

*Judicial Council  
Administrative  
Office of the  
Courts*



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
FY 2019**

### ***The Judicial Council of Georgia***

was created in 1945 to develop policies for administering and improving Georgia courts. Judicial Council members and committees meet throughout the year to address specific aspects of court administration and improvement. The Judicial Council is made up of 27 members who represent every class of court, plus the President of the State Bar of Georgia, who serves as a non-voting member. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) was created in 1973. As staff to the Judicial Council, the AOC provides subject-matter expertise on policy, court innovation, legislation, and court administration to all Georgia courts.

This report is published by the Judicial Council of Georgia and the Administrative Office of the Courts in compliance with O.C.G.A. §15-5-24.

Chair, Chief Justice Harold D. Melton  
Director, Cynthia H. Clanton  
Judicial Council of Georgia  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
244 Washington Street SW, Suite 300  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Note: This report covers Fiscal Year 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019). Names and titles listed in this report are as of those dates and do not reflect changes in leadership or titles before or after those dates.

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## State of the Judiciary

*Chief Justice Harold D. Melton delivered his first State of the Judiciary Address to the legislature on February 19, 2019.*



### *In Remembrance of Chief Justice Hines*

Just over two months after retiring from the bench, Chief Justice P. Harris Hines died in a car accident on November 4, 2018. “He was a great lawyer, a great judge, and a great public servant, but most of all he was a great man. Because of the love and kindness he extended so freely to others, the late Chief Justice Hines was loved and cherished by every member of our Court, our Court staff, and by just about every person who met him.”

*“We are well poised to meet the inevitable changes ahead.”*

Chief Justice Melton observed that as the judgeships in Georgia’s appellate courts have recently grown in number, the new jurists have made the courts younger, which will provide stability for years to come as the judiciary works with its legislative and executive branch counterparts “to forge strong relationships to best serve our citizens.”



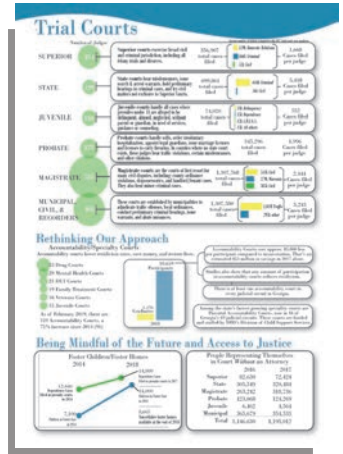
***“In every generation, we have called upon the rule of law to be a beacon of light...”***

A sea change has occurred in Georgia’s courts over the years. Courts no longer only seek to punish a crime, but they also seek to treat the underlying problem. Criminal justice reform, in which Justice Michael Boggs has been a leader, has made significant improvements in bail practices and sentencing. Accountability Courts have diverted many people out of the pipeline to prison. Volunteer lawyer groups such as the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation have stepped in to improve the education and lives of many disenfranchised young people. All of these efforts contribute to combat the underlying issues of individuals who find themselves in court.

***“We do not take this building for granted.”***

The appellate courts will move into the new judicial building by winter 2019. The Chief Justice thanked the legislature for approving and funding Georgia’s first state building dedicated solely to the judiciary. “The building looks slightly upward to the Capitol, giving the Legislature the appropriate presumption of righteousness it deserves, but at the same time it looks squarely at the Capitol in readiness to do our jobs.”

The new Judicial Building’s construction progress as of February 2019.



A flier handed out to legislators outlined every class of court in Georgia.

## *From the Director*

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On behalf of the Judicial Council and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), I am pleased to share the 46th Annual Report covering our work during Fiscal Year 2019. The AOC was created by statute in 1973 to serve the Judicial Council, which is the statewide governing body for the judicial branch of Georgia. The Judicial Council is made up of 26 judges representing all classes of courts and the president of the State Bar of Georgia, who is a non-voting member.

As we approached the end of Fiscal Year 2019 on June 30th, the AOC experienced an unprecedented ransomware attack on our IT servers. While this unfortunate event burdened many judges and staff by disrupting our services, we used this opportunity to start anew and upgrade and strengthen all of our IT systems. We are now stronger and more secure than ever before.

Before the ransomware incident, we had a very productive year serving the Judicial Council, the broader judiciary, and improving the administration of justice. Our services included four Judicial Council meetings held in Marietta, Atlanta (2), and Columbus; numerous committee meetings (see pages 10-15); creation of a new Courts Directory; and the annual case count. We will report the case count for all courts at [georgiacourts.gov](http://georgiacourts.gov) when the count is completed. Of particular note this year was the creation of the Judicial Council Ad Hoc Committee to Prevent Sexual Harassment in the Judicial Branch of Government, which is a unique opportunity for our staff to support the development of a statewide sexual harassment prevention policy for the judiciary.

Our staff successfully shepherded legislation and budget requests through the 2019 legislative session. One such budget



enhancement expanded our administrative role overseeing grants for legal services for victims of domestic violence to include the administration of grants for legal services to divert at-risk children into kinship care. The Presiding Justice often joined our weekly legislative calls, which kept everyone informed and provided a platform to voice ideas or concerns. With the Judicial Council's recommendation, the Griffin and Gwinnett Circuits were successful in persuading the legislature to grant them new judgeships.

The AOC staff also worked with partners in both the judicial and executive branches, and within the broader community, to provide a variety of services and products, including co-hosting the 2018 Child Welfare Summit, the Eliminating Barriers to Justice Conference, the Georgia Council of Court Administrators Conference, the Georgia State Bar, Media & Judiciary Conference, and the 2018 National Association of Court Management Conference. We assisted and livestreamed the Judicial Work at the Interface of Mental Health & Criminal Justice seminar, which was well attended. We continued to collect and analyze important participant data for the Council of Accountability Court Judges, the Child Support Commission, and Parental Accountability Courts. And finally, we hosted a Criminal Record Expungement Clinic in Albany, Georgia, with the faith community, the Dougherty Judicial Circuit Superior Court judges, and Law Library staff.

The JC/AOC facilitates many training events across the State. Below: Attendees gather for the 2018 Child Welfare Conference.

This year we enhanced the professional and ethical image of the judiciary through a number of creative events and resources. The AOC began a video series to introduce the public to the members of the Judicial Council, created a series of video stories featuring accountability court graduations around the state,



**DIRECTOR'S LETTER** *CONTINUED*

created pictorial essays of a day in the life of a Magistrate Court judge, and highlighted judges who celebrated Constitution Day (September 17th), Bill of Rights Day (December 15th), and Law Day (May 1st) in their communities. These written and visual stories were profiled in publications and on social media over the past year, and we thank the judges for patiently allowing us to film their activities. It is vitally important to show and tell the good work being done by Georgia's judges to deliver and improve justice in our state.

The AOC continues to have an international impact as our relationship with the United States Department of State and the Republic of Georgia's judiciary continued this year. Last fall, we welcomed a Mandela Washington Fellow from Ethiopia, which is a program sponsored by the Department of State.

As I write this message, we continue to watch the finishing touches on the new Judicial Building, and we cannot help but reflect on our loss this year of our beloved Justice Harris Hines, the former Chair of the Judicial Council and my boss. Like the new building, Justice Hines was a majestic leader who inspired others by his kind words and good works. He often remarked how hard work and sincerity could transform a life. Justice Hines continues to be missed, and I believe his spirit lives on in our service.

At the AOC's final staff meeting of the calendar year, we were fortunate to be serenaded by the Council of Municipal Court Judges' President Matthew McCord, who has an amazing voice. All our staff found it deeply moving. The daily work of this agency and my opportunity to lead it always fills me with purpose, but moments like that bring so much joy to ♪"let it shine, let it shine"♪. It is an honor to serve as the AOC Director. We can and we will improve our services even more in the years to come.



Above: The staff at the Administrative Office of the Courts provides support to every class of court in Georgia.



Judge Matthew McCord delivering his message at the December staff meeting, "... be the hardest on your own opinions, it will keep you humble."

*With appreciation and respect,*

Cynthia Clanton  
Director  
Administrative Office of the  
Courts



*Thanks to our partner organizations:*



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY



## *Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)*

### *Mission*

The Judicial Council and AOC lead collaboration on policy across Georgia's courts to improve the administration of justice in Georgia.

### *Vision*

To improve justice in all Georgia courts through collaboration, innovation, and information. As staff to the Judicial Council of Georgia, the Administrative Office of the Courts provides subject-matter expertise on policy, court innovation, legislation, and court administration to the state's trial and appellate courts. The AOC also furnishes a full range of information technology, budget, and financial services to the judicial branch.

### *Leadership*

Cynthia Clanton is Director of the AOC and the lead of the Director's Division, which is made up of Governmental and Trial Court Liaison led by Tracy Mason; Legal led by Jessica Farah; Human Resources led by Stephanie Hines; and Budget led by Maleia Wilson. The other Divisions of the AOC are: Communications, Children, Families and the Courts, led by Michelle Barclay; Financial Administration, led by Drew Townsend; Information Technology, led by Jorge Basto; and Judicial Services, led by Christopher Hansard.



## About the AOC

**DIRECTOR'S DIVISION** is comprised of Human Resources, Governmental and Trial Court Liaison, General Counsel, and Budget. The Director determines priorities, strategy, and direction of the agency and oversees its divisions.

**FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION** provides fiscal services for the Judicial Council, AOC, the state's courts, and other judicial branch organizations. Services provided include: payroll administration, budget preparation and management, audit compliance, invoicing, fixed asset management, and management of accounts receivable and payable. The Financial Administration staff also provides budget data to the Governor's Office and General Assembly on behalf of each Judicial Council budgetary unit.

**COMMUNICATIONS, CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE COURTS DIVISION** supports court system initiatives and partnerships that improve outcomes for Georgia's most vulnerable citizens – children, victims of domestic violence, and families seeking child support. It includes staff support to the Child Support Commission, the Committee on Justice for Children, the Judicial Council Standing Committee on Access to Justice and oversees grant management for victims of domestic violence. A combination of state, federal and private funds finance this work. The staff serves as a liaison to the Council of Accountability Court Judges and the

Georgia Commission on Family Violence. This Division also houses the Communications Department for the entire AOC.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION** develops, supports, and enhances automation solutions for all levels of court throughout the State of Georgia. The AOC IT Division offers consulting and research services, provisioning of hardware resources and compliance with legislative mandates as well as keeping up with industry fluctuations and develops, supports and enhances automation projects for all levels of court throughout the State of Georgia.

**JUDICIAL SERVICES DIVISION** is made up of two offices: Research and Data Analysis, and Court Professionals. Through these two offices, this division provides data-driven analysis of the state's trial courts and oversees the policy and regulatory matters of Georgia's court professionals.

In addition to staffing all the Judicial Council meetings, committees (ad hoc and standing) and connected committees, the AOC provides fiscal, legal, human resource, technology, legislative tracking, research, communication, and liaison services to multiple classes of courts.



244 WASHINGTON

## FY 2019 Highlights

While delivering welcoming remarks to the National Association for Court Management, the late Chief Justice Hines offered these words to live by “Be kind. Be kind. Be kind.”



*July 2018*

Scholarships were provided to Georgia juvenile court judges to attend the NCJFCJ annual conference.



Justice Britt Grant appointed to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

### JUDICIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Recommended two new judgeships: Griffin and Gwinnett Circuits

Records Retention Schedules were approved and forwarded to the State Records Committee.

Adopted new Judicial Council Legislation Policy

Chief Justice Hines presides over his final oral argument on Aug. 7.

A representative from the National Judicial Council of Nigeria visited.



Governor Deal appoints Justice Sarah Hawkins Warren to the Supreme Court.

*August 2018*

Georgia's Parental Accountability Court received national recognition from the National Child Support Enforcement Association.







On September 4, the investiture ceremony for Chief Justice Harold D. Melton and Presiding Justice David E. Nahmias is held at the State Capitol.



The Council of Accountability Court Judges holds their biggest annual training conference to date.

**September  
2018**

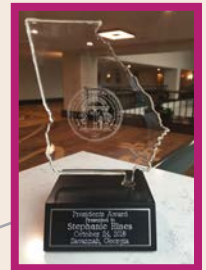


Trial judges from the Republic of Georgia visit Cobb County Superior Court.



Judge Christian Coomer is sworn-in to the Court of Appeals of Georgia.

JC/AOC staff-member Stephanie Chambliss Hines is the recipient of the GCCA President's Award.



**October  
2018**

#### AWARDS

- Judge James Bodiford received the Freedom of Information Award
- Judge James Whitfield received the Judge Aaron Cohn Award
- Judge Joseph Iannazzone received the Ogden Doremus/Kent Lawrence Award

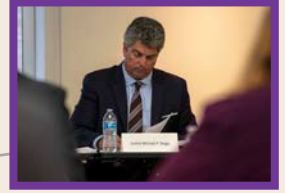
The annual "Eliminating Barriers to Justice" conference was held at Georgia State University with Chief Justice Harold D. Melton delivering the keynote address.



FY 2019 HIGHLIGHTS *CONTINUED*

The Commission on Interpreters meets to review the final draft of a guide designed to standardize the use of interpreters in Georgia's Courts.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Criminal Justice Reform meets to work on the Uniform Misdemeanor Citation and Rules.



The Supreme Court holds oral arguments in Albany.

**November 2018**

Judge Joseph H. Booth tells his inspiring story to a crowd at the Shepherd Spinal Center.



## JUDICIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Adopted the Statewide Minimum Standards and Rules for Electronic Filing and Uniform Transfer Rules, submitted to the Supreme Court for final approval. Adopted Model Uniform Superior Court Rule 36.16.

Adopted the Uniform Misdemeanor Citation and Rules arising from the Criminal Justice Reform Committee. Submitted to the Supreme Court for final approval.

The Committee on Justice for Children co-sponsors Georgia's largest child welfare conference to date.

**December 2018**



Judge Todd Markle is sworn into the Court of Appeals of Georgia.

Justice Carol Hunstein retires after 42 years of public service.

2018 Emergency Preparedness and Continuity of Judicial Operations Manual approved.



Judge M. Yvette Miller endowed the BLSA scholarship fund at Mercer School of Law.

Judge Kenneth Hodges swearing-in ceremony held at the Court of Appeals of Georgia.

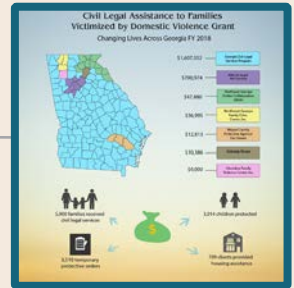


UGA announces plans for the "Be Kind Fund."

## January 2019

The Judicial Council's A2J Committee and the State Bar partner to award a grant to UGA Law School for their Access to Justice Initiative.

Many infographics are produced highlighting the work of the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts



Chief Justice Harold D. Melton delivers the State of Judiciary Address in the House Chamber on February 19.

A reception hosted by the Judicial Council and the State Bar of Georgia following the State of the Judiciary Address.

## February 2019

### JUDICIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Endorsed and adopted NCSC Model Administrative Protocol for administering interpreter and language programs in trial courts.

Chief Justice Melton announces the creation of the Ad Hoc Committee to Prevent Sexual Harassment in the Judicial Branch. Supreme Court Order was signed February 13.



**FY 2019 HIGHLIGHTS** *CONTINUED*



Before his tragic passing in August, Judge Stephen Goss delivers the Talarico Lecture at the UGA School of Law. The lecture is named after Judge Goss's former teacher, Susan Talarico.

**March  
2019**



The Waycross Judicial Circuit celebrates its 70th anniversary.

Many JC/AOC committees meet to continue their work, including BCR, JDEX, Technology, and JWAC.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

Laureen Kelly presented on the Southwest Georgia Legal Self-Help Center.

Approved amendments to the General and Civil Domestic Relations Filing and Disposition Forms.

New Board of Court Reporting Bylaws approved.

Georgia's Multi-Disciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect Institute presents at the national Court Improvement Initiative meeting in D.C.

**April  
2019**

April 2, Sine Die at the Capitol.



Commission on Child Support staff teams up with the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies to analyze laws on low income and parenting time deviation.





Justice Robert Benham and JC /AOC A2J staff attorney Tabitha Ponder attend the ABA Equal Justice Conference.

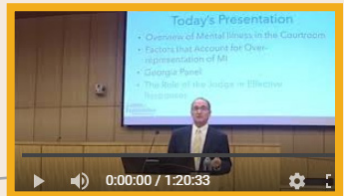
The Georgia Council of Court Administrators holds its spring meeting at Lake Lanier.



## May 2019



JC/AOC Division Director Christopher Hansard becomes a Fellow of the Institute of Court Management.



The "Judicial Work at the Interface of Mental Health & Criminal Justice" seminar takes place and is archived at our Youtube channel.



Juvenile Court Judge Bradley Boyd and Attorney Nathan Hayes receive the Lovett Awards.

FY2019 Georgia Courts Registrar by the numbers

## June 2019

Attorney Annissa Patton and DFCS case manager Jasmine Spratling receive the 2019 Chief Justice Hines Awards.



Chief Judge Christopher McFadden's investiture is held on June 25.

### Georgia Courts Registrar

Active Certified -

Court reporters: 1,044

Neutrals: 2,604

Interpreters: 161

Newly registered neutrals: 415

Neutral application assists: 555

Certified Court Reporter application assists: 107

Certified process servers application assists: 123

Certified interpreters application assists: 21

## Budget

### FY 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Amended FY 2019 Judicial Council budget was reduced by \$13,194. The legislature made the following adjustments.

Amended Fiscal Year 2019 Budget	Amount Funded
Adjustment to agency premiums for Department of Administrative Services	\$ 8,763.00
Adjustment to agency premiums for Department of Administrative Services Council of Accountability Court Judges reduction for personal services based on actual start dates	\$ (9,632.00)
Institute of Continuing Judicial Education reduction for personal services based on actual start dates	\$ (12,325.00)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ (13,194.00)</b>

The final Amended FY 2019 Judicial Council budget was \$15,832,325.

The Judicial Council was appropriated \$15,845,519 for Fiscal Year 2020 during the 2019 legislative session. The Judicial Council received \$636,885 in enhancements in FY 2020. The enhancements were as follows:

#### FISCAL YEAR 2020 ENHANCEMENT REQUESTS

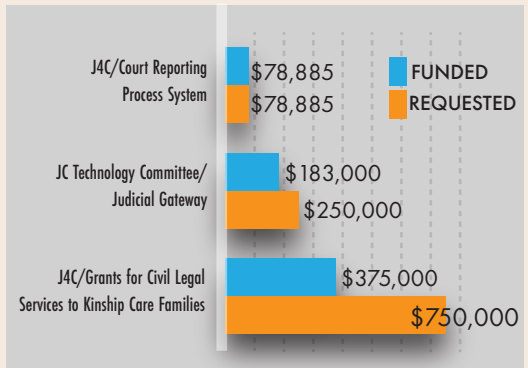
##### Civil Legal Services for Kinship Care

**Families:** This funding allows Georgia's nonprofit organizations who qualify for the funds through a competitive grant process to provide legal services for kinship caregivers and at-risk children who would otherwise be placed in foster care.

**Georgia Judicial Gateway:** This funding will be used for additional staff to provide help desk support, vendor contract management and troubleshooting for the

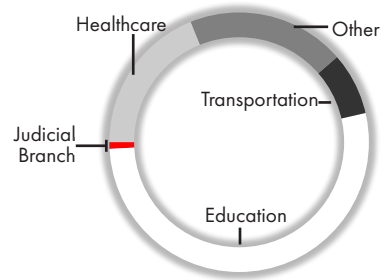
Judicial Gateway web portal. The Judicial Gateway is a web-based portal that facilitates access to numerous services provided by both public and private entities. The Portal enables citizens and court professionals to access vital judicial services throughout the state of Georgia.

**Court Process Reporting System:** The funding will be used for system enhancements and upgrades. The CPRS is a system that allows for real-time child welfare data sharing between the Executive and Judicial branch.



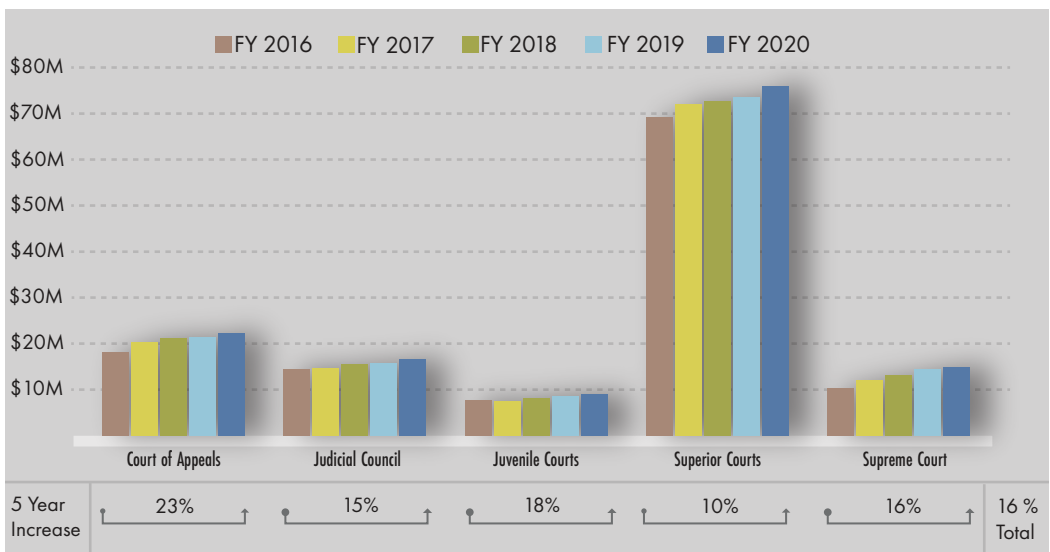
## FY 2020 JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

The **entire** Judicial Branch was appropriated \$138,781,075 for FY 2020 during the 2019 legislative session. This amount accounts for less than 1% of Georgia's annual operating budget.



## FISCAL YEAR 2016 - 2020 JUDICIAL BRANCH ANNUAL BUDGETS

AGENCY NAME	FY 2016		FY 2017		FY 2018		FY 2019		FY 2020
Court of Appeals	\$	18,160,948	\$	20,409,238	\$	21,191,223	\$	21,353,318	\$ 22,304,557
Judicial Council	\$	14,414,124	\$	14,690,266	\$	15,479,797	\$	15,832,325	\$ 16,571,037
Juvenile Courts	\$	7,606,988	\$	7,542,849	\$	8,241,981	\$	8,654,701	\$ 9,010,048
Superior Courts	\$	69,144,648	\$	72,018,465	\$	72,712,269	\$	73,613,912	\$ 75,909,534
Supreme Court	\$	10,359,796	\$	11,971,688	\$	13,106,746	\$	14,356,302	\$ 14,985,899
<b>TOTALS</b>	\$	119,686,504	\$	126,632,506	\$	130,732,016	\$	133,810,558	\$ 138,781,075



## FY 2019 Legislation

### **The Judicial Council recommended two judgeships in 2019:**

**HB 21:** Provides for an additional superior court judge in the Gwinnett Judicial Circuit. **Final passage.**

**HB 28:** Provides for an additional superior court judge in the Griffin Judicial Circuit. **Final passage.**

### **The Judicial Council supported the following legislation:**

**SB 38:** Proposed by the Judicial Council. Requires that new case numbers be given to post-judgment proceedings filed more than 30 days after the initial judgment or dismissal of a case and requiring computerized record-keeping of such post-judgment filings. **Final passage (as part of HB 239).**

**HB 92:** Proposed by the Council of Municipal Court Judges. Provides that up to six excess municipal court training hours shall, upon the request of the individual judge, be carried over and applied to the next calendar year. **Final passage.**

**HB 134:** Proposed by the superior courts of Fulton, Gwinnett, and Cobb counties. Strikes the provision that law library funds be directed to the general fund in counties with a population of 950,000 or more. **Final passage.**

**HB 257:** Proposed by the Council of Magistrate Court Judges. Provides for general substantive and technical changes to the magistrate court. **Final passage.**

**HB 381:** Proposed by the Georgia Commission on Child Support, provides for clean-up bill to OCGA § 19-6-15 to remove language specifying the use of imputed gross income based on a 40-hour workweek at minimum wage and to reflect changes in Federal law, rules, and regulations. **Final passage.**

**HB 492:** Proposed by the Council of Magistrate Court Judges. Provides that applications for the execution of a writ of possession be made within thirty days after its issuance, unless extended by the court for good cause. **Final passage.**



# The Judicial Council

## Judicial Council of Georgia

Authorized and Directed by Statute (Ga. L. 1945, 1973, 1983, 1984)

Created by Supreme Court Order (Amended May 2016)

All Judicial Council Members serve Ex-officio.

The Director of the AOC is the Secretary to the Judicial Council pursuant to its bylaws.

### *Chair*

**Chief Justice Harold D. Melton**, Supreme Court of Georgia

### *Vice-Chair*

**Presiding Justice David E. Nahmias**, Supreme Court of Georgia

### *Council Members:*

**Chief Judge Stephen L.A. Dillard**, Court of Appeals of Georgia

**Vice Chief Judge Christopher J. McFadden**, Court of Appeals of Georgia

**Judge Stephen D. Kelley**, Superior Court, Brunswick Judicial Circuit

**Judge Shawn E. LaGrua**, Superior Court, Atlanta Judicial Circuit

**Judge Jeffrey H. Kight**, Superior Court, Waycross Judicial Circuit

**Judge James G. Tunison, Jr.**, Superior Court, Southern Judicial Circuit

**Judge Arthur Lee Smith**, Superior Court, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit

**Judge Asha Jackson**, Superior Court, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit

**Judge Robert C.I. McBurney**, Superior Court, Atlanta Judicial Circuit

**Judge Geronda V. Carter**, Superior Court, Clayton Judicial Circuit,

**Judge Ralph Van Pelt, Jr.**, Superior Court, Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit

**Judge Donald W. Gillis**, Superior Court, Dublin Judicial Circuit

**Judge Bonnie Chessher Oliver**, Superior Court, Northeastern Judicial Circuit

**Judge Carl C. Brown**, Superior Court, Augusta Judicial Circuit

**Judge Nancy Bills**, State Court, Rockdale County

**Judge T. Russell McClelland**, State Court, Forsyth County

**Judge Philip Spivey**, Juvenile Court, Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit

**Judge Juliette Scales**, Juvenile Court, Atlanta Judicial Circuit

**Judge Sarah S. Harris**, Probate Court, Bibb County

**Judge Torri M. Hudson**, Probate Court, Treutlen County

**Judge Glenda Dowling**, Magistrate Court, Pierce County

**Judge Joyette Holmes**, Magistrate Court, Cobb County

**Judge Matthew McCord**, Municipal Court, City of Stockbridge

**Judge Dale R. “Bubba” Samuels**, Municipal Court, City of Monroe

**Brian D. “Buck” Rogers**, Attorney, Designee for President of State Bar of Georgia  
(Non-Voting Member)

Judicial Council members as of June 30, 2019



The Judicial Council in December, 2018



## JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA

**STANDING COMMITTEES****Access to Justice (A2J)**

Staff to Committee: Tabitha Ponder

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Robert Benham</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Co-Chair
<b>Charles J. Bethel</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Co-Chair
<b>Bill Adams</b>	Attorney	Statewide	State Bar of Georgia Representative
<b>MJ Blakely</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Gate City Bar Association
<b>Verda Colvin</b>	Superior Court Judge	Macon Circuit	Superior Court Representative
<b>Clarence Cuthpert</b>	Probate Court Judge	Rockdale County	Probate Court Representative
<b>Tony DelCampo</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Georgia Hispanic Bar Association Representative
<b>Sara L. Doyle</b>	Appeals Court Judge	Statewide	Court of Appeals Representative
<b>V. Sharon Edenfield, Esq</b>	Attorney	Statewide	State Bar, Young Lawyers Division
<b>Belinda Edwards</b>	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Superior Court Representative
<b>Jana Edmondson-Cooper</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Georgia Commission on Interpreters
<b>Terica Redfield Ganzy</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Georgia Association of Black Women Lawyers Representative
<b>Mike Jacobs</b>	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	Stonewall Bar Association Representative
<b>Tracy Johnson</b>	Executive Director	Office of Dispute Resolution	Georgia Commission on Interpreters
<b>Monica Khant, Esq.</b>	Attorney	Statewide	State Bar, Young Lawyers Division
<b>Ethan Pham Esq</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Morrow	Municipal Court Representative
<b>Brendon Shaw Rhodes</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Fulton County	Magistrate Court Representative
<b>Will Simmons</b>	District Court Administrator	6th Judicial Circuit	Clerk/Court Administrator Representative
<b>Jason B. Thompson</b>	State Court Judge	Fayette County	Fayette Bar, Young Lawyers Division
<b>Maureen Wood</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Rockdale Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>Heather Wright</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Georgia Commission on Interpreters
<b>Kristina Blum</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Gwinnett County	Advisory Member
<b>Latisha Dear Jackson*</b>	Superior Court Judge	DeKalb County	Advisory Member
<b>Karlise Grier</b>	Executive Director	CJCP	Advisory Member
<b>Vicky Ogawa Kimbrell</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Advisory Member
<b>Cassandra Kirk</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Fulton County	Advisory Member
<b>Mike Monahan</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Advisory Member

\*Municipal Court Representative until taking Superior Court Bench in January 2019



## Budget

Staff to Committee: Maleia Wilson

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>Michael P. Boggs</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Chair
<b>Charlie Bethel</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Vice-Chair
<b>Shawn LaGrua</b>	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Member, President-Elect, Council of Superior Court Judges
<b>Joseph C. Iannazzone</b>	State Court Judge	Gwinnett County	Member, President-Elect, Council of State Court Judges
<b>Juliette Scales</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Member, President-Elect, Council of Juvenile Court Judges
<b>T.J. Hudson</b>	Probate Court Judge	Treutlen County	Member, First Vice President, Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Joyette Holmes</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Cobb County	Member, First Vice President, Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Dale "Bubba" Samuels</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Monroe	Member, President-Elect of the Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>Maria Golick</b>	State Court Judge	Cobb County	Advisory Member, Budget Chair of Council of State Court Judges
<b>Mike Greene</b>	Probate Court Judge	Jones County	Advisory Member, Budget Chair of Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Ted N. Echols</b>	Municipal Court Judge	McDonough	Advisory Member, Budget Chair of Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>Cynthia Clanton</b>	Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, JC/AOC
<b>Shannon Weathers</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Superior Court Judges
<b>Bob Bray</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of State Court Judges
<b>Eric John</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Juvenile Court Judges
<b>Kevin Holder</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Sharon Reiss</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Magistrate Court Judges

### ▲ *Mission*

The Budget Committee handles the initial review of Judicial Council, AOC, and all subprogram budgets and recommends continuation funding and enhancement requests to the Judicial Council for approval.

### ◀ *Mission*

The Access to Justice Committee improves the public's trust by focusing on access and fairness through the elimination of systemic barriers in the judicial system related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, indigence, and language.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA**  
**STANDING COMMITTEES** *CONTINUED*

## Court Reporting Matters

Staff to Committee: John Botero

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>Christopher J. McFadden</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Chair
<b>Kathy S. Palmer</b>	Superior Court Judge	Middle Circuit	Superior Court Representative
<b>Verda M. Colvin</b>	Superior Court Judge	Macon Circuit	Superior Court Representative
<b>Jane Morrison</b>	State Court Judge	Fulton Circuit	State Court Representative
<b>John K. Edwards</b>	State Court Judge	Lowndes County	State Court Representative
<b>Robin W. Shearer</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Western Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>Linnie Darden, III</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Atlantic Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>Sarah S. Harris</b>	Probate Court Judge	Bibb County	Probate Court Representative
<b>W. Allen Wigington</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Pickens County	Magistrate Court Representative
<b>James Anderson, III</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Norcross	Municipal Court Representative

### ▲ **Mission**

The Court Reporting Matters Committee acts on behalf of the Judicial Council in handling appeals from decisions of the Board of Court Reporting; reviews and recommends changes to court reporting rules and fee schedules; approves Board of Court Reporting opinions; and recommends candidates for Board of Court Reporting membership.

### Education and Training

Staff to Committee: Stephanie Hines  
 Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
Brian Rickman	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Chair
A. Gregory Poole	Superior Court Judge	Cobb Circuit	Vice Chair
Nancy Bills	State Court Judge	Rockdale County	State Court Representative
Stacey K. Hydrick	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	State Court Representative
C. Gregory Price	Juvenile Court Judge	Rome Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
T.J. Hudson	Probate Court Judge	Treutlen County	Probate Court Representative
Mary Kathryn Moss	Magistrate Court Judge	Chatham County	Magistrate Court Representative
Margaret Washburn	Municipal Court Judge	City of Sugar Hill	Municipal Court Representative

#### ▲ Mission

The Standing Committee on Education and Training recommends best practices in training and education of trial court judges to the Judicial Council.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA**  
**STANDING COMMITTEES** *CONTINUED*

## Grants

Staff to Committee: Meisa Pace

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>William T. Boyett</b>	Superior Court Judge	Conasauga Circuit	Chair
<b>Melanie B. Cross</b>	Superior Court Judge	Tifton Circuit	Vice Chair
<b>Anne Barnes</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Court of Appeals Representative
<b>Jeannette L. Little</b>	State Court Judge	Troup County	State Court Representative
<b>William P. Bartles</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Flint Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>Melanie Bell</b>	Probate Court Judge	Twiggs County	Probate Court Representative
<b>Cassandra Kirk</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Fulton County	Magistrate Court Representative
<b>Graham McKinnon IV</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Braselton	Municipal Court Representative
<b>Verda M. Colvin</b>	Accountability Court Judge	Macon Circuit	Accountability Court Representative
<b>Linda Klein</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
<b>Jennifer Thomas</b>	Georgia Commission on Family Violence	Statewide	Advisory Member
<b>Jody Overcash</b>	District Court Administrator	7th Judicial District	Advisory Member

### ▲ Mission

The Standing Committee on Grants administers grant funds awarded to the Judicial Council or Administrative Office of the Courts, and reviews applications for those funds. This Committee is a successor to the Judicial Council Domestic Violence Committee.

### GRANTS COMMITTEE MILESTONES FOR 2019

#### The Committee awarded funds for:

- Providing 6,662 families with civil legal services
- Safeguarding 3,092 children  
Obtaining 3,557 Temporary Protective Orders
- Providing 742 clients with housing assistance
- Providing assistance with 354 Divorce Proceedings

## Judicial Workload Assessment

Staff to Committee: Christopher Hansard

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
David T. Emerson	Superior Court Judge	Douglas Circuit	Chair
Russell Smith	Superior Court Judge	Mountain Circuit	Vice Chair
Stephen Kelley	Superior Court Judge	Brunswick Circuit	1st District Representative
Denise Marshall	Superior Court Judge	Dougherty Circuit	2nd District Representative
Edward Lukemire	Superior Court Judge	Houston Circuit	3rd District Representative
J.P. Boulee	Superior Court Judge	Stone Mountain Circuit	4th District Representative
Robert McBurney	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	5th District Representative
Kathryn Powers	Superior Court Judge	Clayton Circuit	6th District Representative
William Boyett	Superior Court Judge	Conasauga Circuit	7th District Representative
Kathy Palmer	Superior Court Judge	Middle Circuit	8th District Representative
Bonnier Oliver	Superior Court Judge	Northeastern Circuit	9th District Representative
Sheryl B. Jolly	Superior Court Judge	Augusta Circuit	10th District Representative
Michelle L.H. Homier	State Court Judge	Cherokee County	State Court Representative
LeRoy Burke, III	Juvenile Court Judge	Eastern Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
Annie Doris Holder	Probate Court Judge	Calhoun County	Probate Court Representative
Robert Turner	Magistrate Court Judge	Houston County	Magistrate Court Representative
Garland Moore	Municipal Court Judge	City of Conyers	Municipal Court Representative
Will Simmons	District Court Administrator	6th District	Advisory Member
Bob Nadekow	District Court Administrator	8th District	Advisory Member
Connie Cheatham	Clerk of Superior Court	McDuffie County	Advisory Member
April Garrett	Clerk of Superior Court	Cook County	Advisory Member
Todd Ashley	Deputy Director, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council	Statewide	Advisory Member
Charles Bethel	Supreme Court	Statewide	Advisory Member

### ▲ Mission

The Judicial Workload Assessment Committee determines the methodology for analysis of data collected through annual trial court case counts. Additionally, based on staff studies, the Committee makes recommendations to the Judicial Council on the need for additional judicial personnel.



**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA**  
**STANDING COMMITTEES** *CONTINUED*
**Legislation**

Staff to Committee: Tracy Mason

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>David E. Nahmias</b>	Presiding Justice	Statewide	Chair
<b>Stephen L. A. Dillard</b>	Chief Judge	Statewide	Vice Chair
<b>Stephen Kelley</b>	Superior Court Judge	Brunswick Circuit	Member, President of the Council of Superior Court Judges
<b>Nancy Bills</b>	State Court Judge	Rockdale County	Member, President of the Council of State Court Judges
<b>Philip S. Spivey</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Ocmulgee Circuit	Member, President of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges
<b>Sarah Harris</b>	Probate Court Judge	Bibb County	Member, President of the Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Glenda Dowling</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Pierce County	Member, President of the Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Matthew McCord</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Stockbridge	Member, President of the Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>William Hamrick</b>	Superior Court Judge	Coweta Circuit	Advisory Member, Legislative Chair of Council of Superior Court Judges
<b>Wesley Tailor</b>	State Court Judge	Fulton County	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of State Court Judges
<b>Al Wong</b>	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of State Court Judges
<b>Bradley Boyd</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Fulton County	Advisory Member, Legislative Chair of Council of Juvenile Court Judges
<b>Rooney Bowen</b>	Probate Court Judge	Dooly County	Advisory Member, Legislative Chair of Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Alice Padgett</b>	Probate Court Judge	Columbia County	Advisory Member, Legislative Chair of Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Connie Holt</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Morgan County	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Betsey Kidwell</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Heard County	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Charles Barrett</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Duluth	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>Tommy Bobbitt</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Dublin	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>Cynthia Clanton</b>	Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, JC/AOC
<b>Shannon Weathers</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Superior Court Judges
<b>Bob Bray</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of State Court Judges
<b>Eric John</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Juvenile Court Judges
<b>Kevin Holder</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Sharon Reiss</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Brian “Buck” Rogers</b>	President Designee	Statewide	Advisory Member, State Bar of Georgia

## Strategic Plan

Staff to Committee: Jessica Farah

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Includes subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness and Continuity of Judicial Operations

Name	Role	Location	Position
W. Allen Wigington	Magistrate Court Judge	Pickens County	Chair
Sara L. Doyle	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Co-Chair
Horace J. Johnson, Jr.	Superior Court Judge	Alcovy Circuit	Member
H. Gregory Fowler	State Court Judge	Chatham County	Member
James R. Whitfield	Senior Juvenile Court Judge	Statewide	Member
Chase Daughtrey	Probate Court Judge	Cook County	Member
James M. Anderson III	Municipal Court Judge	Norcross	Member
Keith R. Blackwell	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Advisory Member
Michael P. Boggs	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Advisory Member

### ▲ Mission

The mission of the Strategic Plan Standing Committee is to create and implement a Judicial Council strategic plan. The committee implements the initiatives of the strategic plan through the staff of the AOC. Work under the FY17-19 strategic plan was completed in July 2019.

### ◀ Mission

The Legislation Committee reviews legislation affecting the judicial branch and recommends policy positions to the Judicial Council where appropriate.

### Strategic Plan Highlights (FY17-19)

- Developed the Emergency Preparedness and Continuity of Judicial Operations Manual to assist with business continuity and succession planning.
- Conducted Twitter Town Halls and began publishing the Georgia Courts Journal electronically to promote the use of technology as an effective communication tool.
- Identified and promoted opportunities for judges to interact with communities via Law Day coloring contests and Day on the Bench events to enhance the professional and ethical image of the judiciary in the community.
- Continued to focus on communications with the executive and legislative branches and stakeholders to encourage ongoing communications and initiatives of mutual interest.

The Strategic Plan Committee is established with three year terms. The terms of committee members listed above concluded at the end of FY19.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA**  
**STANDING COMMITTEES** *CONTINUED*

## Technology

Staff to Committee: Kristy King

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
Harold D. Melton	Chief Justice	Statewide	Chair
David T. Emerson	Superior Court Judge	Douglas Circuit	Vice Chair
Ken Shigley	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
Jeff Kuester	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
Jorge Basto	Administrative Office of the Courts	Fulton County	AOC Representative
Sheila Studdard	Clerk of Superior Court	Fayette County	Council of Superior Court Clerks Representative
Cindy Mason	Clerk of Superior Court	Columbia County	Clerks' Cooperative Authority Representative
Rebecca Keaton	Clerk of Superior Court	Cobb County	Clerks' Cooperative Authority Representative
Carla McMillian	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Court of Appeals Representative
Stephen Kelley	Superior Court Judge	Brunswick Circuit	Superior Court Judge Representative
Diane Bessen	State Court Judge	Fulton County	State Court Judge Representative
Bobby Simmons	Juvenile Court Judge	Clayton Circuit	Juvenile Court Judge Representative
Patty Laine	Probate Court Judge	Cherokee County	Probate Court Judge Representative
James Altman	Magistrate Court Judge	Fulton County	Magistrate Court Judge Representative
Margaret Washburn	Municipal Court Judge	City of Sugar Hill	Municipal Court Judge Representative
T.J. Bement	District Court Administrator	10th District	Council of Court Administrators Representative
Jesse Stone	State Senator	23rd District	Senate Representative
Vacant	State Representative		House Representative
Vacant	Governor's Office		Governor's Representative
Dennis Dunn	Attorney General's Office	Fulton County	Attorney General's Representative

### **Mission** ▲

The Standing Committee on Technology provides guidance and oversight for the Judicial Council's technology initiatives.

### **Mission** ►

The Judicial Council Ad Hoc Committee on Criminal Justice Reform was established in August 2018 for the purposes of complying with the directives within SB 407 (2018) relative to the duties of the Judicial Council, and to provide statewide judicial leadership regarding previous criminal justice policies enacted upon the recommendations made by the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform from 2011 through 2018.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA  
*AD HOC COMMITTEES*

## Criminal Justice Reform

Staff to Committee: Tracy Mason

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws. Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
Michael P. Boggs	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Chair
Amanda Mercier	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Member
Paige Reese Whitaker	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Member
Ben Studdard	Superior Court Judge	Henry County	Member
Shondeana Crews Morris	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	Member
Juliette Wiltshire Scales	Juvenile Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Member
Rooney Bowen	Probate Court Judge	Dooly County	Member
W. Allen Wigington	Magistrate Court Judge	Pickens County	Member
Matthew McCord	Municipal Court Judge	Stockbridge	Member
LaTisha Dear Jackson	Municipal Court Judge	Stone Mountain	Member
Brenda S. Weaver	Superior Court Judge	Appalachian Circuit	Member
Dawn Jones	Attorney	State Bar of Georgia	Member
Joyce Gist Lewis	Attorney	Atlanta	Member
Tracy "T.J." BeMent	District Court Administrator	Tenth Judicial District	Member
Carey Miller	Executive Counsel	Office of the Governor	Member
Blake Tillery	State Senator	District 19	Member
Chuck Efstration	State Representative	District 104	Member
Cynthia Clanton	Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, IC/AOC
Shannon Weathers	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Superior Court Judges
Bob Bray	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of State Court Judges
Eric John	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Juvenile Court Judges
Kevin Holder	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Probate Court Judges
Sharon Reiss	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Magistrate Court Judges
Maryellen Simmons	Public Defender	Coweta Circuit	Advisory Member, Georgia Public Defender Council
Robert W. Smith	General Counsel	Statewide	Advisory Member, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council
Wayne Purdom	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	Advisory Member

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA**  
**AD HOC COMMITTEES** *CONTINUED*
**Committee to Prevent Sexual Harassment in the Judicial Branch of Government**

Staff to Committee: Stephanie Hines

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws. Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>Sarah Hawkins Warren</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Chair
<b>Carla McMillan</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Court of Appeals Representative
<b>Horace J. Johnson</b>	Superior Court Judge	Alcovy Circuit	Superior Court Representative
<b>Dax E. Lopez</b>	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	State Court Representative
<b>Maureen E. Wood</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Rockdale Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>T.J. Hudson</b>	Probate Court Judge	Treutlen County	Probate Court Representative
<b>Joyette Holmes</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Cobb County	Magistrate Court Representative
<b>Matthew McCord</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Stockbridge	Municipal Court Representative
<b>Edwin Bell</b>	Court Administrator	DeKalb County	Advisory Member
<b>Jamala McFadden</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Advisory Member
<b>Shelley Seinberg</b>	Attorney	Office of the Attorney General	Advisory Member
<b>Rebecca Sullivan</b>	General Counsel	DOAS	Advisory Member

**▲ Mission**

The Judicial Council Ad Hoc Committee to Prevent Sexual Harassment in the Judicial Branch of Government was established to research, examine, and evaluate best practices and encourage each class of court, and corresponding court councils, to establish and maintain sexual harassment policies.

Chief Justice Harold D. Melton signed the order creating the Committee on February 13, 2018. Justice Sarah Hawkins Warren serves as chair.





Connected  
Boards,  
Committees,  
Commissions,  
and Councils

**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS****Council of Accountability Court Judges**

Taylor Jones, Executive Director  
gaaccountabilitycourts.org

**Leadership**

Name	Role	Location	Position
Brenda Weaver	Superior Court Judge	Appalachian Circuit	Chair
Kathlene F. Gosselin	Superior Court Judge	Northeastern Circuit	Vice-Chair
Jason Deal	Superior Court Judge	Northeastern Circuit	Immediate Past President
Jeffrey S. Bagley	Superior Court Judge	Bell-Forsyth Circuit	Executive Committee member
James F. Bass Jr.	Superior Court Judge	Eastern Circuit	Executive Committee member
Mary Staley Clark	Superior Court Judge	Cobb Circuit	Executive Committee member
Verda M. Colvin	Superior Court Judge	Macon Circuit	Executive Committee member
Reuben M. Green	Superior Court Judge	Cobb Circuit	Executive Committee member
T. Russell McClelland	State Court Judge	Forsyth County	Executive Committee member
D. Scott Smith	Superior Court Judge	Cherokee Circuit	Executive Committee member
Alison W. Toller	Juvenile Court Judge	Northeastern	Executive Committee member

**Mission**

To improve the quality, accessibility, and administration of Accountability Courts. The CACJ strives to set goals that include achievable expectations; make efficient use of resources that adhere to evidence-based research and leading practices, work to enhance public safety, and that are transparent to all.

**Highlights**

- Implemented seven new accountability courts in FY19, bringing the total number of certified/funded courts up to 163.
- Piloted a new blended learning and strategic action planning protocol to complement the existing peer review process.



Above, top: the Executive Committee on stage with Governor Deal at the 2018 Training Conference.  
Bottom: recipients of the 2018 Star Award.

- Hosted our second Mental Health Court Start-up Training. This training is designed for the implementation of Mental Health Court programs to provide the new team members foundational training to operate new programs.
- The Carl Vinson Institute released the CACJ Processes and Outcomes report. The report outlines the positive impacts of accountability courts to participants and their communities. Studies in the report showed:
  - » Those that graduate do far better than those that are terminated;
  - » Recidivism rates of offenders that have just some participation in an accountability court program are lower compared to similarly-situated offenders who did not participate in a program; and
  - » Taken together these studies show that any amount of participation in an accountability court, regardless of completions, leads to reduced recidivism, which is consistent with national findings.
- Hosted 22 accountability court teams for an annual operational tune-up training. These trainings revisit team roles, selecting the right participants, evidenced-based treatment, and legal issues.
- The council examined the previous year's (FY 2018) data. Some of the positive impacts found were:
  - » 99 families reunited due to accountability courts;
  - » 93 drug free babies born to female participants, who otherwise would have likely been born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, thereby saving approximately \$5,877,600;
  - » In FY 2019, accountability courts served 29 percent more participants than in FY 2018, expanding the potential benefits of these courts to Georgia and its citizens.

An excerpt from the Processes and Outcomes report shows the many benefits of Accountability Courts.

Accountability courts help lower recidivism and help people return to productive lives, supporting their families and paying taxes.

Accountability courts cost approximately \$5,000 less per participant compared to incarceration.

The CACJ Annual Conference brings together judges, court professionals, treatment providers, law enforcement, and other stakeholders for extensive training. The September 2018 conference was the largest yet with approximately 1,200 attendees.

"For 25 years, I came to this courthouse because I was in trouble or in jail. In the past two years, it has been because you all wanted to help me. I have been on probation or locked up for 30 years. I can't tell you how grateful I am for you all."



**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS****Commission on Dispute Resolution**

Tracy Johnson, Executive Director; Karlie Sahs, Program Manager  
godr.org

***Leadership*****Chairperson**

**Judge Jane C. Barwick**

**Commission Members**

**Justice Keith R. Blackwell**

**Justice Britt C. Grant**

**Judge Amanda H. Mercier**

**Judge Charles E. Auslander, III**

**Emily S. Bair, Esq.**

**Raymond G. Chadwick, Jr., Esq.**

**Mary Donovan, Esq.**

**Judge C. Andrew Fuller**

**Herbert H. (Hal) Gray, III, Esq.**

**Melissa C. Heard, M.S.S.W.**

**Timothy Hedeem, Ph.D.**

**Nicole Hull, Esq.**

**Judge M. Cindy Morris**

**Patrick T. O'Connor, Esq.**

**Rep. Jay Powell, Esq.**

**Edith B. Primm, Esq.**

**Judge Renata Turner**

**Randall Weiland**

***Mission***

The Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution (GCDR) is a policy-making body appointed by the Supreme Court of Georgia charged with leading a statewide system of court alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs.

***Highlights***

- There are currently 41 court ADR programs in Georgia offering high-quality, cost-effective alternatives to traditional litigation. These services cover 93 of the 159 counties and utilize neutrals registered through the Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution in a range of categories that include general civil mediation, domestic relations mediation, specialized domestic violence, arbitration, early neutral evaluation, juvenile dependency and juvenile delinquency. As of June 30, 2019, there were 2,521 registered neutrals. The partnership between neutrals, programs, and the Commission creates a comprehensive network that benefits taxpayers, litigants, attorneys, judges, and courts.

- 25<sup>th</sup> Annual ADR Institute and 2018 Neutrals' Conference: The Institute was held Friday, December 7, 2018, at the State Bar of Georgia. There were 272 attendees in total. The keynote speaker was Professor Andrea Kupfer Schneider, Director of the Dispute Resolution Program at Marquette University Law School, with her presentation "What's Sex Got to do with it? Effective Negotiation Skills for All". Here, GCDR and the Dispute Resolution Section of the State Bar of Georgia also presented the 2018 Chief Justice Harold G. Clarke Award to Raye Rawls, Esq. in



After 6 years as the chair of the Commission, Judge Charles Auslander passed the gavel to Judge Jane Barwick in February 2019.

recognition of her outstanding contributions to the field of alternative dispute resolution in Georgia.

- **New Rules for Mediating Cases with Domestic Violence:** In a joint effort by GCDR and the Georgia Commission on Family Violence to update the mediation rules concerning screening practices for cases in which intimate partner violence/abuse (domestic violence) is present, the GCDR approved new Rules for Mediating Cases with Domestic Violence, effective January 1, 2021.
- **Changes in GCDR Leadership:** The Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution has a new chair, after long-serving Athens-Clarke County State Court Judge Charles E. Auslander stepped down. Judge Auslander was appointed to the Commission in 2006 and led as chair since 2012. Judge Auslander—a UGA “Double Dawg”—passed the gavel to Chair-Elect Superior Court of Fulton County Judge Jane C. Barwick, in a ceremony during a February 13 Commission meeting at the University of Georgia’s Law School on his home turf: Athens. The Commission also recognized outgoing members Ms. Stefani R. Lacour, Esq. and Ms. Vjolca Prroni Young, LL.M., and Justice Keith R. Blackwell ushered in the Commission’s new members, as appointed by the Supreme Court: Fulton County Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Renata Turner, Ms. Nicole W. Hull, Esq., and Mr. Randall Weiland. The Supreme Court has also approved the addition of a new seat on the Commission to ensure the permanent designation of a ADR court program director.

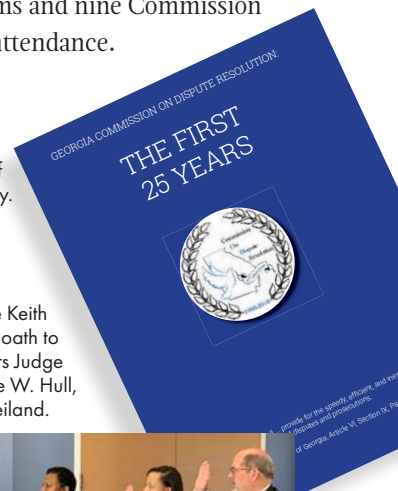
- **25th Anniversary:** The Supreme Court Order adopting the ADR Rules, including the creation of GCDR and GODR, was filed on January 27, 1993. This order established a new precedent for handling conflict in Georgia, “providing for the speedy, efficient, and inexpensive resolution of disputes and prosecutions.” To commemorate the special occasion, GCDR:

- » Commissioned a Special Anniversary seal;
- » Published and distributed “The First 25 years” a History of the Commission;
- » Hosted seven (7) continuing education events around the state; and
- » Offered five (5) scholarships for 2018 registration renewal fees.

- **2018 ADR Program Directors Conference:** The conference was held September 19-21, in Athens. In all, 25 representatives from court ADR programs and nine Commission Members were in attendance.

“The First 25 Years” is a thorough compendium of the Commission’s history.

Below, left to right: Justice Keith Blackwell administers the oath to new Commission members Judge Renata Turner, Ms. Nicole W. Hull, Esq., and Mr. Randall Weiland.





**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS****Committee on Justice for Children**

Authorized and Created by the Supreme Court

Staff to the Committee: Jerry Bruce

[georgiacourts.gov/j4c/](http://georgiacourts.gov/j4c/)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>David E. Nahmias</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Chair
<b>Kim Anderson</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	Member
<b>Mandi Ballinger</b>	State Representative	Bartow County	Member
<b>Michael Boggs</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Member
<b>W. Bradley Bryant</b>	Georgia Student Finance Commission	Fulton County	Member
<b>Christopher Carr</b>	Attorney General	Statewide	Member
<b>Lindsay Caulfield</b>	Grady Health System	Fulton County	Member
<b>Stephen Louis A. Dillard</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Member
<b>Darice Good</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	Member
<b>Chuck Efstration</b>	State Representative	Gwinnett County	Member
<b>Britt Hammond</b>	Superior Court Judge	Toombs Circuit	Member
<b>Jennifer King</b>	Georgia CASA	Fulton County	Member
<b>Amanda Heath</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Augusta Circuit	Member
<b>Dr. Sharon L. Hill</b>	Georgia State University	Fulton County	Member
<b>Glen Jackson</b>	Co-Founder, Jackson Spalding	Fulton County	Member
<b>Michael Key</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Coweta Circuit	Member
<b>Debra Nesbit</b>	Association of County Commissioners	Fulton County	Member
<b>Nealie McCormick</b>	Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns	Mitchell County	Member
<b>Gary McGiboney</b>	Georgia Department of Education	Fulton County	Member
<b>Avery Niles</b>	Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice	Statewide	Member
<b>Mary Margaret Oliver</b>	State Representative	DeKalb County	Member
<b>Rachel Davidson</b>	Georgia Office of the Child Advocate	Statewide	Member
<b>Lisa Jones</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Southwestern Circuit	Member
<b>Tom Rawlings</b>	Georgia Division of Family and Children Services	Statewide	Member
<b>Juliette Scales</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Member
<b>Phil Spivey</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Ocmulgee Circuit	Member
<b>Catherine Vandenberg</b>	Atlanta Legal Aid	Fulton County	Member
<b>Talley Wells</b>	Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice	Statewide	Member
<b>Wendell Willard</b>	State Representative	Fulton County	Member
<b>Robert Wright</b>	Bishop, Episcopal Diocese, Atlanta	Fulton County	Member
<b>Stephanie Zaic</b>	Attorney	Towns County	Member

### ***Mission:***

Striving to improve justice for children and families within the child welfare legal system.

### ***Highlights:***

- Continued to expand our two-day Multi-Disciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect Institute (MD-CANI) training to reach over 1300 stakeholders, from 50 different Georgia counties. This is a two-day training that covers best practices during the entirety of a dependency case from intake through permanency.
- Co-sponsoring the third annual Child Welfare Legal Summit in November 2019, in partnership with the Office of the Child Advocate and the Division of Family and Children Services, with an anticipated 800 attendees. Honorable Scott Bernstein of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals will be the keynote speaker.
- Secured \$375,000 in funding from the legislature to support legal services for kinship caregivers, provided by legal service providers across the state. These services will likely prevent more children from entering foster care.
- Continued managing a three-year Quality Improvement federal grant in Douglas County, which serves pregnant women, or new mothers, who are substance exposed.

By providing holistic services to these women, the children born to these mothers avoid being taken into care.

- Continued to support the Cold Case Project which reviews over 300 long-term foster care cases each year, to help these children overcome barriers and achieve permanency.
- Continue to support the 57 Georgia Child Welfare Law Specialists with bi-annual trainings and scholarships.
- Provided stakeholder educational opportunities at two Court Improvement Initiative meetings for approximately 100 stakeholders attending from 17 jurisdictions.
- Continued work to enhance the Court Process Reporting System (CPRS) to meet the growing needs of its user base, including its largest users, CASAs and judges.
- Promoted awareness of the importance of child welfare work by awarding the annual Hines Award to one child welfare attorney and one child welfare case manager. The awards were presented by Presiding Justice Nahmias at the Georgia State Bar meeting in Orlando.

The Committee and staff facilitate many trainings across Georgia on matters of child welfare. Below, L to R: Judge Michael Key presents at a Multi-disciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect Institute, Presiding Justice Nahmias keynotes the 2018 Child Welfare Conference, Jerry Bruce hosts a discussion about juvenile alternative dispute resolution issues.



**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS****Georgia Commission on Child Support**

Staff to the Commission: Elaine Johnson

Created and authorized by O.C.G.A. § 19-6-50, 53

georgiacourts.gov/csc/

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>R. Michael Key</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Coweta Circuit	Chair
<b>Timothy Barr</b>	State Representative	District 103	House of Representatives Member 1
<b>Vacant</b>	State Representative	Vacant	House of Representatives Member 1
<b>Anne Elizabeth Barnes</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Member
<b>Charles Clay</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	Member
<b>Kathleen Connell</b>	Attorney	Cobb County	Member
<b>Chuck Hufstetler</b>	State Senator	District 52	State Senate Member 1
<b>Emanuel Jones</b>	State Senator	District 10	State Senate Member 2
<b>Lisa C. Jones</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Southwestern Circuit	Member
<b>Shawn LaGrua</b>	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Member
<b>Vacant</b>	Superior Court Judge	Vacant	Member
<b>Emory Palmer</b>	Superior Court Judge	Coweta Circuit	Member
<b>Ronald "Rick" Smith</b>		Cobb County	Member
<b>Dr. Roger Tutterow</b>	Economist	Kennesaw State University	Member
<b>Wendy Williamson</b>	Attorney	Chatham County	Member

***Mission***

The Child Support Commission was created by statute for the purpose of studying and collecting information and data relating to awards of child support and to create and revise the child support obligation table. The Commission conducts comprehensive reviews of the child support guidelines, economic conditions, and all matters relevant to maintaining effective and efficient child support guidelines that will serve the best interest of Georgia's children and considers the changing dynamics of family life.

The Commission trains judges, attorneys, mediators, and the public around the state; develops and maintains the state's child support calculator and worksheets; maintains websites for the Child Support Commission and for Georgia's Income Deduction Order process; and proposes legislation when it deems an amendment to the guidelines is necessary.

## Highlights

The Child Support Commission sponsored legislation in 2019 adding an exclusion to gross income for adoption assistance; removing language that allowed the use of minimum wage and 40 hour work weeks as a standard for imputing income, pursuant to a federal requirement; added “or the jury” in appropriate locations; and cleaned up grammar and punctuation throughout the statute, O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15. The Child Support Commission established two study committees in 2019 to study the Low Income Deviation and the Parenting Time Deviation.

Staff continued training around the state at 24 locations on the child support guidelines, child support online calculator, and Georgia’s Income Deduction Order process. We also support the Department of Human Services, Division of Child Support Services’ Parental Accountability Courts by providing a database and training for court coordinators to gather information on participants for evaluation purposes. This year, information from the database will be used to create a second research report on the effectiveness and continued growth of those courts.



When scheduling training seminars, the commission staff emphasizes going to every part of the State. The pictures above are from training events in (top to bottom) Augusta-Richmond, Tift, and Hall Counties.

**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS****Georgia Commission on Interpreters**

Staff to the Commission: John Botero

Authorized and Created by the Supreme Court

[georgiacourts.gov/coi/](http://georgiacourts.gov/coi/)

Name	Role	Location	Position
Keith R. Blackwell	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Co-Chair
Sarah Warren	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Co-Chair
Clyde Reese	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Vice Chair
Maria Batres Esq.	Attorney	Cobb County	State Bar Representative
Stephen Nevels	Public	Jackson County	Non-Attorney Representative
María Ceballos-Wallis	Public	DeKalb County	Public
Christopher Paul	Attorney	Bartow County	State Bar Representative
Jana Edmondson-Cooper	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
Dax E. López	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	State Court Representative
Pilar Archila	Public	Laurens County	Non-Attorney Representative
Meng Lim	Superior Court Judge	Tallapoosa Circuit	Superior Court Representative
Robert Waller, III	Juvenile Court Judge	Gwinnett Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
Ruth R. McMullin	Magistrate Court Judge	Gwinnett Circuit	Magistrate Court Representative
Mazi Mazloom	Municipal Court Judge	City of Marietta	Municipal Court Representative
Bert Reeves	State Representative	Cobb County	General Assembly Representative
Detria Carter Powell	Probate Court Judge	Lowndes County	Probate Court Representative

**Mission**

To provide interpreter licensing, regulatory, and educational services for Georgia courts so they can ensure the rights of non-English speaking persons.



## Highlights

- The administrative staff for the Commission on Interpreters increased the number of training and testing opportunities for candidate interpreters.
- Staff for the Commission on Interpreters Increased trainings for members of the bench, members of the bar, and court administrators to instruct them on the importance of using professional interpreters for parties who need an interpreter to ensure equal access to justice.
- The Commission on Interpreters has been working on revising the current rules and regulations to provide more comprehensive guidance to court professionals, the courts and, other stakeholders.

Orientation Workshop Instructors Philippe Du Moulin, M. Catherine McCabe, and COI staff Bianca Bennett presenting to candidate members.



COI staff member John Botero serving as a mock judge during the orientation workshop, all attendees play different scenarios to learn about real-life ethics.



**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS****Board of Court Reporting**

Staff to the Board: John Botero

Authorized and Created by Statute.

Reports to the Judicial Council's Court Reporting Matters Standing Committee

[georgiacourts.gov/bcr/](http://georgiacourts.gov/bcr/)

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>John Kent Edwards, Jr.</b>	State Court Judge	Lowndes County	Chair
<b>John K. Larkins, Jr.</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	Vice-Chair
<b>Brenda Trammell</b>	Superior Court Judge	Ocmulgee Circuit	Board Member
<b>Frederic Bold, Jr.</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	Board Member
<b>Daniel Gershwin</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Machine Shorthand	Fulton County	Board Member
<b>Kevin King</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Machine Shorthand	Fulton County	Board Member
<b>Randi Strumlauf</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Voice Writer	Gwinnett County	Board Member
<b>Christopher Paul Twyman</b>	Attorney	Floyd County	Board Member
<b>Cheryl Gilliam</b>	Official Reporter	Fulton County	Board Member
<b>Pavon Bohanan</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Voice Writer	Hall County	Board Member
<b>Cynthia H. Clanton</b>	Director, JC/AOC	Fulton County	Board Secretary

**Mission**

The Georgia General Assembly established the Board of Court Reporting of the Judicial Council of Georgia to ensure the integrity and competency of the court reporting practice. The Board of Court Reporting establishes and enforces standards that govern court reporters and provides a forum for an exchange of ideas and educational services.

**Highlights**

- Increased efficiency of processing complaints against court reporters.
- Provided clarification on court reporting issues via Advisory Opinions.
- Update of Rules and Regulations and Bylaws of the Board.



Top: Swearing-in of members Christopher Twyman and Pavon Bohanan. Judge Edwards in center.  
Bottom: BCR Chair Judge John Edwards with Board Staff John Botero, Amber Richardson, Alison Lerner, Bianca Bennett and Angela Choyce

# Reports from Appellate Courts and Trial Courts Councils

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS****Supreme Court of Georgia**

gasupreme.us

In 2019, the Supreme Court of Georgia took a historic step – across the street and into a new building. At the end of the year, the state’s highest court and the Court of Appeals moved into the new Nathan Deal Judicial Center – the first State building in Georgia history dedicated solely to the judiciary, the third branch of government. As Chief Justice Harold D. Melton said in his first State of the Judiciary address to the Georgia Legislature: “This building reflects what the citizens of this great State expect the Justices and Judges to accomplish each day when we come to work. It reflects the dignity and majesty of the rule of law we are called upon to uphold on a daily basis.”

With the historic move, the Supreme Court kept costs down by taking with it all existing furniture and furnishings that remained sturdy and appropriate. It also purchased some key furnishings that were designed and constructed by Georgia prison inmates through Georgia Correctional Industries and the Georgia Department of Corrections. The purchase of the furniture allowed the Supreme Court to support the rehabilitation of offenders while obtaining stately furniture at a cost effective price.

The regeneration and vitality of the new judicial building reflect the makeup of the Supreme Court itself. By the end of 2020, six of our nine Justices will have taken office only within the last few years. The majority of today’s Justices served previously on the Court of Appeals, Georgia’s intermediate appellate court.

The Justices reflect a diversity of backgrounds:

**CHIEF JUSTICE MELTON** was Executive Counsel to former Governor Sonny Perdue (later U.S. Secretary of Agriculture);

**PRESIDING JUSTICE DAVID E. NAHMIA** was United States Attorney in Atlanta;

**JUSTICE ROBERT BENHAM** was the first African-American appointed to the state’s highest court in more than 140 years;

**JUSTICE KEITH BLACKWELL** graduated Number 1 in his class at the University of Georgia law school and was top of his class at UGA’s undergraduate school;

**JUSTICE MICHAEL P. BOGGS** and

**JUSTICE CHARLES J. BETHEL** both served in the Georgia Legislature;

**JUSTICE NELS S.D. PETERSON** was Georgia’s first Solicitor General;

**JUSTICE SARAH H. WARREN** also served as Solicitor General and argued before the United States Supreme Court; and

**JUSTICE JOHN J. ELLINGTON** has served on every level of court in the state of Georgia.

All the new Justices quickly settled into their jobs and took on a caseload that grew 8 percent between January-to-September in 2018 and January-to-September in 2019. During that time, filings in direct appeals grew 11 percent; filings in habeas petitions grew 16 percent. Murders, which are by far the largest category of cases that come to the Court, grew 34 percent.



The Nathan Deal Judicial Center as of October 2019.



**The 2019 Supreme Court of Georgia**

**Standing, L to R:** Justice Charles J. Bethel, Justice Nels S.D. Peterson, Justice Michael P. Boggs, Justice Sarah Hawkins Warren, Justice John J. Ellington.

**Seated, L to R:** Justice Keith R. Blackwell, Presiding Justice David E. Nahmias, Chief Justice Harold D. Melton, Justice Robert Benham.

People are often surprised to learn that in addition to their judicial duties, the Justices have a wide range of responsibilities concerning the regulation and oversight of the state's legal and judicial professions. Chief Justice Melton chairs Georgia's Judicial Council, which is the policy-making body for Georgia's judiciary and is comprised of representatives from every class of court. He appointed in 2019 a Committee to Prevent Sexual Harassment in the Judicial Branch of Government, which continues to make progress in developing policies to prevent sex harassment both for the Supreme Court and the judiciary statewide. Justice Sarah H. Warren chairs the Committee. Every Justice has oversight or liaison responsibilities with

various organizations, many of which are listed in the table at the bottom of this page.

In addition, the Supreme Court reviews and approves all rules published by Georgia courts and judicial regulatory entities. In 2019, the Court amended its own rules governing oral arguments. Effective Sept. 9, 2019, the new rules allow law students to participate in arguing cases before the high court. Another amendment requires that requests for oral argument in a case must include details about why argument is necessary before the Court grants the request. The Court made the changes to improve the quality of oral arguments and bring the state's highest court in line with other appellate courts nationwide.

**ORGANIZATIONS WITH A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE SERVING IN OVERSIGHT OR LIAISON ROLE**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Judicial Qualifications Commission (regulates judges' conduct)</li><li>• The State Bar (regulates the practice of law)</li><li>• The Office of Bar Admissions (regulates admission to the practice of law)</li><li>• The Institutes for Continuing Judicial Education and Continuing Legal Education</li><li>• The Access and Fairness Committee</li><li>• The Justice for Children Committee</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Office of Dispute Resolution (mediation)</li><li>• The Commission on Interpreters</li><li>• Accountability Courts</li><li>• Criminal Justice Reform</li><li>• The Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism</li><li>• The new Business Court</li><li>• The Ad Hoc Committee on Cybersecurity Insurance for the Judiciary</li></ul> |
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**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Court of Appeals of Georgia**

gaappeals.us

***Mission***

Sitting in five three-judge panels, the Court of Appeal handles the majority of appeals in Georgia, and is responsible for assuring that the rule of law applies equally to all appeals, and that they are resolved correctly and promptly. As an appellate court with statewide jurisdiction, the Court of Appeals shares responsibility with the Supreme Court for producing a clear and consistent body of case law that can be relied upon throughout the state.

***Highlights***

- New Chief Judge Chris McFadden Elected
- Developed Plans to Move into New Courthouse
- Implemented Paperless Fiscal Processes
- Deepened Cybersecurity Defenses
- Reduced Docketing Time Via Trial Court Electronic Filing
- Began Developing Procedures for Pro Se E-Filing
- Improved Public Awareness Through Social Media
- Expanded Access to Electronic Records





#### COURT OF APPEALS 2019 MILESTONES

- 3,397 FILINGS
- 1,224 DIRECT CRIMINAL APPEALS
  - 1,263 DIRECT CIVIL APPEALS
  - 850 APPLICATIONS DOCKETED
- 60 EMERGENCY MOTIONS DECIDED
  - 1,321 OPINIONS ISSUED
- MORE THAN 218 CASES DECIDED PER JUDGE
  - 4 NEW JUDGES ADDED
    - Stephen S. Goss
    - Christian A. Coomer
    - Todd Markle
    - Ken Hodges
- 2 JUDGES MOVED TO SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA
  - Charles Bethel (by appointment)
  - John J. Ellington (by election)

#### Standing, left to right:

**D. Todd Markle**, Judge  
**Stephen S. Goss**, Judge  
**E. Trenton “Trent” Brown III**, Judge  
**Amanda H. Mercier**, Judge  
**Clyde L. Reese**, Judge  
**Elizabeth D. Gobeil**, Judge  
**Christian A. Coomer**, Judge  
**Ken Hodges**, Judge

#### Sitting, left to right:

**Carla Wong McMillian**, Presiding Judge,  
Fifth Division  
**Sara L. Doyle**, Presiding Judge,  
Third Division  
**Anne Elizabeth Barnes**, Presiding Judge,  
First Division  
**Christopher J. McFadden**, Chief Judge  
**M. Yvette Miller**, Presiding Judge,  
Second Division  
**Stephen Louis A. Dillard**, Presiding Judge,  
Fourth Division  
**Brian M. Rickman**, Judge

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Council of Superior Court Judges**

Executive Director: Shannon Weathers  
[georgiasuperiorcourts.org](http://georgiasuperiorcourts.org)

***Vision:***

Judicial Excellence; Accessible, Effective, and Efficient Superior Courts.

***Mission:***

The Council of Superior Court Judges' mission is to provide leadership and support to preserve the ability of the Courts to meet their constitutional and statutory responsibilities and further the administration of justice while functioning as a liaison with other courts and the other two branches of Government.

The Council provides payroll and travel reimbursements; budget administration and accounting; leave entry, benefit coordination, and other human resources needs for all judges and their state-paid staff; and management of all superior court statewide accounting functions.

The Council also provides legal support for required publications such as the Uniform Rules for Superior Courts and Pattern Jury Instructions; statewide legal support for judges handling death penalty habeas corpus cases; logistics for seminars and meetings; and numerous other critical statewide functions for superior courts.

The Council office also serves as the hub for legislative tracking, meeting coordination, and monitoring during the legislative session.

***Leadership:***

President

**Judge Shawn LaGrua**, Atlanta Judicial Circuit

President Elect

**Judge Brian Amero**, Flint Judicial Circuit

Secretary Treasurer

**Judge J. Wade Padgett**,  
 Augusta Judicial Circuit

Immediate Past President

**Judge Stephen Kelley**,  
 Brunswick Judicial Circuit

***Goals:***

Over the next four years, the Council will seek sufficient funding to provide state paid law clerks for the 34 Superior Court judges who do not already have a state or county paid law clerk.



Judge Doris L. Downs and Judge H. Gibbs Flanders were the recipients of the 2019 Emory Findley Award. The award recognizes judges for their outstanding leadership and dedication to the continued improvement of our court system.

## Highlights:

**Staffing:** During the recession, many law clerk positions were eliminated. With the assistance of the Governor and the Legislature, the Council has restored some of these positions and created others. Of the 214 active Superior Court Judges, only 34 lack either a state or county paid law clerk.

**Judicial Education Podcasts:** Superior Court Judges Wade Padgett and LaTain Kell have worked diligently to create a podcast series, “The Good Judge-ment Podcast,” to not only provide accessible continuing education opportunities to judges, but also to extend the information to lawyers and members of the public. These Podcasts are available free of charge in iTunes.

### Pattern Jury Instructions Rewrite

**Initiative:** Under the leadership of CSCJ President Judge Shawn LaGrúa, the Council plans to rewrite many of the suggested pattern jury instructions in plain English. This project will be conducted by a subcommittee within the Council which will work throughout the year.

This initiative is intended to better assist judges in the instruction of jurors by promoting a clear and concise presentation of the law to citizens serving on a jury.

**Mental Health in Local Jails:** Under the leadership of CSCJ President-Elect Judge Brian Amero, the Council created a Special Committee on Mental Health in Local Jails. The Committee hosted a training conference on Judicial Work at the Interface of Mental Health and Criminal Justice in May at Georgia State Law School.

**Post-trial Rules:** In conjunction with the Supreme Court of Georgia, and in consultation with the State Bar of Georgia, the Council of Superior Court Clerks, the Georgia Public Defender Council, the Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council, CSCJ amended the Uniform Superior Court Rules on motions for new trials to expedite such proceedings and instituted reporting measures to better identify criminal cases with post-trial delays.



Swearing-in ceremonies, left to right (top row): Jeffery O. Monroe, Macon Judicial Circuit; Jeffrey Watkins, Cherokee Judicial Circuit; Tadia Whitner, Gwinnett Judicial Circuit; Rachelle L. Carnesale, Atlanta Judicial Circuit. Left to right (bottom): Shondeana C. Morris, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit; Stacey K. Hydrick, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit; Nina Markette Baker, Coweta Judicial Circuit.



**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Council of State Court Judges**

Executive Director: Bob Bray  
[georgiacourts.gov/statecourt/](http://georgiacourts.gov/statecourt/)

***Mission and Goals:***

“Impartial Courts - Judicial Excellence - Accessible and Efficient Justice.” The Council consists of 129 active judges, who serve in 71 counties, and a number of Senior Judges and Judges Emeritus. Each year the Council develops a Strategic Business Plan to further its mission toward the improvement of State Courts, the quality and expertise of its judges, to maintain the impartiality of the judiciary and to ensure the fair, efficient administration of justice. The five Strategic Objectives of the Council are to:

1. Support the State Courts
2. Enhance Effectiveness and Continuity of our Council
3. Support the Judiciary as a whole
4. Foster Relationships within the Judiciary and with other branches of government
5. Serve, inform and interact with the public

Right: Judge Nancy Bills passing the Council presidency and its responsibilities to Judge T. Russell McClelland in May 2019.  
 Below: The Council's Executive Committee meets at the May 2019 Conference.

***Leadership:***

President

**Judge T. Russell McClelland**, Forsyth County

President Elect

**Judge Wesley B. Tailor**, Fulton County

Secretary

**Judge Alvin T. Wong**, DeKalb County

Treasurer

**Judge R. Violet Bennett**, Wayne County

Past President

**Judge Nancy Bills**, Rockdale County



### ***Highlights:***

- The 2019 State Court Benchbook was completely revised and updated and includes two new Chapters: Chapter 12 on Collections and Default Judgments; and Chapter 13 on Bifurcating and Trifurcating Damages.
- A Judicial Workload Study of the State Court of Rockdale County was begun utilizing the new case categories and time standards published in November 2018 Judicial Workload Study of the Superior and State Courts of Georgia by the National Center for State Courts. The Rockdale study concluded that the workload of that state court requires two full-time judges to process the cases.
- The recent cyber attack on the Administrative Office of the Courts seriously impacted the office of the Council of State Court Judges, however, many critical working files have been able to be recovered or recreated to maintain the administration of Council business.
- Six new state court judges were elected or appointed to serve in 2019 and participated in a four-day new judge orientation in Athens, Georgia in January.
- The caseloads in the State courts of Georgia continue to grow and the statewide revenues increased over \$2 million.
- The Council of State Court Judges worked with the Council of Superior Court Judges to update, revise and rewrite jury charges used civil and criminal trials.



Left: Judge Joseph C. Iannazzone received the prestigious Ogden Doremus/Kent Lawrence Award in October, 2018.  
Below: Governor Brian Kemp addresses attendees at the May 2019 Conference.





**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Council of Juvenile Court Judges**

Executive Director: Eric John  
georgiacourts.gov/cjcj/

***Mission:***

The Juvenile Court's mission is to serve the community by assisting children and families in need and to protect the community by administering individual justice and deterring delinquent behavior through the court and community-based services from the Programs arm of the Court and the Department of Juvenile Justice probation services.

***Vision:***

The Juvenile Court's vision is to achieve excellence by providing quality services for the positive development of children, the safety of the community and the preservation of the family unit.

The Council of Juvenile Court Judges provides support to the juvenile court judges through legal research services, legislative tracking, and specialized programs to assist in protecting the best interests of children and the state.

***Leadership:***

President

**Judge Juliette Wiltshire Scales**

Atlanta Judicial Circuit

President-Elect

**Judge Lisa C. Jones**

Southwestern Judicial Circuit

Vice-President

**Judge C. Gregory Price**

Rome Judicial Circuit

Secretary

**Judge Render M. Heard Jr.**

Tifton Judicial Circuit

Treasurer

**Judge Lindsay H. Burton**

Northeastern Judicial Circuit

Past-President

**Judge Philip Spivey**

Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit

Judge Juliette Wiltshire Scales  
being sworn-in as president of the  
Council of Juvenile Court Judges  
in May 2019.



### **Highlights:**

**Juvenile Data Exchange (JDEX):** The JDEX initiative centralizes data on juvenile offenders, providing judges a complete picture of data for offenders. JDEX was brought online in June 2019. Trainings across the state are in progress and will be completed mid-November 2019.

### **Justice Case Activity Tracking System (JCATS):**

Thirty-nine (39) counties use the case management system JCATS in their court. Eighty eight (88) percent of the delinquent cases in the state is captured by JCATS. Since 2015, there has been an increase of 25% of the counties using JCATS. The latest to come on board was Floyd County under Judge Greg Price.

### **Children In Need of Services (CHINS):**

The CHINS State Coordinator position was put in place to help create and implement a standard CHINS protocols. The CHINS Coordinator has held quarterly meetings with a statewide collaborative team; conducted a statewide survey of all juvenile courts to gather key information; partnered with the Carter Center Mental Health Program to strengthen the CHINS system; and initiated a pilot program to work with select counties to collect data, highlight best practices, and address challenges.

### **Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI):**

JDAI is a nationwide initiative to help jurisdictions reduce their reliance on secure detention. Georgia's Initiative has completed system assessments for Rockdale and Chatham Counties; launched Rockdale County as an officially recognized JDAI site; and created three state steering committee workgroups for refining three key focus areas:

1. Refining Georgia's JDAI State Scale Plan and onboarding process.
2. Creating Georgia JDAI demonstration sites.
3. Cultivating a plan for improving race, equity, and inclusion in Georgia's juvenile justice system.

Stakeholders attend the JDEX meeting in May 2019.



**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED*

## Council of Probate Court Judges

Executive Director: Kevin Holder  
georgiacourts.gov/probate/

### ***Mission:***

Our Council's vision is excellence in the administration of justice in every probate court. Our Council's mission is to advance the common interests of and assist probate courts in fulfilling their responsibilities. Finally, our Council's guiding principles are to ensure that probate courts fulfill their statutory responsibilities, demonstrate integrity, respect the independence and diversity of each court, function collaboratively, continuously improve service to our constituency and engage all members of the Council.

### ***Leadership:***

President

**Judge Sarah Harris**, Macon-Bibb County

President-Elect

**Judge T.J. Hudson**, Treutlen County

First Vice-President

**Judge Kelli Wolk**, Cobb County

Past President

**Judge Rooney Bowen, III**, Dooly County

Secretary-Treasurer

**Judge Darin McCoy**, Evans County

From left to right: Judge Sarah Harris, Judge Kelli Wolk, Judge T.J. Hudson, Judge Kerri Carter, and Judge Darin McCoy at the Council's 2019 Spring Conference.



Judge J. Wade Padgett, Augusta Circuit Superior Court was honored for his contributions to the Council's traffic certification program.



2018 Fall COAG in Savannah, GA.



Above: 2019 Probate Judges Day at the Capitol.  
Below: Judge Sarah Harris, State Senator Mike Dugan, and Judge Edith Haney at the State Capitol.



### *Highlights:*

- Identified and established a pipeline of new leaders within the Council
- Re-engaged each of the Council's respective districts
- Reorganized the Council's standing committees
- Created a committee to study streamlining filing fees
- Revamped the Council's Mentor Program
- Finalized the work to begin production of the videos and informational materials for self-represented litigants
- Amended the Council's bylaws
- Updated the Uniform Probate Court Rules
- Achieved a year-over-year of probate courts who successfully submitted their caseload reports
- Conducted the first ever Training Council retreat to examine the training offerings and certification programs
- Retooled the Traffic Certificate program for probate judges with traffic jurisdiction



2019 Leadership Retreat, Jekyll Island, GA.



**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Council of Magistrate Court Judges**

Executive Director: Sharon Reiss  
georgiamagistratecouncil.com

***Mission:***

Magistrate court, also called small claims court and sometimes the people's court, is an informal court that handles money claims of less than \$15,000. This court offers a quick and inexpensive process to resolve complaints.

The Council of Magistrate Court Judges supports community justice by:

- Improving the magistrate courts and the administration of justice;
- Assisting the chief magistrates, magistrates, and senior magistrates throughout the state in the execution of their duties; and
- Training and promoting chief magistrates, magistrates, and senior magistrates.

Case type examples include: dispossessory; evictions; four types of criminal misdemeanors; probable cause hearings; setting bond and then binding over to other courts, and some fraud cases.

***Leadership:***

President

**Judge Michael Barker**, Chatham County

President-Elect

**Judge T.J. Hudson**, Treutlen County

Vice-President

**Judge Bobby Harrison Smith, III**  
Long County

Immediate Past President

**Judge Glenda Dowling**, Dooly County

Secretary

**Judge Berryl A. Anderson**,  
DeKalb County

Treasurer

**Judge Jennifer Lewis**, Camden County

***Highlights:***

- The Council hosts bi-annual training for all Magistrate Court Judges and also a dedicated training for Chief Magistrates. Topics include: law changes; ethics; filing; budgeting; staffing; scheduling; administration; IT support; and diversity to improve efficiency and leadership.
- The Council continued to work on tutorials and technology tools like the forms generator and web tutorials to improve the citizen experience.
- Council judges have won multiple awards for their hard work and dedication to the Council and the Administration of Justice.



Every year the Georgia Council of Magistrate Court Councils hosts a legislative day at the State Capitol. This gives the judges an opportunity to interact with legislators and discuss the issues they face in their courts and communities.

### Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council

The Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council, which was created by statute in 1983, consists of five members and oversees the training and certification of Magistrate Judges. O.C.G.A. § 15-10-130 et seq. The Council, chaired by Judge Betsey Kidwell (Magistrate Court of Heard County) met twelve times in FY 2019:

- July 18, 2018 – via GoToMeeting
- August 15, 2018 – via GoToMeeting
- September 30, 2018 – during the biannual recertification training held in Savannah, GA
- October 17, 2018 – via GoToMeeting
- November 21, 2018 – via GoToMeeting
- December 19, 2018 – via GoToMeeting
- January 23, 2019 – via GoToMeeting
- February 20, 2019 – via GoToMeeting
- March 20, 2019 – via GoToMeeting
- April 14, 2019 – during the biannual recertification training held in St. Simons, GA
- May 15, 2019 – via GoToMeeting
- June 19, 2019 – via GoToMeeting

The Council developed and approved the training curriculum for mandatory annual magistrate training, focusing on several topics including interpreters, mental health, elder abuse, misdemeanor bail reform, jail diversion, judicial ethics, garnishments, abandoned mobile homes, court security, domestic violence, and landlord-tenant issues. Additionally, the Council formed two subcommittees, The Curriculum Committee which studies and recommends possible training topics to the full Council, and the Mentor Committee which oversees the mentoring of new magistrate judges. Finally, the Council issued certification to magistrate court judges meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2018.

**The Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council submits this report pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-10-134(e).**



**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Council of Municipal Court Judges (CMuCJ)**

Trial Court Liaison: LaShawn Murphy  
[georgiacourts.gov/municipal/](http://georgiacourts.gov/municipal/)

***Mission:***

To set standards and policies, and to provide information and education services to the Municipal Courts of Georgia so they can more efficiently and effectively operate their courts, administer justice, and serve the public.

***Guiding Principles:***

- Be an advocate for the Municipal Courts and their Judges.
- Provide professional and forward thinking leadership.
- Be a reflection of the people we serve.
- Encourage public understanding of the judiciary and the courts.
- Uphold the Constitution and the law.
- Maintain and enhance Judicial Council relations created in statute per O.C.G.A. § 36-32-40.

***Leadership:***

President

**Judge Matthew McCord**, Stockbridge

President-Elect

**Judge Dale "Bubba" Samuels**  
 Franklin Springs and Monroe

Vice-President

**Chief Judge Willie Weaver Sr.**, Albany

Secretary

**Judge JaDawnya Baker**, Atlanta

Treasurer

**Judge Keith Barber**, Statesboro

Immediate President

**Judge LaTisha Dear Jackson**  
 Stone Mountain

***Highlights:***

- Held an effective leadership retreat in September 2018. This was an opportunity for the president to share their vision, strategize and have open discussions on pertinent initiatives with key members of the Council.

Judges Matthew McCord, Margaret Washburn, JaDawnya Baker, and Charles Barrett at the CMuCJ Legislative Day at the State Capitol.



Judge Matthew McCord at a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Bail Reform.



- Convened a successful Breakfast and Legislative Day at the Capitol, February 5, 2019.
- Focused the Council's attention on Bail Reform efforts.
- Partnered with the Access, Fairness, Public Trust and Confidence Committee (AFPTCC) to include judicial trainings on Inclusion and Human Trafficking, as well as tracks in annual trainings and the presentation of GA Reflections on Access and Fairness in the Courts, Part 2: Engaging the Faith Community as a follow-up to their 2016 Summit (GA Reflections on Ferguson).



Judge E.R. Lanier, Municipal Court of Norcross, received the 2019 Frost Lifetime Achievement Award.

### **Honors:**

- The Council recognized a number of municipal court judges with awards. Judge E. R. Lanier, Municipal Court of Norcross, received the Frost Ward Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes a municipal court judge who has made significant contributions to the Council of Municipal Court Judges over a long period of time.
- Chief Judge Rashida Oliver, Municipal Court of East Point, received the Glen Ashman Educational Achievement Award in appreciation of continued contributions to academics and judicial education for municipal court judges throughout the State of Georgia.
- Chief Judge Dexter Wimbish, Municipal Court of Greenville, was awarded the Special Recognition Award for the Degree for

Dismissal Diversion Program, designed to afford Defendants the opportunity to obtain their high school diploma, GED or higher learning degree.

- Chief Judge Matthew McCord, Municipal Court of Stockbridge, was awarded the Special Recognition Award as 2018-2019 Goodwill Ambassador for the Council, for Selfless Commitment, Dedication & Service to the Council through Various Judicial Appointments.
- Chief Judge Matthew McCord recognized deserving municipal court judges with the President's Award: Judge Thomas C. Bobbitt, III, for selfless commitment & continued service to the Council; and, Judge W. Keith Barber, CMu CJ Treasurer for outstanding service & commitment to modernizing the Treasurer's position.

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council**

The Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council, created in statute per O.C.G.A. § 36-32-22, consists of six members and oversees the training and certification of municipal court judges and chief clerks. The Council, chaired by Judge Margaret Washburn (Municipal Court of Sugar Hill), met five times in FY 2019:

- October 3, 2018 – Athens, GA, in conjunction with the Fall Law & Practice Update
- December 10, 2018 – Via GoTo Meeting
- February 5, 2019 – Atlanta, GA, in conjunction with the Executive Committee meeting
- April 30, 2019 – Warner Robins, GA, in conjunction with the Executive Committee meeting
- June 18, 2019 – Savannah, GA, in conjunction with the Summer Law & Practice Update

The Council developed and approved a robust training curriculum for mandatory new judges orientation and annual municipal court judges training, focusing on such topics as Municipal Court Uniform Rules Update, City Councils, Municipal Judges, Communication: Improving the Court and Maintaining Independence in Judicial Decisions, Immigration: A View from the Bench, SB 407 – Criminal Justice Reform/ New Citation, Professionalism: Rules For The Judges – The 2019 JQC Update, Case Law update, Evidence, IT Security (Best

Practices for Information Systems Security & You) and updates from the Department of Driver Services. The Council issued certification to municipal court judges meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2018.

Per statutory requirement, the Council also oversaw the training and certification of chief municipal court clerks. The training curriculum for chief clerks focused on such topics as Municipal Court Uniform Rules, Bond Forfeitures, Fines and Fees, Ethics for Clerks, Legislative Update, Records Retention (Georgia Archives), and updates from the Department of Driver Services and the Georgia Crime Information Center. The Council issued certification to chief municipal court clerks meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2018.

**The Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council submits this report pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 36-32-24.**



Chief Judge Margaret Washburn, Chair, Municipal Courts Training Council.

# Appendix

Georgia's Judicial Demographics

Supreme Court.....	9
Court of Appeals.....	15
Superior Court .....	214
State Court .....	129
Juvenile Court .....	121
Probate Court .....	174
Magistrate .....	498
Municipal, Civil, and Recorders Courts.....	336
TOTAL.....	1,496

RACE	Supreme Court		Court of Appeals		Superior Court		State Court		Juvenile Court		Probate Court		Magistrate Court		Municipal Court		TOTAL
WHITE NON-HISPANIC	6	1	8	4	139	44	84	23	61	32	71	91	228	175	243	37	1,247
WHITE HISPANIC							1		1				1		1		4
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	2		1	1	12	17	9	11	12	15	4	8	30	59	27	24	232
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE														1			1
ASIAN				1	1		1						1	3	4		11
TOTAL	8	1	9	6	152	61	95	34	74	47	75	99	260	238	275	61	1,495

☐ MALE      ☐ FEMALE

Georgia's Case Characteristics

Due to the ransomware attack on June 29, 2019, case count data was unavailable at the time of this report. Case data will be published at [georgiacourts.gov](http://georgiacourts.gov) as it becomes available.

## ***JUDICIAL COUNCIL INTERNS***

Each year the Judicial Council makes internships available to rising college students in law, political science, and other academic disciplines. They receive valuable training and exposure to our system of justice. Equally important is the value they bring to us in fresh perspective, insightful questions, and technical prowess.

The JC/AOC wishes to thank the interns who joined us during FY19.



Guadalupe Mora



Taylor Evans



Malcolm Sinkfield



Sharod McClendon



# Judicial Council of Georgia Administrative Office of the Courts

244 Washington Street, SW  
Suite 300  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

[georgiacourts.gov](http://georgiacourts.gov)

