

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PIERCE COUNTY
WAYCROSS JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA**

**TO THE JUDGES AND CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT
TO THE JUDGE(S) AND CLERK OF MAGISTRATE COURT
TO THE JUDGE(S) AND CLERK OF PROBATE COURT
TO THE JUDGE(S) AND CLERK OF JUVENILE COURT**

ORDER-DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, it has been determined that judicial emergency exists in this county having been so declared by the Governor, the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, and this Court;

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of the undersigned that persons working regularly in the Pierce County Courthouse may have been exposed to COVID-19 and are experiencing symptoms and some personnel have had close contact with them.

WHEREAS, despite the implementation of and adherence to designated public health and safety guidelines, the Probate Judge of Pierce County has tested positive for COVID-19. Pursuant to the CDC and Department of Public Health rules, it has been determined that those who have had "close contact" as defined by the CDC and DPH should self-quarantine for 7-10 days from the last close contact with an infected person. This requirement has resulted in the Judge and Staff of the Probate Court being in self-quarantine. The Probate Judge and entire staff (2) are quarantined pending COVID-19 testing and actual medical conditions. The judge and his staff work extremely close together and the chance of exposure is high. Based upon the foregoing, the Pierce County Probate Judge made the decision to close the Pierce County Probate Court as of 3:00 p.m. on December 22, 2020. On December 22, 2020, the Pierce County probate Judge advised the Court of his decision and requested a Declaration of Judicial Emergency for the Pierce County Probate Court. This Court finds that said request is reasonable and prudent and is in the best interest of the public and all courthouse personnel.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that, pursuant to O.C.G.A. §38-3-61, the Probate Court of Pierce County, Georgia shall be closed beginning Tuesday, December 22, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. through and including Monday, January 4, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. at which time this judicial emergency shall end or until further order of the court. Provided this order is not extended or otherwise modified, the Probate Court will re-open for normal operations on Monday, January 4, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that upon the re-opening of the Probate Court, social distancing will be strictly enforced; and the use of appropriate sanitizers by all occupants of the building or the general public on entering the building.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-62, all court deadlines, time schedules or filing requirements are hereby suspended, tolled, or extended for the duration of the judicial emergency as noted above; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Sheriff or his/her designee shall post a copy of this notice on the courthouse doors, and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Superior Court, or his designee, shall immediately notify the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Clerks of the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court by sending them a copy of this notice and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the County Manager, or his designee, shall post a copy of this notice and any subsequent modification or extension in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 38-3-63 by posting it on the county website or other appropriate public address system.

SO ORDERED this 23rd day of December 2020.



Dwayne H. Gillis, Chief Judge
Superior Court of Pierce County