

# Rooker Report

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## EVANS CAPTURES SESSIONS SEAT; MCCOY TAKES CHANCERY PRIMARY

Come September, the gender makeup of the General Sessions Court will undergo overhaul.

That's when attorney Sue McKnight Evans will be sworn in to complete the term of the late Judge Donald Washburn, giving the nine-division court two female judges for the first time in history.

Evans, a 62-year-old grandmother, will join Judge Penny Harrington and seven male judges on the panel after defeating interim judge Casey Moreland in this month's Democratic primary election.

Moreland was appointed to the bench last March by the Metro Council to fill the vacancy created by the death of Judge Washburn. Had his appointment been ratified by the voters, he would have continued to serve



EVANS



MCCOY

out the balance of the term, which expires in 1998.

But Evans outpolled Moreland by almost 10 percentage points in a light voter turnout to wrest the seat from him. Political observers said her ability to get her supporters out to vote made the crucial difference.

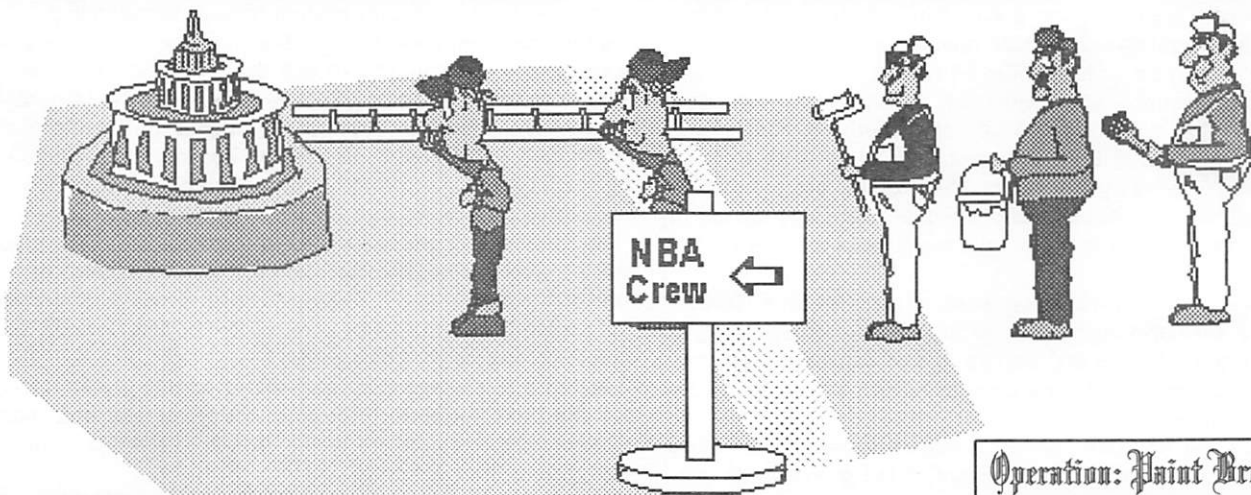
"I didn't think I could win," said the former school teacher afterwards. "I'm no politician."

In recent years, Evans has served as a special judge on more than 200 occasions, she said in support of her bench experience. She began

practicing law in 1986.

Evans is only the third woman to hold a General Sessions judgeship in (See EVANS, Page 2)

## Bar Rises to Give Courthouse a Hand



Having failed the white glove test, the Metro Courthouse has now been targeted for an unprecedented spring house cleaning by some of those who make their living there.

Members of the Nashville Bar Association, on urging from President Tom White, are planning to devote a full day in May to sprucing up the residence of Lady Justice with their own elbow grease and voluntary assistance from some of their clients in the trades industry.

While complete details are pending, Mayor Phil Bredesen reportedly is receptive to the idea, which will require the government to furnish all materials for the project but little of the manpower.

For the sake of identification, then, we will call the project "Operation: Paint Brush."

The concept is an outgrowth of a recent tour of the courthouse by a bar association committee concerned over the deteriorating state of the 60-year-old structure. The lawyers were accompanied on the tour by a number of government officials, including

Presiding Judge Barbara Haynes of Circuit Court and Sam McPherson, director of General Services, which is responsible for the upkeep of all Metro-owned buildings.

When the tour was over, the obvious conclusion was that major equipment repairs under a pending improvements package would require capitalization yet to be provided. But minor alterations to the general appearance of the building could be accomplished primarily by the mere sweat of the brow.

Routine maintenance of the courthouse and other Metro buildings has slackened in recent years because of an alternative personnel replacement program that hasn't lived up to its expectations. About 30 General Services employees and a half-million dollars worth of contract janitorial services were released under the previous administration in favor of utilizing DUI defendants for public service work, mostly in housekeeping jobs.

The idea behind the DUI program was to accomplish the same work at no expense to taxpayers. But McPherson said the pro

(See OPERATION: PAINT BRUSH, Page 2)

## Co-Workers Come to Aid of Ill-Fated Clerk

As a clerk in the General Sessions Courts, AnnMarie DiMascio was once amazed when defendants would list their home addresses as "in a car" or "under a bridge."

Like most average people, she found it difficult to understand how anyone could survive without a permanent residence.

Then, on a tragic night in February, fate served her an all-too-clear explanation.

A raging fire of unknown origin swept through her Old Hickory home while she and her son were away. Nothing was saved.

Firemen were frantically battling the blaze when DiMascio and her son arrived at 10:45 that night of Feb. 26. But the fight was futile. All she could do was watch her home of 18 years crumble to a heap of rubble, along with her furnishings, clothing, food...everything.

It was devastating to a woman who just four years earlier had been left a widow and whose kinfolk were all hundreds of miles away in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Her grown son provided her only comfort. He had only recently come

from Florida to live with her and had been out job hunting the day of the fire. He had picked up his mother at a friend's house minutes before they arrived to find the house in flames.

The house and its contents were covered by insurance, but replacement will be some time in coming. In the meantime, friends and co-workers are doing what they can to help ease the burden.

Bulletins have been posted in work areas near the courts where Mrs. DiMascio has worked for more than six years as a traffic and drivers license clerk. Money donations have been generous and will help buy clothing, food and lodging for the woman and her son, who are temporarily staying with friends.

Dee Patterson, a friend and co-worker, said she and Dot Patton, a general sessions secretary in the Ben West Building, have been accepting donations in Mrs. DiMascio's behalf. "AnnMarie is extremely grateful for the outpouring of love shown to her and her son during this tragic period," said Patterson.

No problem, AnnMarie. That's what friends are for.

## Operation: Paint Brush... The Bar Lends a Hand

(From Page 1)

Much of the courthouse is currently under dust cover as renovations are being made on at least three courtrooms on the fourth and fifth floors. Those projects are part of a general renovation package that eventually will include replacement of five passenger elevators at a cost of just under \$1 million.

The bar association project, which will take place over about a 10-hour period on a Saturday to be determined, will concentrate on the ground, second, third, fifth and sixth floors -- all areas of concentrated business by the courts. Much of the first floor, which houses administrative offices, was painted last year, and the fourth floor will not be included in the project because of extensive renovations in progress.

Organizers expect to have 30 professional painters and 30 attorney "helpers" on hand, using 10 sets of rolling scaffolds, 175 gallons of paint and about 9,000 square feet of canvas drop cloths. Other Bar volunteers will be assigned to brass polishing and interior window washing.

The courthouse has been an architectural treasure ever since the cornerstone was laid in 1936. Proof of the quality of its construction was exemplified earlier this month when workers tearing out a wall in Judge Frank Clement's probate court jury room found a newspaper sports page implanted in the plaster. Court officer David Smith said the insulation had preserved the paper so well that the date (October 14, 1936) was clearly legible, as well as one headline that read "Vanderbilt Coaches Put Special Stress on Aerial Defense."

## Evans, McCoy Winners

(From Page 1)

Davidson County. Harrington and now-Circuit Court Judge Barbara Haynes are the other two.

Chancery Court also is assured of having its first elected female chancellor in September. That guarantee came when attorney Carol McCoy beat out challenger John Aaron Holt in the Democratic primary.

McCoy will be the Democratic nominee against Republican Ellen Hobbs Lyle, who was appointed by Gov. Don Sundquist to replace Chancellor C. Allen High, who retired last year. That matchup will take place in the August general election. Evans has no opposition in the general.

## Re-Examining the Security System

In addition to the bar association's clean-up campaign, revisions to the courthouse security system appear forthcoming.

Judges reportedly are not satisfied with the lax procedures now in place and are planning to ask that the policy be changed for tighter control over personnel access. The State Trial Courts' Court-house Committee has devised a proposal that would require all courthouse personnel to go through security checks upon entering the building. Currently, a large number of employees have been issued cardkeys that enable them to bypass security.

The committee's proposal also would require police officers to use the west entrance, rather than the security bypass door at the rear of the building. The judges contend this would help ease congestion inside the lobby area of the building, which becomes chaotic during heavy traffic peaks.

Elected officials and their authorized agents would continue to use the east entrance through cardkey access and temporary workers would be required to sign in with security personnel at the rear ground floor entrance.

The proposal appears to have the endorsement of judges at all levels and is not expected to meet resistance from the administration, although some revisions could be recommended.

## ...and Parking Rates

In a personnel-related matter, government employees scored a small victory this month by voicing disapproval of an increase in parking rates at the Criminal Justice Center Parking Garage.

When Central Parking Systems, which operates the garage for Metro, announced that daily parking rates would be increased from \$2 to \$3 per day for rooftop parking, employees signed a petition in protest. When the petition found its way to the mayor's office, an announcement followed that the rates would be rolled back to \$2 for the early birds. Rate adjustments for inside parking also were overturned.

## Offices to Close April 5 for Good Friday

All offices under jurisdiction of the Circuit Court Clerk will be closed on April 5 in celebration of Good Friday. This includes Circuit Court Clerk's Office, General Sessions Civil Division, Traffic Violations Bureau and Probate Court Clerk's Office. Offices will re-open on Monday, April 8.

## Richard, Jeanne Reach Altar After 15-Year Romance

Richard Arnold might be the biggest procrastinator in town, but he met his match when he was introduced to a young lady named Jeanne Tant, who bet that her patience could outlast his resistance in a meaningful relationship.

She won her bet last month. Fifteen years later.

It was a beautiful wedding. Family and friends packed the Knights of Columbus auditorium to witness the culmination of what might have been a record courtship.

Despite all those years of resistance, the groom showed no signs of being a reluctant participant. And, of course, the glowing smile on the face of the bride radiated messages of happiness and, well, triumph.

Arnold, son of legendary country music Hall of Famer Eddy Arnold, proudly announced that the couple would be spending their honeymoon on an ocean liner in the Caribbean following the big event.

The couple's smiles were still intact a week later when the new Mrs. Arnold returned to her daily routine with the Metro Personnel Department and the groom to his desk job in the Traffic Violations Bureau's warrant office.

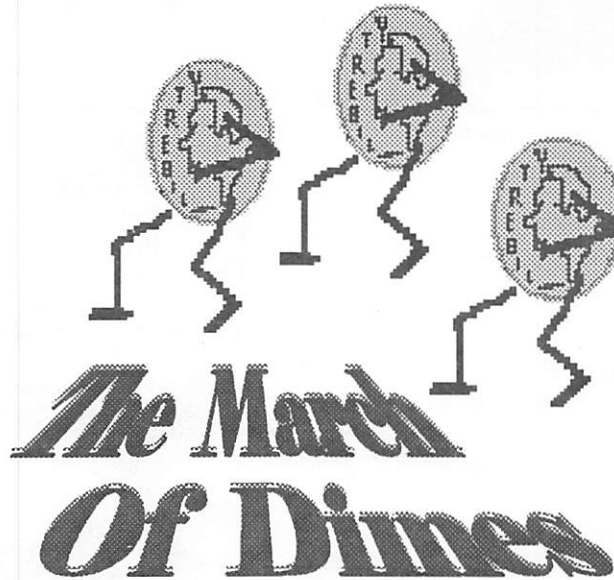
Of course, the part about them having any kind of a bet on who could hold out the longest was just a joke. There could never be a loser in such a happy ending romantic adventure. But if there actually had been a contest of endurance, Jeanne would have been declared the winner. Right?

Well, maybe not. We forgot to mention that the wedding took place on Feb. 29, Leap Year.

Richard only has to buy an anniversary gift every four years!

### In April

An obscure driving school for seniors could soon get more attention from the courts. A look at AARP's "55 Alive" program.



If you believe babies should have a healthy start in life, you could be a March of Dimes supporter.

If someone in your family or someone you know successfully gave birth last year, you could be a March of Dimes supporter.

If you have the stamina to walk five miles on a Sunday afternoon, you could be a March of Dimes supporter.

Or if the act of giving to worthy causes makes you feel good, you could be a March of Dimes supporter.

Even if you're a Jeff Foxworthy Redneck, you could be a March of Dimes supporter.

Truth is, you probably *should* be a March of Dimes supporter regardless of *who* you are. And your chance will come next month when the organization presents its WalkAmerica fund drive for the 26th consecutive year.

The schematic drawing below depicts the five-mile route hundreds of participating Nashvillians will trek on Sunday, April 28 in a physical display of support for the charity organization. Each step they take will represent sponsor donations that will ensure continued research and development for prevention of birth defects.

Most of Davidson County's elected officials (including Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker) are encouraging their employees to participate in the fund drive, either as walkers or as sponsors of walkers.

Metro government no longer includes the March of Dimes as a sanctioned event for employee participation. But elected officials are not bound by administration policies and most have continued to support the fund drive in addition to the government's consolidated charity campaign.

Last year, six of Rooker's employees participated in the Walkathon, bringing in \$737 in sponsor donations. Many other co-workers made contributions in lieu of walking.

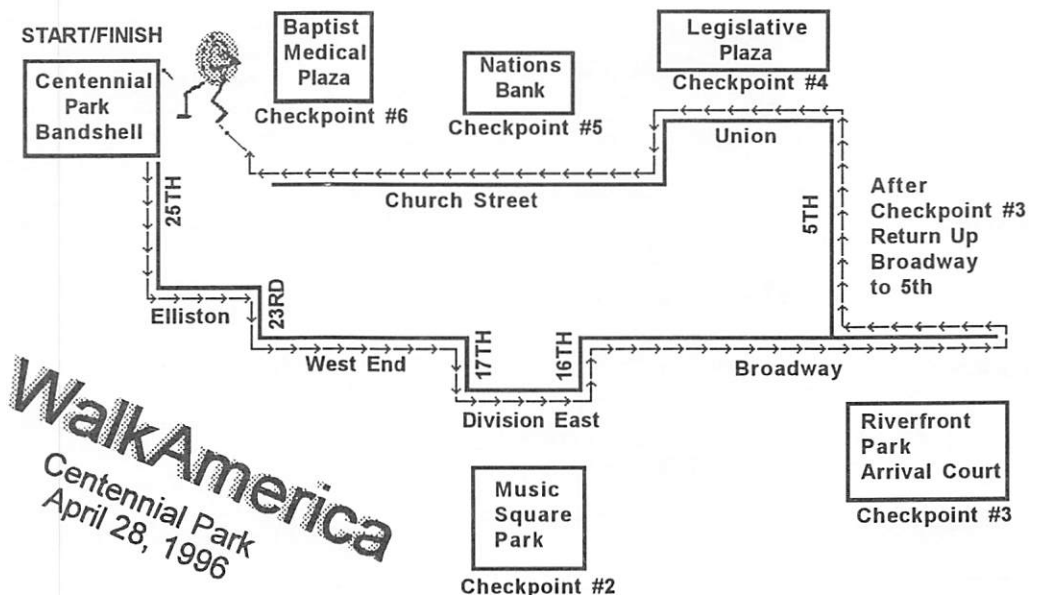
Nationwide, walkers have raised more than \$800 million during the drive's 26 years with 76 cents of every dollar going to fund research, education and special community projects to help babies be born healthy.

The effectiveness of the program is documented by such milestones as the development of lifesaving surfactant therapy to treat respiratory distress syndrome and breakthrough gene therapy that replaces defective genes with healthy ones.

The theme of this year's march is "Walk for Someone You Love." If you would care to participate, all the necessary paperwork is available through each department's chief clerk.

Walkers collecting \$75 in sponsorships will receive a WalkAmerica t-shirt and those collecting \$200 or more will get a sweatshirt. The individual collecting the most total dollars will win a three-night stay for two at a resort in the Bahamas.

Registration will be at 12 noon with the walk to start at 1 p.m.



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Statistics compiled for the month of February

### Case Information

#### Circuit Court

New Civil Cases Filed .....	297
Civil Cases Concluded .....	314
New Divorce Cases Filed .....	296
Divorce Cases Closed .....	295

#### General Sessions Civil

New Cases Filed .....	2,971
Executions Issued .....	2,292
Judgments Collected .....	\$497,642
Orders of Protection Petitions .....	121

#### Probate Court

New Cases Filed .....	192
Cases Closed .....	104
Cases Retired .....	0

#### Traffic Violations

Moving Citations .....	17,621
Parking Violations .....	7,807
Total Fines Collected .....	\$274,875
Nullifications .....	1,449
Nullification Fees Collected .....	\$13,041

### Circuit Court Jury Trial Verdicts

#### Week of February 5

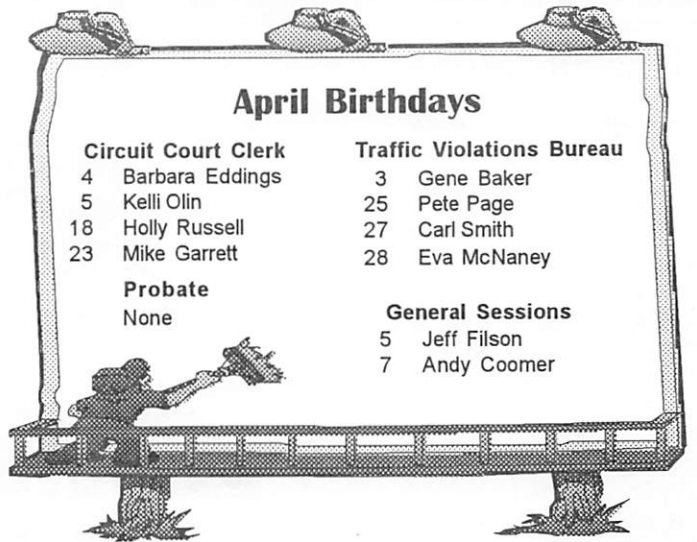
Case	Type	Court	Verdict
94C-2302	Personal Injury	6th (P)	\$55,000
94C-175	Auto Accident	5th	Defendant
94C-2977	Auto Accident	6th (P)	\$3,000
94C-1861	Auto Accident	5th (P)	\$50,000
93C-1705	Negligence	2nd (D)	Directed
93C-1202	Auto Accident	1st (P)	\$18,500

#### Week of February 12

Case	Type	Court	Verdict
94C-3110-3111	Building Permit (GSA)	5th (D)	\$50 fine
94C-2091	Auto Accident	6th (P)	\$10,500
93C-3063	Contract	1st (P)	\$4,354
92C-715	Slip/Fall	2nd	Defendant
94C-1935	Auto Accident	1st (P)	\$30,000
95C-1428	Personal Injury	5th (P)	\$2,372

#### Week of February 26

Case	Type	Court	Verdict
90C-2705	Auto Accident	6th (P)	\$50,000
91C-313	Auto Accident	1st (P)	\$40,642
91C-2857	Contract	1st	Defendant
95C-495	Auto Accident	2nd (P)	\$775
93C-3074	Auto Accident	6th (P)	No Award
95C-1343	Personal Injury (GSA)	2nd (P)	\$2,083



### April Birthdays

#### Circuit Court Clerk

4	Barbara Eddings
5	Kelli Olin
18	Holly Russell
23	Mike Garrett

#### Traffic Violations Bureau

3	Gene Baker
25	Pete Page
27	Carl Smith
28	Eva McNaney

#### Probate

None

#### General Sessions

5	Jeff Filson
7	Andy Coomer

## Cheers...

Country songstress **Crystal Gayle** scored another hit this month when she fulfilled her civic duty to pull jury duty. The Nashville beauty with the body-length hair not only responded to her juror summons, but was selected as a jury panelist in a criminal trial before Judge **Thomas H. Shriver**. Jury coordinator **Lisa Smith** said the country music superstar was very cordial and "even more beautiful in person" than on the screen. For that, Ms. Smith received an autographed photo of the coal miner's "other" daughter...As a deputy clerk in our General Sessions civil division, **Greg Jett** has his hands full. But the load doesn't get much lighter once he reaches home each evening. In fact, his responsibilities there increased last month when he and wife **Suzanne** welcomed their fourth child into the family. The couple is now buying diapers for new son **Dylan Campbell Jett**, a 7-pound, 11-ounce bundle of joy who arrived on Feb. 21 at Memorial Hospital. He measured 20 1/2 inches in the tale of the tape and reportedly is a hit with his big sister and two brothers...There were at least a half dozen other hospital events that had successful endings during recent weeks. In no particular order, we applaud the recoveries of the following associates:

Traffic Violations Bureau computer operator **Annette Wheeler**, back on the job after gallbladder surgery on Feb. 29 at Baptist Hospital...Metro mailman **Billy Chunn**, recovering at Baptist Hospital following surgery on March 14 to correct a brain passage blockage...**Steve Murff**, a state fire marshal and husband of traffic warrant clerk **Connie Murff**, recuperating from shoulder surgery...**Shelby Bright**, mother of traffic filing clerk **Rhonda Hall**, preparing to return to her executive post with Nations Bank following successful cancer surgery at Baptist Hospital...Deputy circuit court clerk **Holly Russell**, back at her desk after having surgery...**Beverly Estes** also has resumed her chores in the traffic bureau following recent surgery and fellow workers in all of our departments are rooting for audit clerk **Janice Yearwood**, who is presently undergoing medical tests.

## ...Tears

Deepest sympathy to the family of **Harold M. Love, Sr.**, a pioneer cultural and political leader, who died on March 13 at the age of 76. Mr. Love was a true statesman who served on the old city council and the Metro Council before devoting 24 years to the state House of Representatives. He served with dignity and sensitivity. His absence leaves an unfillable void in our community...We are also saddened by the passing of **Mearl St. Clair**, father of deputy circuit clerk **Carol Cullom**. Mr. St. Clair died unexpectedly at his home in Wisconsin on Feb. 26...Condolences also to deputy traffic clerk **Nikki Stephens** in the recent death of her grandmother, **Mary Edith Patterson**, who succumbed at her home in Hohenwald at the age of 84.

## Rooker Report

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Established by **George L. Rooker (1929-1993)**,  
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