

**SPECIAL MASTER MARY ASHLEY NICHOLS**  
**Historic Metropolitan Courthouse, Suite 501 – 615-880-2548**  
**Email: [marshnichols@jnsnashville.gov](mailto:marshnichols@jnsnashville.gov)**

## **I. Brief Biography**

**Mary Ashley (Marsh) Nichols was appointed Special Master for the Davidson County Circuit Courts in January, 1998. She was born September 9, 1956 in Jackson, Mississippi. She holds a B.A. in Communication from Mississippi State University (1979) and a J.D. from the Nashville School of Law (1988). She practiced with the law firm of Parker & Allen from 1988 to 1995 when she took maternity leave. She served as law clerk to the Honorable Hamilton Gayden from August, 1996 to the time she received this appointment.**

## **II. Preliminary General Matters**

**The special master position was created by T.C.A. section 17-2-123 (Full-time master in certain counties), which confers the powers set out in Rule 25 and T.C.A. section 17-2-118 (Substitute judges).**

**As Special Master, recommendations are made to the trial judge. Pursuant to Rule 25, upon Order of Reference, she makes findings of facts and conclusions of law for the court.**

**The Special Master conducts case management conferences for First Circuit (cases filed prior to Jan. 1, 2022) Second, Fifth, Sixth and Eighth Circuit Courts. [See V. below].**

## **III. Correspondence**

**All case management orders should be efiled with the Circuit Court Clerk's office. Do not send the order directly to the special master unless directed to do so. DO NOT DELIVER THE ORIGINAL TO THE SPECIAL MASTER.**

**The Special Master's mailing address is 1 Public Square, Suite 501, Nashville, TN 37201.**

## **IV. Communication**

**The assistant to the special master is Cyndi Webb. The telephone number for Ms. Webb is 615-880-2546. Please contact her directly**

**BY EMAIL ([cwebb@jisenashville.gov](mailto:cwebb@jisenashville.gov)) to schedule or reschedule any matter.**

**The Special Master strongly encourages members of the Bar to contact her with any matters pertaining to the Circuit Courts. If she cannot assist you directly, she may be in the position to refer you to the proper person. Do not hesitate to email the special master at [marshnichols@jisenashville.gov](mailto:marshnichols@jisenashville.gov)**

#### **V. Case Management/Status Conferences**

**The special master works remotely and all case management conferences are conducted by telephone. Counsel should all be on one line and then contact the special master. Conference lines are acceptable and the number should be provided to Ms. Webb one day before the conference.**

**The Special Master conducts case management/status conferences for First (cases filed before Jan. 1, 2022) Second, Fifth, Sixth and Eighth Circuit Courts. Attendance is mandatory unless prior arrangements have been made with the Special Master. You may not enter an agreed scheduling order to avoid the status conference.**

**The first conference is held approximately six months after filing the complaint. You will receive an initial notice from the court scheduling the conference. Please make every effort to accommodate the Court by keeping this schedule. If you cannot attend, please do not send an associate unless the associate is familiar with the file and can agree upon scheduling, trial v. mediation track, etc. A follow-up conference will be scheduled at an agreed time after the initial conference. If you must reschedule the INITIAL conference, contact Ms. Webb by email.**

**The procedure during the case management conference is as follows:**

**The Special Master will ask the procedural history of the case and the status of discovery. She will want to know the issues as to liability, causation and damages. She will direct an attorney to draft to draft the scheduling order. Orders MUST be filed within 72 hours of the case management conference.**

**Counsel who disagree with the recommendation of the Special Master to the court are encouraged to file a motion to take exception to the case management order and place the issue before the court.**

**Please do not fail to appear ON TIME for a case management/status conference. Never wait until the date and time of the conference to notify the special master you cannot attend.**

#### **FORM ORDER**

**Here is a copy of the template case management order: [Click HERE](#)**

#### **NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT**

**Counsel are responsible for contacting Ms. Webb and notifying her of all settled cases as soon as the settlement is reached. If the case is set for a pretrial conference and for trial, both dates must be included in the notification.**

**Counsel shall contact the special master by text message or telephone for any case that settles after hours or over the weekend before trial.**