt on their ability to judge cases impartially, or which could raise other questions regarding any of the Canons of Judicial Ethics, they should review the synopses of published JIC Opinions which have been provided by the AOC.

## Judicial Data Center Prepares for Year 2000

by John O'Sullivan



Many articles have been written lately pondering what will occur at midnight on 12/31, 1999. According to the articles, at the new millennium all implemented computers and programs will bring commerce to a halt, elevators will stop between floors, security alarms will be set off, and airplanes will crash or get lost.

The primary reason for the concern is that all data have been stored in computers in "binary" format," i.e.: 961001 for October 1, 1996. If a court employee started working in 1980 and planned on a 25 year retirement, he or she would expect to retire in 2005. When the magic date arrives, the computer will subtract 10 from 5 and come up with -75 years service, meaning that he or she needs to work for 100 more years before their retirement service would equal +25.

The Judicial Data Center staff has been working on this problem for more than 3 years and will have all mainframe programs migrated before the end of 1999.

Currently, Computer Associates International and the State Data Systems Management Division are determining if the present computers are compliant. The following process may work with PCs: the date and time in the PC to 12/31/99 and 23:55:00 and then turn the PC off. After 10 minutes, turn the PC back on and check the date. The time should be correct.

The State Data Systems Management Division is presently sponsoring a Year 2000 study which will estimate the economic impact of Y2K. The results of the study will be presented to the Legislature for funding for such things as replacement of PCs and their associated software.

## Personnel Profile

by Sheila Wall



With the end of this year comes the retirement of two of the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals judges—Presiding Judge Sam Taylor and Judge John Patterson. These two men, whether in the governor's office, in the legislature or the judiciary, have served the citizens of Alabama for most of their lives.

Here are some of their insights after working as public servants for almost four decades.



**Q.** Judge Taylor, how has the public's perspective of judges and the courts changed since you entered the courts as a Montgomery County Judge in 1975?

**A.** The one thing that has changed is the media's having more influence over people. With the influx of 24-hour television news stations, it is impacting people much more heavily than ever before. The public reacts to the latest political or news spot on television. The way the elections now are being run, the candidates really look bad.

After the elections, though, the confidence in the judiciary that is lost during the campaigns is restored.

As in the first lines of "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Since the beginning, human nature hasn't changed. We always think that everything 30 or 40 years ago was all sweetness and light, but things were just as turbulent and controversial then as they are now except that today nearly everyone has access to

viewing unsettling daily events as they actually happen. When all else fails, however, people really believe they can get fair treatment by the judge.

**Q.** Judge Taylor, how did serving in the House of Representatives give you insight as a member of the Judicial Branch?

**A.** I understand the enormous pressure the legislature is under. I also understand how they see judges as a little formal or remote. We are all just people. I'm very comfortable with them.

**Q.** Judge Taylor, after serving on the Court of Criminal Appeals for 13 years, what advice would you give to your successor?

**A.** Don't be an absentee landlord. Lawyers tend to get an exaggerated value of their worth. They have to try to do better because they are the role models. Judges have invisible restrictions on what they do. If judges demean themselves, they demean all other judges and the court system as well.



**Q.** Judge Patterson, how did your service as Governor and Attorney General give you insight while serving as an appellate court judge?

**A.** Without compromising principles, I think that the Judicial Branch should keep good working relations with the other branches, if possible. We have the doctrine of the separation of powers. It's true that the three branches are equal; however, it's important to keep in mind the checks and balances that are provided to keep each branch in line.

**Q.** Judge Patterson, did you have a mentor growing up who

motivated you toward public service?

**A.** My father motivated me to be a lawyer. Being a lawyer has been a great asset to me. It has opened all the doors. I was never interested in politics, but when my father was killed while serving as our state's attorney general, there was such a sentiment in the state, I became caught up in it and ran for his office.

**Q.** Judge Patterson, what advice would you give to your successor?

**A.** First, I would advise them to surround themselves with good people. I've been blessed with having good help.

Second, I would advise them to endeavor at all times to conscientiously do what is right under the law, without regard to what the public or any group of people would say. If you do that, you'll never have any trouble defending your decision.



On Jan. 20, 1997, Judge Taylor and Judge Patterson will leave their seats on the Court of Criminal Appeals. For Judge Taylor this means he'll have the leisure time to do a little writing and reading. "It would be fun to be unprogrammed," he said. Judge Patterson, on the other hand, is planning to stay on and work as an active retired judge for at least a year if possible. "When you enjoy what you're doing and you have plenty to do, time ceases to be important," he said.

*If you would like to recommend an outstanding individual to be recognized in the personnel profile, please contact Sheila Wall at AOC.*

## **ALALINC -- The State Law Library's Online Service Nears End of Second Year and Continues to Grow**

Currently, there are approximately 500 judges, lawyers, businesses, teachers and general citizens subscribing to the service. Calhoun County Circuit Judge Sam Monk was one of ALALINC's first subscribers, participating in the system's original pilot. At present, approximately 25 trial court judges subscribe to the system. The Library has extended complementary access to all of Alabama's trial court officials.

ALALINC, the online service of the Supreme Court and State Law Library, went online in March 1995 to provide computer access to Alabama's appellate court opinions through the use of a bank of five telephone lines. During the past 18 months, the system has grown to encompass 12 telephone lines and 12 incoming Internet channels that

accommodate more than 3000 calls per month plus numerous web page contacts. ALALINC usage has nearly tripled during the last 12 months. Users from around the world can connect to ALALINC through either a phone connection or across the Internet. ALALINC's Internet web site is "http://www.alalinc.net".

ALALINC provides fast access to the opinions of the Supreme Court of Alabama, the Court of Civil Appeals, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court. The opinions of Alabama's appellate courts are available on the day of release and federal cases, within 24 hours of release. Users may view and read opinions online, download copies to their computers and conduct full-text boolean searches of the legal research databases.

ALALINC services also include an e-mail system, the ability to transfer files among users, access to other databases maintained by the Secre-

tary of State and the Center for Law and Civic Education, and UJS directory information. Internet services available through ALALINC include the ability to surf the world wide web via web browser, ftp service and Internet e-mail.

To use ALALINC, one needs a computer, a modem and communications software. Incompatible software is available from the Library at no charge. Annual subscription fees for basic service are \$100 per year. The cost of both basic access and outgoing Internet service is \$220 per year. Users are entitled to unlimited e-mails. There are no online charges for using ALALINC. Anyone interested in information concerning accessing ALALINC should contact The Law Library at (334) 242-2400 or (800) 236-4069.



## **Update: Judicial Data Center's Help Desk**

Many readers will recognize (800) 216-8860 as that of the Judicial Data Center's Help Desk. Despite the more than 600 calls made to the help desk in each month, all callers were greeted by Shirley Lee, who has been the Help Desk coordinator since April.

The primary reason for the establishment of the Help Desk Coordinators position was to insure

that callers are directed to the person who is most qualified to answer their questions. Sometimes, because of travel, meetings, etc., Ms. Lee is unable to immediately connect the caller with the appropriate person. She then logs the call and has it returned as soon as a respondent becomes available.

Some benefits of the Help Desk coordination effort include the ability to analyze calls to determine the type of training that needs to be

provided and to clarify instructions printed in the various manuals that have been written for the State Judicial Information System customers.

By far, the largest number of calls are regarding the Financial Systems (271) with Criminal and Traffic running in 2nd and 4th place respectively.

Please let the Judicial Data Center know if you have suggestions for the Help Desk.



From left, Jim Barganier, Supreme Court Justice Hugh Maddox and Lee Sims

### Architects Receive Honor Award for the Alabama Judicial Building

The Alabama Judicial Building continues to receive the praise of architectural enthusiasts nationwide. Most recently the building was featured in the Architectural Record, March 1996, and received an Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

The trade magazine stated that for Alabama's highest court,

architects Barganier Davis Sims, together with Gresham Smith & Partners, met local expectations of a dignified judicial edifice on a surprisingly modest budget, and produced a thoroughly modern building at the same time. The 241,000 square-foot, poured-concrete structure cost \$102 per square foot.

The Judicial Building, center of the Judicial Branch of state government, was also honored at this year's annual AIA convention. Alabama Supreme Court Associate Justice Hugh Maddox joined the building's architects in receiving an Honor Award. The award, sponsored by the AIA, is touted as the highest level of recognition for exemplary design.

Members of the Design Award

jury made the following comments, "Level of finish in the details is admirable, refined details and floor patterns are particularly nice, a complex problem solved in a very effective way and clearly accomplished within budget constraints."

Seventeen projects were entered in the Design Awards competition, which annually recognizes and promotes excellence in architecture.

Four projects submitted by architectural firms have earned Design Award recognition. The Mobile Government Plaza (designed by Harry Golemon, FAIA/Mario Bollulo, AIA - A Partnership, Houston, Texas, in association with Frederick C. Woods, AIA, and Associates, Mobile and Harry Golemon Architects Inc., Houston, Texas) received an Award of Merit.

## COURT PERSONNEL

July 1-October 1

### RETIREMENTS

**Patty W. Baucum**, court specialist, retired from Madison County circuit clerk's office July 31, 1996.

**Virginia Claire Boren**, court administrator of Jefferson County, retired Aug. 30, 1996.

**W. Loy Campbell**, circuit judge, 38th Judicial Circuit, retired Sept. 30, 1996. Judge Campbell had served in the judiciary since Dec. 5, 1975.

**Corrine Darawich**, court specialist, retired from Mobile County circuit clerk's office on July 31, 1996.

**John P. Dison**, court attendant, Judge Jerry L. Fielding's Office, 29th Judicial Circuit, retired Aug. 30, 1996.

**Walter D. Enoch** retired as special roving court reporter in Birmingham on Aug. 30, 1996.

**Carolyn J. Ingram**, court specialist, retired from Mobile County district clerk's office on Aug. 30, 1996.

**Patricia C. Kidd**, court specialist, retired from Etowah County circuit

clerk's office on Aug. 30, 1996.

**Clara S. Laird** retired as a Merit Court Reporter for Judge Teresa B. Petelos, 10th Judicial Circuit, on Aug. 30, 1996.

**Jimmie T. Nabors**, court specialist, retired from the Bessemer circuit clerk's office on Aug. 30, 1996.

**Minnie Irene Padgett**, court specialist, retired from Dekalb County circuit clerk's office on July 31, 1996.

**Pauline N. Tankersley**, court specialist, retired from Cullman County circuit clerk's office on Aug. 30, 1996.

**Circuit Judge H. Randall Thomas**, 15th Judicial Circuit, retired July 31, 1996. Judge Thomas had served in the judiciary since Oct. 17, 1975.

### RESIGNATIONS

**Circuit Judge Stephen W. Drinkard**, 19th Judicial Circuit, resigned Sept. 6, 1996. Judge Drinkard had served as a judge since Jan. 17, 1989.

**Tracy Rodgers** resigned her position in the AOC public information division on Aug. 13, 1996, to pursue a teaching

career.

**Barbara Swift** resigned as a register of Calhoun County on Sept. 30, 1996.

### APPOINTMENTS

**Curtis J. Elzie** was appointed supernumerary circuit clerk on Sept. 1, 1996. Mr. Elzie had served as Circuit Clerk in Bullock County from Jan. 16, 1977, to Jan. 16, 1995.

**Suzanne B. Frazier** was appointed as the special Roving Court Reporter in Birmingham on Sept. 3, 1996. She has been assigned to the court administrator's office.

**Ben A. Fuller** was appointed circuit judge of the 19th Judicial Circuit on Oct. 9, 1996. Judge Fuller replaces Circuit Judge Stephen Drinkard.

**Marie C. Hall** was appointed the official court reporter for Judge Philip N. Lisenby, 6th Judicial Circuit, on Oct. 1, 1996.

**Jenifer C. Holt** was appointed circuit

(See "Personnel" next page)

(“Personnel Continued)

judge of the 38th Judicial Circuit on Oct. 1, 1996. Judge Holt replaces retired Circuit Judge Loy Campbell.

**Agnes M. Miller** was appointed court administrator, Jefferson County, on Aug. 31, 1996.

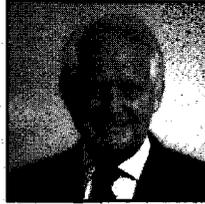
**Frances L. Roark** appointed official court reporter for Judge Lewis H. Hamner Jr., 5th Judicial Circuit, on July 15, 1996.

**William A. Shashy** was appointed circuit judge of the 15th Judicial Circuit on Sept. 11, 1996. Judge Shashy replaced retired Circuit Judge H. Randall Thomas.

**James W. Woodroof Jr.**, was appointed circuit judge of the 39th Judicial Circuit on Aug. 1, 1996. He replaced retired circuit judge Henry W. Blizzard.

#### IN MEMORIAM

**Walter C. Wood**, bailiff for Birmingham District Judge Robert G. Cahill's office, died on Aug. 1, 1996. He began working for District Judge Robert W. Gwin Dec. 13, 1973. At the time of his death, he was the oldest in-service bailiff in the Jefferson County Courthouse. Mr. Wood is survived by a son, Walter Keith Wood, a daughter, Sue A. Wood, and one grandchild.



#### A Message From the Chief Justice



Chief Justice Perry O. Hooper Sr.

The Holiday Season is a beautiful time to pause, bow our heads, and thank our Heavenly Father for the abundant blessings we have all received.

No nation has ever been so blessed as we have in these great United States. You and I have spiritual liberties that people in other parts of the world can scarcely believe. We can turn to our God or we can turn from God. The law is the protector of our liberties.

My belief can be summed up by those 56 men who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor and said: "We hold these Truths self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness-".

Like many of you, I have children and grandchildren. I have four sons, three daughter-in-laws and seven

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*It welcomes news about Alabama's courts and their programs, projects and personnel.*

*To contribute to this publication, please contact Sheila V. ... (300) 392-8077 or (300) 42-4300.*

Chief Justice  
Supreme Court of Alabama  
Perry O. Hooper Sr.

Administrative Office of Courts  
Francis W. G...

Managing Editor  
Sheila F. V...

grandchildren. This will be the first Holiday Season for my grandchildren, and I pray that they can leave this world a little better, so they can enjoy the same wonderful blessings--spiritual, economic and intellectual.

I wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season.

*Perry O. Hooper Sr.*



#### Alabama Court News

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