

From Managers to Leaders: Developing Transformational Leadership Skills

Presented by: Dr. Alfred Degrafinreid II





- 01.** BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH & LEADERSHIP JOURNEY
- 02.** WHAT IS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HOW DOES IT APPLY TO THE COURTS?
- 03.** DEVELOPING YOUR VOICE AS A LEADER
- 04.** LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE FOR THE FUTURE

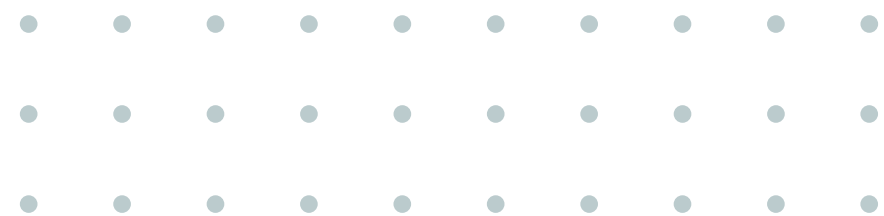


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH & LEADERSHIP JOURNEY



HELLO!



Oh, the Places You'll Go! - Dr. Seuss

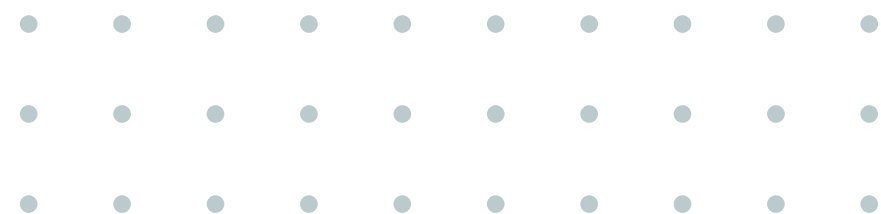
THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT COURT ADMINISTRATOR



WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

“THERE ARE ALMOST AS MANY DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP AS THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DEFINE THE CONCEPT”

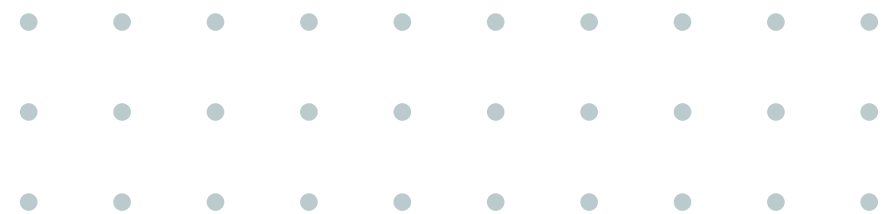
– BERNARD BASS



MEET THE PRESIDENT AND CEO OF LEADERSHIP TENNESSEE

Signature Program Class VII Alumni
(2019-2020)

Association for Leadership
Programs, National Board Member



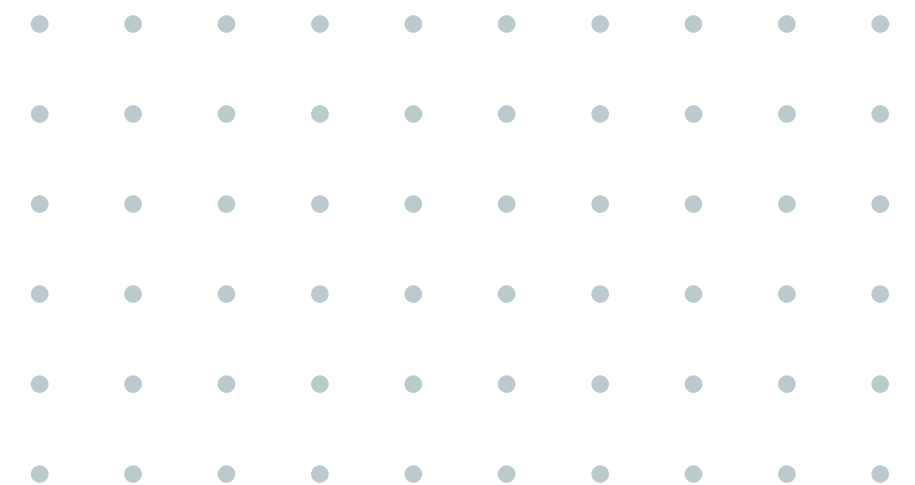


VISION

TENNESSEE LEADERS
LEVERAGING TRUSTED
RELATIONSHIPS AND
PURPOSEFUL DIALOGUE TO
INFLUENCE OUTCOMES AND
CREATE A BETTER STATE

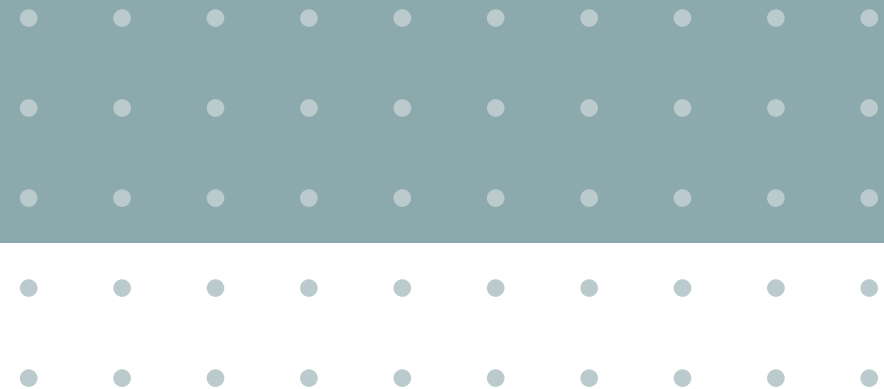
MISSION

FOSTERS COLLABORATIVE,
NONPARTISAN DIALOGUE ON
ISSUES OF STATE IMPORTANCE,
BY CONNECTING AND
DEPLOYING A NETWORK OF
DIVERSE LEADERS AND
ENGAGED CITIZENS.



02.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP



A TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADER

The Story of Mrs. Louise
Degrafinried

The New York Times

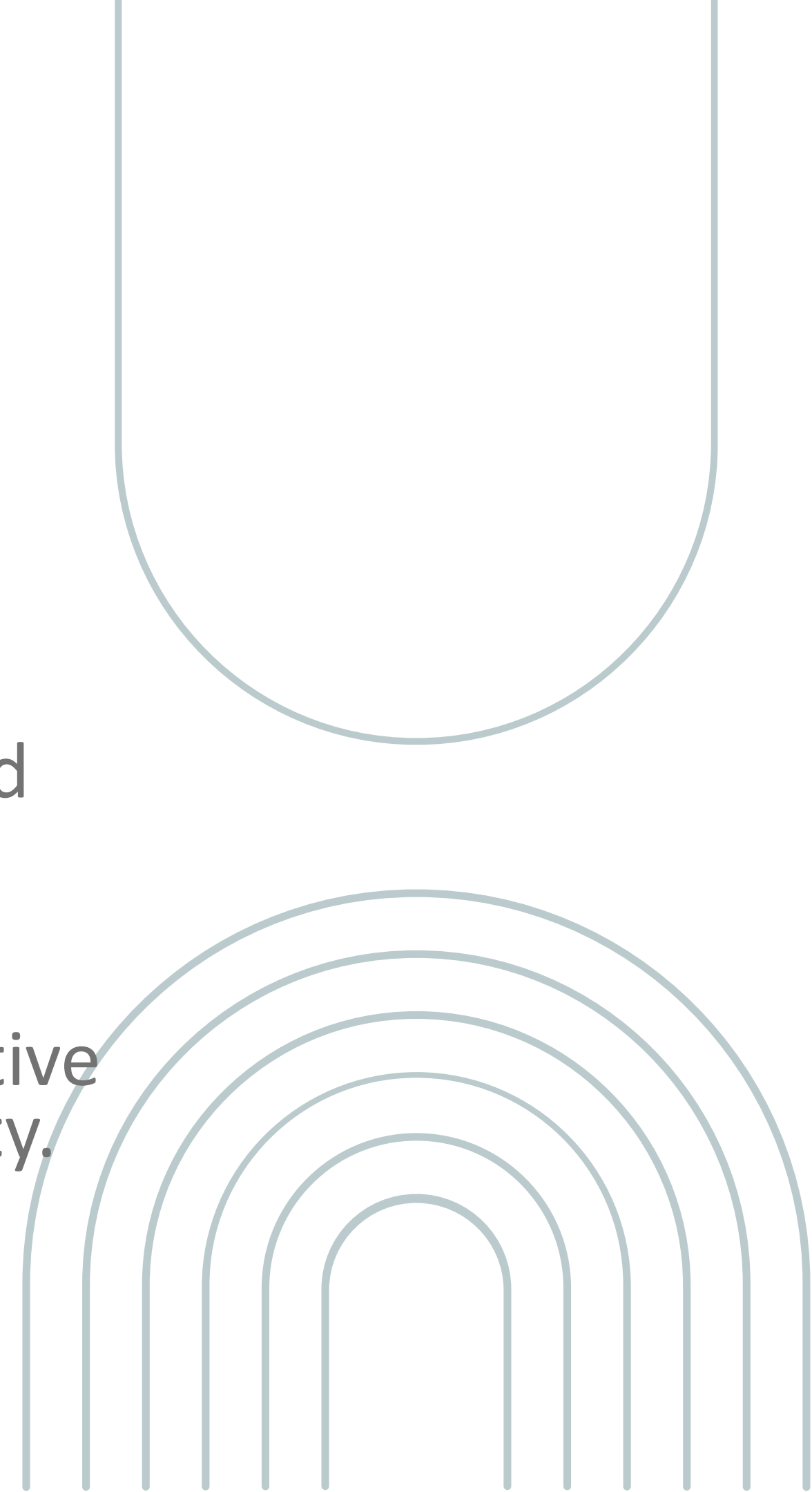
***WOMAN, 73, GETS ARMED
FUGITIVE TO GIVE UP BY
'GIVING HIM BIBLE'***



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that inspires and motivates people to work together toward a shared vision.

Transformational leaders help followers develop their potential and make a positive impact on the organization or community.



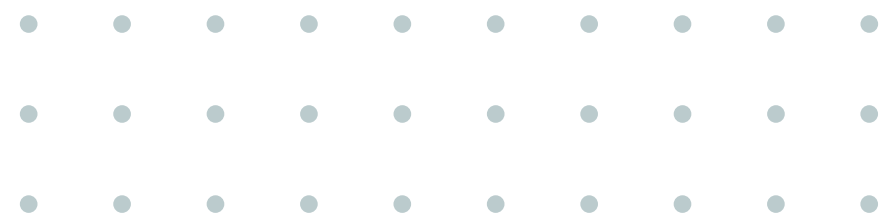
Beyond Management: Leadership is more than overseeing tasks - it is about inspiring change.

Core Qualities of Transformational Leaders:

- Visionary Thinking
- Emotional Intelligence
- Adaptability
- Mentorship & Development
- Strategic Decision Making

Why it Matters in Court Administration

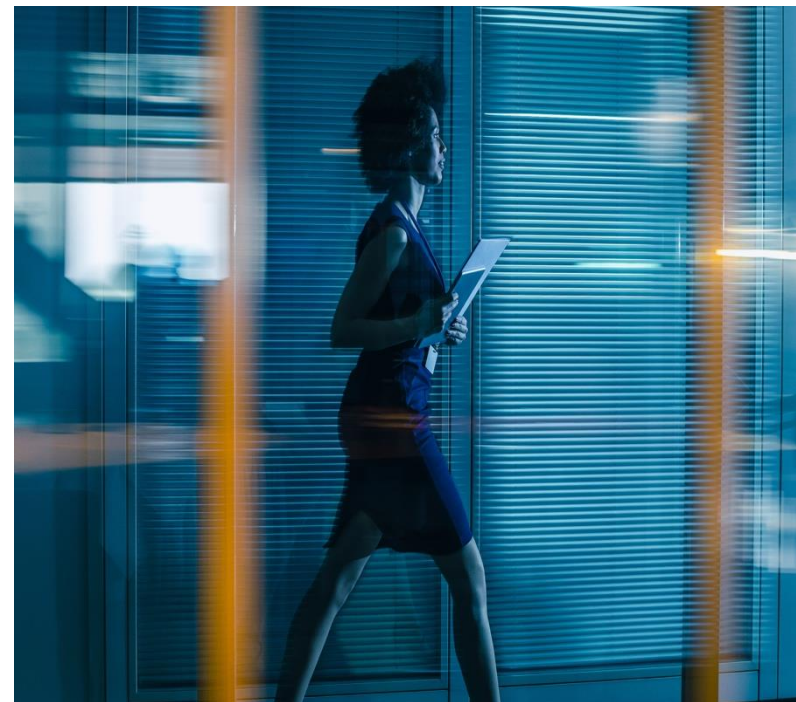
- The justice system is complex and multifaceted
- The justice system is important
- The justice system is the slowest moving branch of government
- Leadership is essential for efficiency, integrity, and public trust.





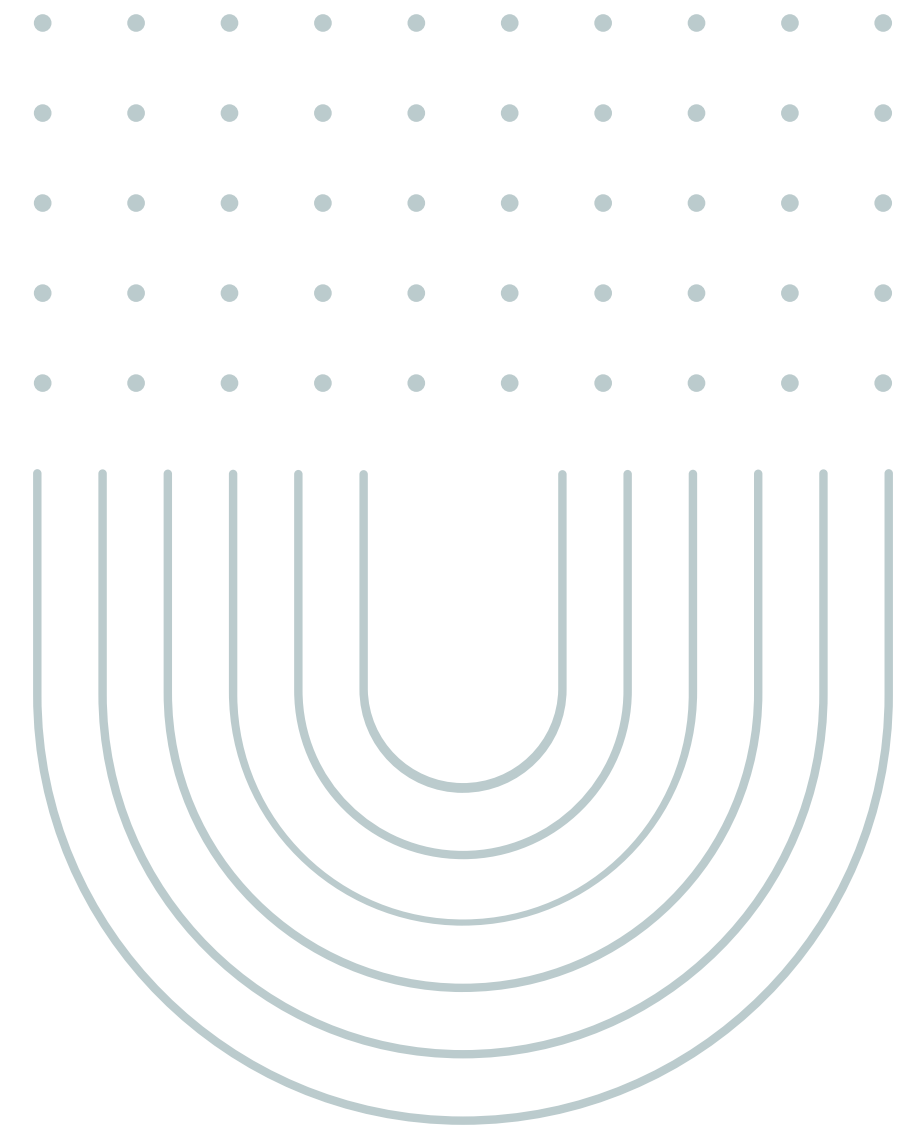
HIGH STAKES IN COURT ADMINISTRATION

- CASE MANAGEMENT DEADLINES
- POLICY CHANGES
- STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION
- DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT PAY ATTENTION TO DETAIL



THRIVING UNDER PRESSURE

- PRIORITIZE EFFECTIVELY (URGENT VS. IMPORTANT)
- STAY ADAPTABLE
- LEAD WITH A SOLUTION-ORIENTED MINDSET



**NAVIGATING A
HIGH-PACED
ENVIRONMENT**

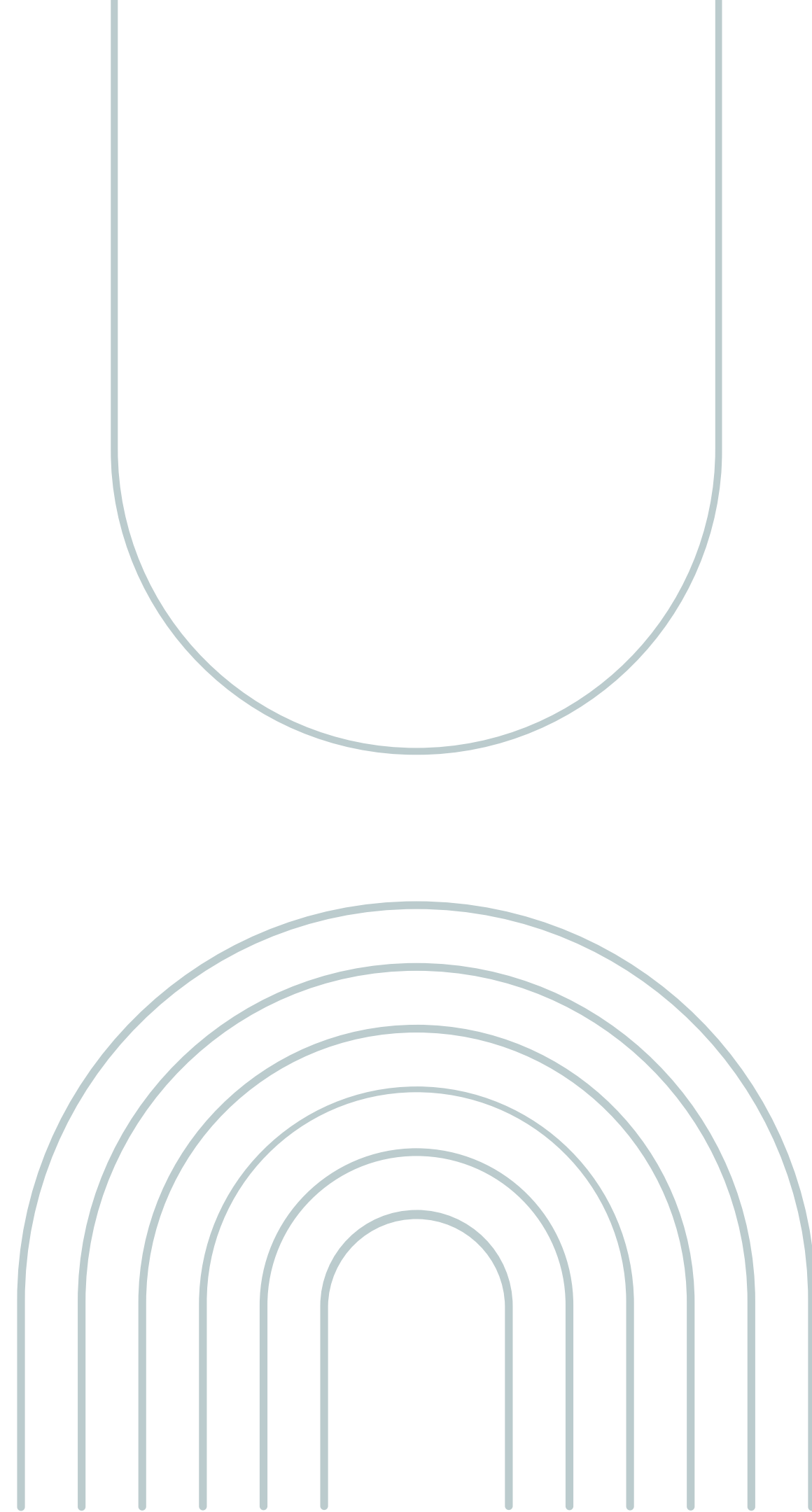
BUILDING LEADERS IN COURT ADMINISTRATION

MANAGERS OVERSEE, LEADERS EMPOWER:

- Encourage professional development
- Offer mentorship opportunities
- Create a culture of growth & continuous learning

INVEST IN YOUR TEAM:

- Offer tangible items
- Leadership succession planning
- Recognizing & nurturing talent
- Encouraging innovation in processes



COLLABORATION IN JUSTICE ENVIRONMENTS

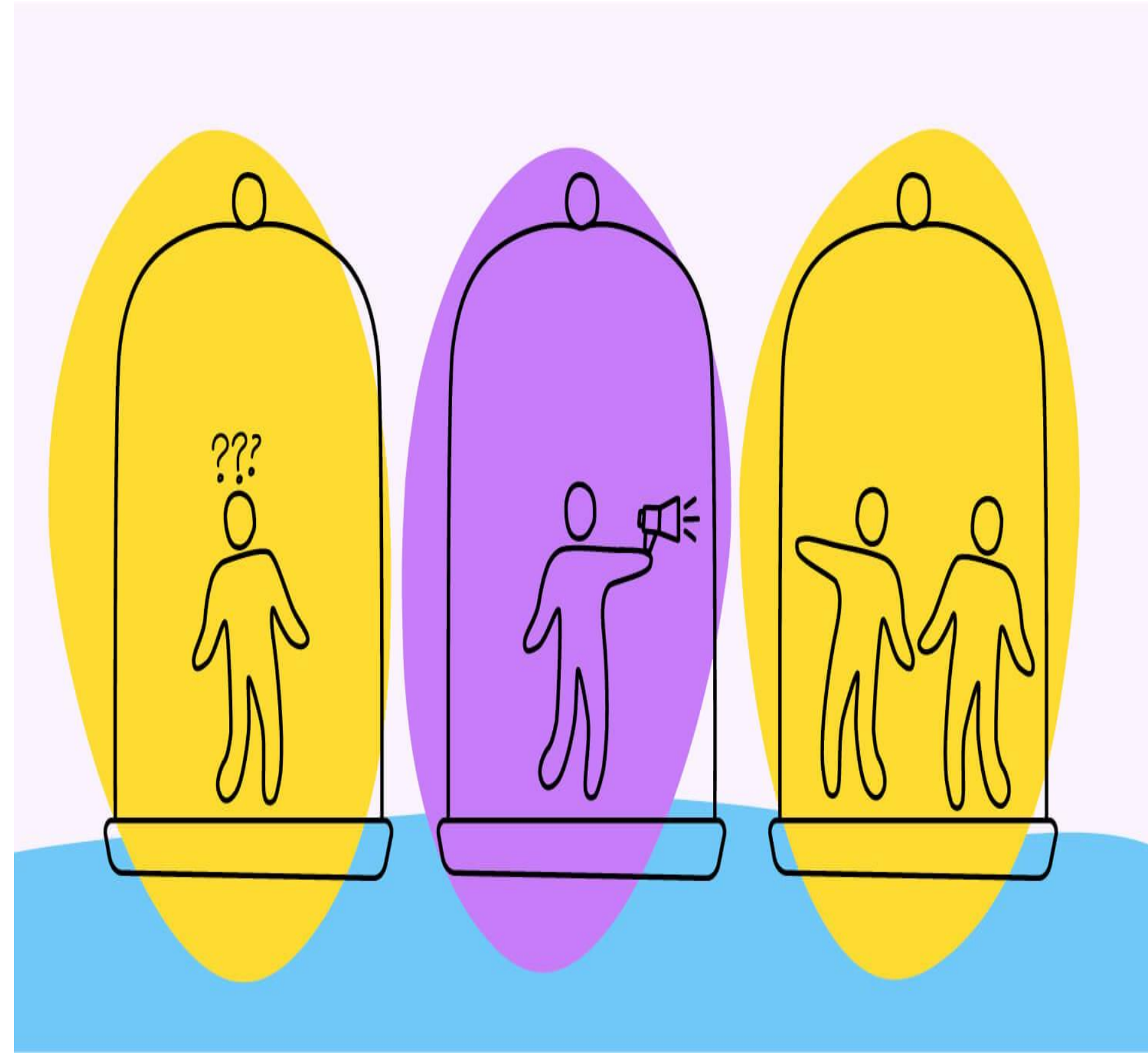
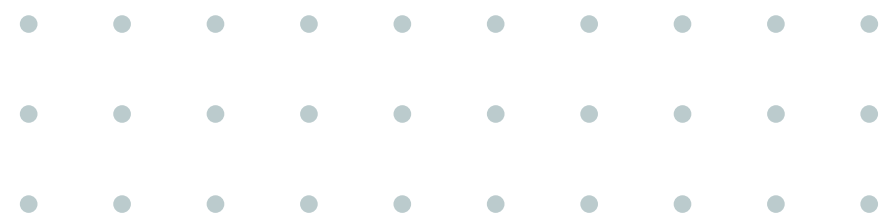
Breaking Silos: Courts do not function in isolation.

Key Partnerships:

- Judges & Court Staff
- Law Enforcement & Corrections
- Social Services & Community Programs
- Technology & Data Management Teams

Effective Collaboration Strategies

- Clear communication channels
- Joint problem-solving and shared goals
- Leveraging technology for efficiency



Case Study:

Office of the Davidson

County Criminal Court

Clerk



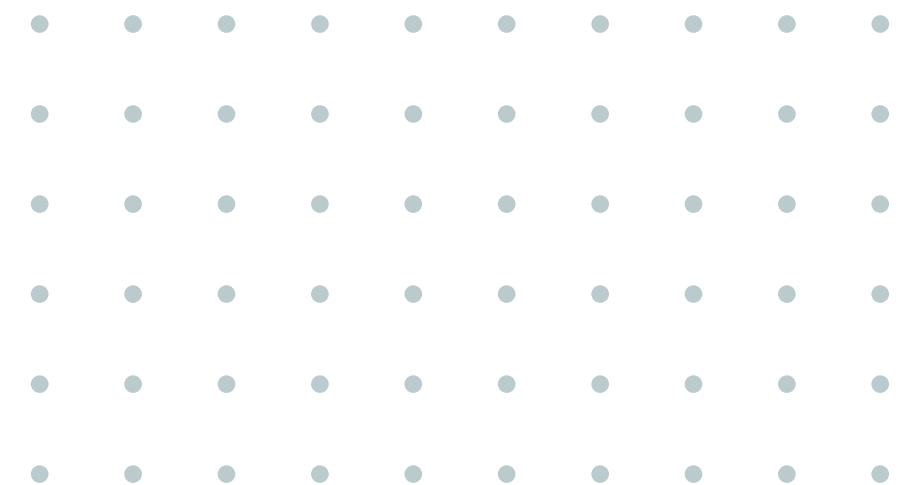


CAO & Chief Deputy Clerk

- ~90 staff
- Multi-million-dollar budget
- Responsible for generating revenue
- 24/7/365 operation
- Responsible for case flow and the management of paper
- 2nd or 3rd worst job in Metro Government of Nashville & Davidson County

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- GS Judges, Criminal Judges, Court Administration, Police, Sheriff, Public Defender, District Attorney, Office of the Mayor, Metro Council, Criminal Justice Planning, Justice IT Department, and Presiding Judges
- Weekly meetings with partners; monthly meeting with Mayor
- Bi-weekly meeting with Technology & Data Teams





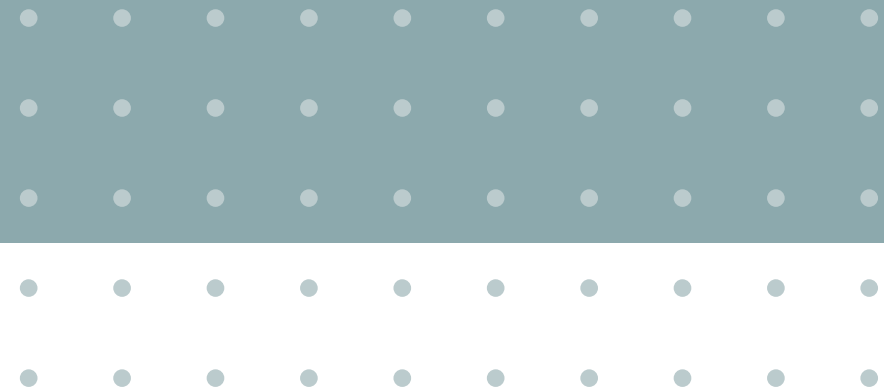
BRINGING JUSTICE TO YOU

- Presiding Judge
- District Attorney
- Public Defender
- Criminal Court Clerk
- Metro Nashville Public Schools
- Nonprofit Organizations



03.

DEVELOPING YOUR VOICE AS A LEADER



YOU ARE EITHER BORN A COURT ADMINISTRATOR OR NOT!



STAFF REPORTING
STRUCTURE



FIRE, FLOOD, AND
PARKING SPACES



DOCKETS FEEDING INTO
OTHER DOCKETS



ELECTRONIC FILING AND
ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE



FBI PROBE



TESTIFYING IN COURT



COURT
ADMINISTRATORS
WEAR MANY
HELMETS



Problem-Solvers
Communicators
Mediators
Policy Implementers
Change Managers
Public Relations
Juggle multiple responsibilities
Remain mission-driven amid
competing priorities

SERVING AT THE PLEASURE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL/JUDGE

The Reality of Court Administration:

- You ultimately serve at the will of elected officials.
- Your role is to **bridge the gap between judicial leadership and operational efficiency.**
- Everything is data driven
- Navigating differing priorities and personalities with professionalism and diplomacy.

How to Lead While Serving:

- Understand your boss's leadership style & expectations.
- Anticipate their needs and present well-researched recommendations.
- Maintain neutrality and professionalism – your role is to uphold the integrity of the system.
- Be adaptable – judicial turnover means adjusting to different leadership approaches.



The “Glorified Administrator” Perception

Breaking the Stereotype

- Court administration is often misunderstood.
- More than paper-pushers—administrators **drive efficiency, fairness, and modernization.**

The Power of Perspective

- **Think beyond administration – lead strategically.**
- Own your role in **policy, justice access, and systemic change.**

Redefining the Role

- **Lead, don’t just manage – focus** on the big picture.
- Use **data to show impact** (efficiencies, backlogs, innovations).
- **Advocate for modernization** and process improvements.





My Journey Beyond Court Administration

- **From the Courthouse to the Campaign Trail:**

- Managed a \$50 million U.S. Senate race in Tennessee, overseeing strategy, operations, and stakeholder engagement.

- **Higher Education Leadership:**

- Served as Associate Vice Chancellor for Local Government Relations and Community Partnership at Vanderbilt University, working at the intersection of academia, government, and community impact.

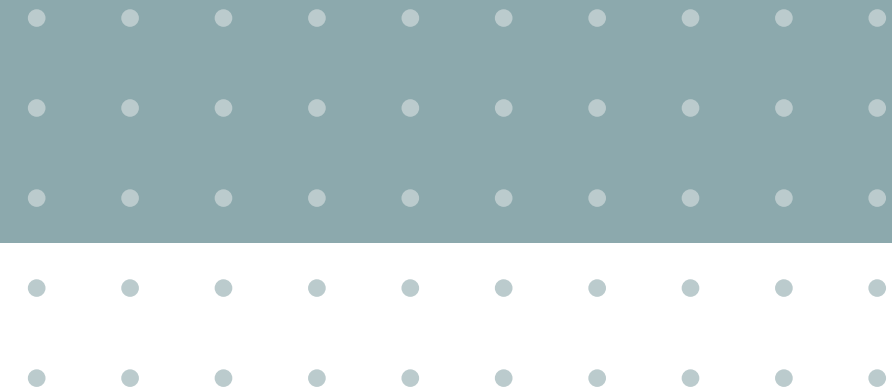
- **Statewide Leadership & Civic Engagement:**

- Now serving as President & CEO of Leadership Tennessee, a nonprofit that brings together leaders across sectors to tackle Tennessee's most pressing challenges.

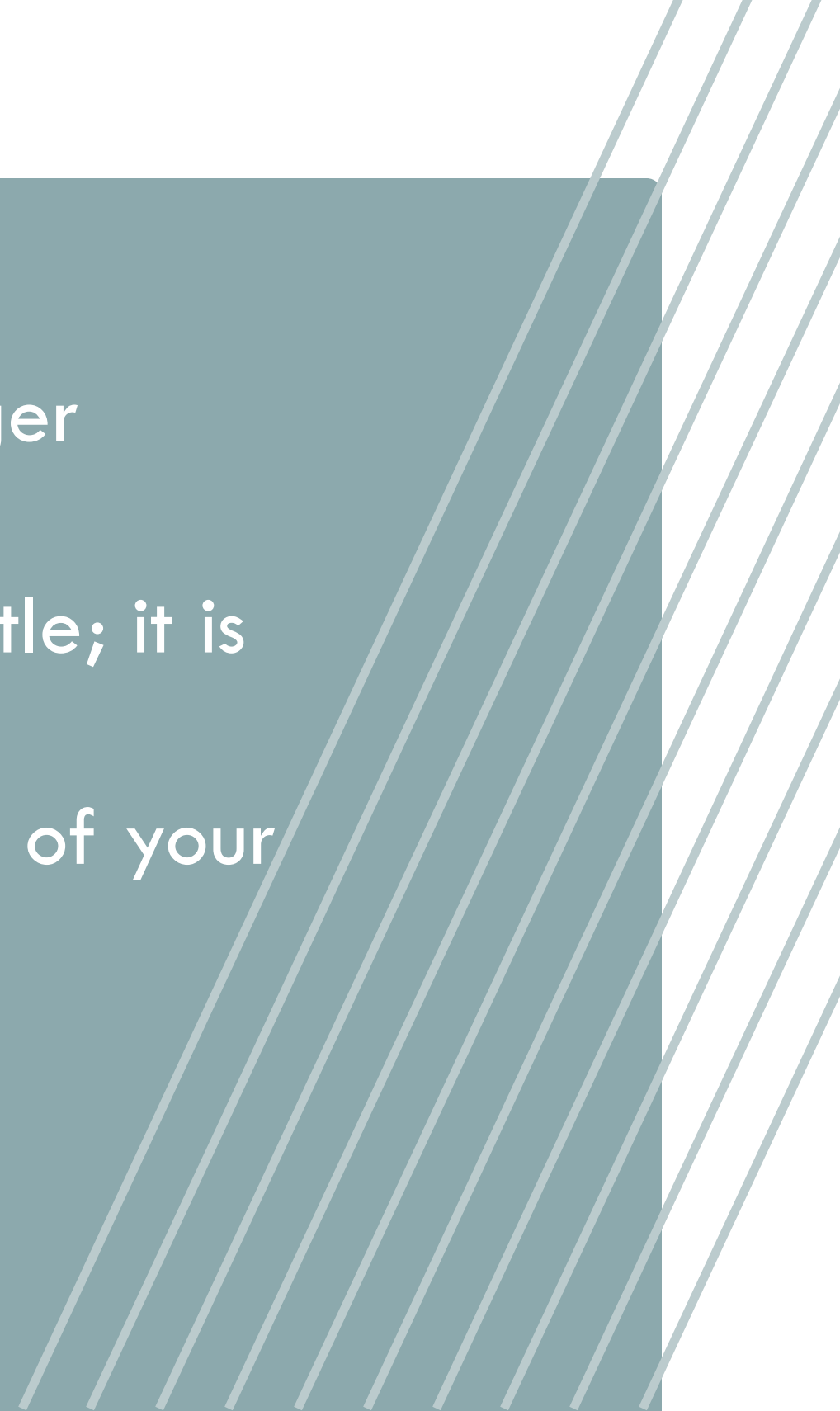
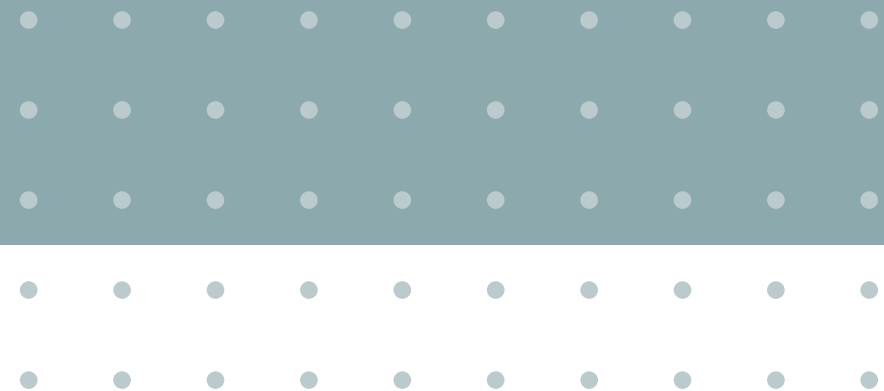


04.

LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE FOR THE FUTURE



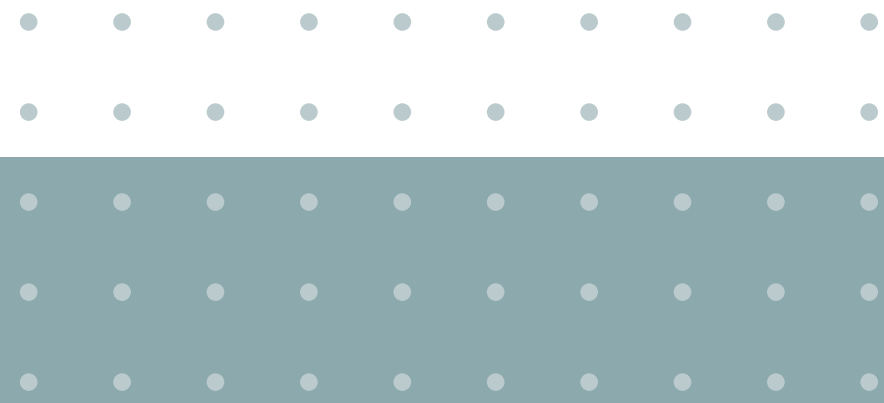
- Your skills in court administration are a foundation for bigger leadership opportunities.
- Stay open to new challenges – leadership is not about a title; it is about influence.
- Never stop learning – growth comes from stepping outside of your comfort zone.



Advice For the Future

- Develop the Next Generation of Leaders
- Build A Culture Where Innovation and Leadership Growth are Encouraged
- Continue to participate in GCCA and NACM
- Be Known As a Problem Solver
- Invest in Leadership and Professional Development for your staff
- Seek a Coach to Help Push You To the Next Level





THANK YOU

Do you have any questions?

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