

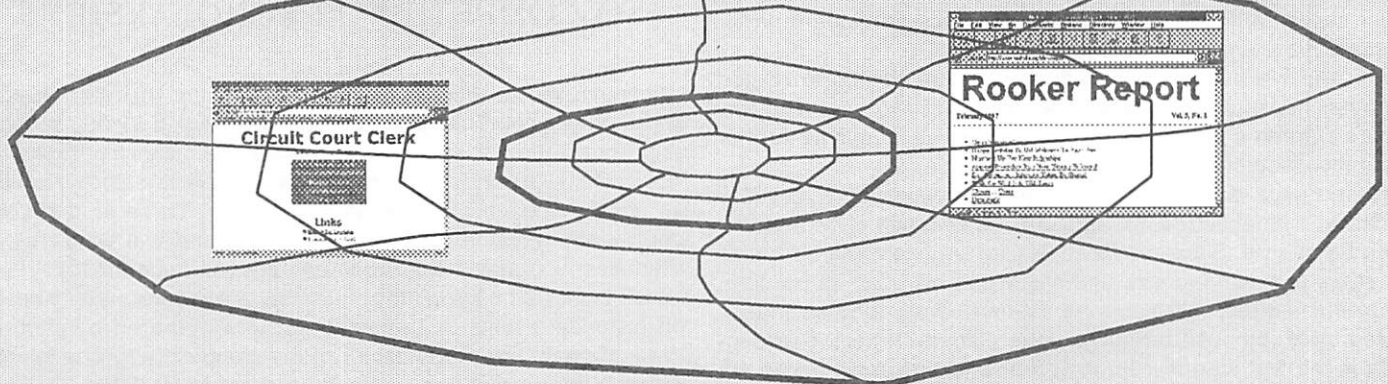
# Rooker Report

March 1997

Published by the Davidson County Circuit Court Clerk's Office

Vol.5, No. 2

## Catch Us on the Web



You'll soon be able to find us on the internet -- "us" being the Rooker Report and other vital information relative to the operations of the Circuit Court Clerk's office.

For months now, our crack computer team has been putting nose to grindstone to establish a web site that will be educational, entertaining and, most importantly, informative and helpful to those doing business with the civil court system.

Eventually, those with internet accessibility will be able to key in our web page for reference information pertaining to circuit court, general sessions civil, probate and traffic violations. It will all come in phases, starting with functions directly related to the circuit courts.

An exact date for start-up is awaiting approval of our selected on-line address: <http://www.nashville.org/cir>. Jot that down for future reference.

The web site is the latest in a series of technological services adopted by Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker during his five years at the helm -- all aimed at promoting office efficiency and a communicative bridge between the legal community and the courts.

The internet service follows on the heels of such innovative projects as computerized hall monitors, electronic case file access and high-speed, voice-activated telephone equipment to provide instant information regarding child support payments.

"We are continuously looking for ways to improve efficiency and to make available to the legal community informational guidelines essential to the judicial process," Rooker said.

The web page meets that criteria by providing a plethora of information relative to the functions of each department under the umbrella of Rooker's responsibility. Persons calling up the circuit court clerk page, for example, will find available links to such topics as local rules of procedure, filing fees and civil and domestic motion dockets that will be updated on a regular basis.

And, of course, the Rooker Report -- reproduced similarly to the printed hardcopy version.

Later, in addition to essential information on other departments, visitors to our web page can select such reference

(See LOOK AT US, Page 2)

## COURTS SPRUCING UP FOR MOCK TRIAL NATIONALS

The nation's keenest young legal minds will converge on Nashville in May to test their courtroom skills in the National High School Mock Trial Championships.

Sponsored by the Young Lawyers Division of the Tennessee Bar Association, the event will be staged on May 9-10 in all 20 courtrooms of the Metro Courthouse and the Ben West Building.

Court TV cameras will be on hand to record the competition for a documentary to be shown in the summer and volunteers from the Nashville Bar Association will assure a clean image by devoting a full day to spitting the two facilities in advance.

The national competition, begun in 1984 with only a handful of participating states, this year will attract more than 40 teams yet to be determined through state level competition. Tennessee's representative will be selected next month when the state finals are held in Memphis. Two teams from Nashville will compete in that elimination process.

The national event is expected to bring in between 700-800 people -- including participants, coaches and supporters -- from as far away as Guam and Alaska, according to attorney Jacqueline Dixon, one of the local coordinators.

The concept strives to give students a better understanding of the American justice system by allowing them to experience legal processes first hand. Through their role playing as lawyers, witnesses, plaintiffs and defendants, the students develop a clearer picture of the mechanism our society has chosen to resolve its disputes.

In attaining that result, qualifying students participate in an intense, two-day competition in which each team participates in a minimum of four trial rounds. Team rankings are determined by points acquired and rounds won in a "power match" system. A fifth, or final round, is held between the top two teams to determine first and second places.

(See MOCK TRIAL, Page 2)



**Look at Us!**

## Report Going Net

(From Page 1)

features as "A History of the Courts in Davidson County" and our earlier series "Wrinkles in the Walls" which chronicles the physical state of the aging Metro Courthouse.

Links also will be provided to information pertaining to related organizations, such as the Nashville Bar Association and the Tennessee Supreme Court, eliminating the need to initiate further destination searches.

The web page design is the creation of deputy circuit clerk Clay Hardin, who emphasized eye appeal in his selection of both graphics and type style. Since readability is ultra important, Hardin chose font styles according to size and clarity and, as often as possible, complemented text with soft tone colored background settings.

Noted chief computer technician Mike Garrett: "Attractive presentation is the first step in capturing reader attention. Chances are good that the reader will zero in on what you have to offer if it is packaged properly; if not, your efforts to provide valuable information could go for naught."

In some instances, graphic reproduction is impractical and sometimes impossible because of incompatible computer functions. For that reason, some graphics that appear in the printed version of the Rooker Report may be omitted in the internet presentation. In those situations, efforts will be made to offer an alternative visual equally representative of the original.

Availability of the report and other court-related information adds a new dimension of convenience for the judicial community.

### ◆ NOTES:

Mayor Phil Bredesen's recent call for blood donors drew an overwhelming response from government employees.

Metro Challenge 1,000 brought out 1,003 workers -- one-fourth of them giving for the first time --and the American Red Cross estimates that almost 2,400 lives were saved in hospitals throughout the Tennessee Valley Region as a result.

Each pint of blood went to help cancer and organ transplant patients, premature babies, accident and trauma victims and many others, according to Charles Wilcox, chief executive officer of the regional service.

◆  
Circuit Court Clerk employees were among a number of Metro Government departments receiving bronze awards for their contributions to the recent United Way fund drive, a major entity of the Metro Employee Consolidated Charities Campaign.

Bronze awards are presented to those organizations achieving an employee donation of \$20-\$49.99 per capita. Gold and Silver awards are presented for \$100 and \$50-plus per capita donations respectively.

Office workers in circuit, probate, general sessions civil and traffic violations combined for a department record \$4,229 in pledges.

◆  
Sue McKnight Evans will succeed Leon Ruben as presiding judge of General Sessions Court in September.

Evans, who was elected last year to complete the unexpired term of the late Donald Washburn, was the choice of fellow judges during the judges' annual election process earlier this year.

The presiding judge term runs for one year.

## National Mock Trial Coming to Nashville

### PREP TEAMS FROM 40 STATES TO COMPETE FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

(From Page 1)

All teams will be recognized and rewarded for their participation and achievement. The winning team will receive a \$2,000 scholarship from Court TV and a gavel-shaped championship trophy.

Each team will consist of eight student members, a teacher coach, an attorney coach and a state coordinator. Three students will portray attorneys, three will be witnesses and two will serve as alternates who may substitute in any position for a full trial.

Each team will be trying the same case, a whodunit mystery based on historical events in Tennessee. It was authored by attorney Wade Cowan, host and director of the competition whose intense lobbying three years ago brought the event to Nashville.

Cowan declined to reveal details of the test case at this time but promised that the trial resolution would be "entertaining." There are other adjectives he could have used as well, such as "interesting." Since the trial will be played out in 20 different courtrooms simultaneously, spectators conceivably could move from one courtroom to another, stay in sync with the testimony and compare the effectiveness of the various trial principals.

But that prospect could hit a snag if expected high spectator attendance maximizes courtroom capacity. Sixteen of the courtrooms are located in the courthouse and four are in the Ben West Building.

Cowan said local judges have been supportive of the event and will play a role in maintaining decorum throughout the two-day competition. Some of the judges, as well as local attorneys, will donate their services as participants in the trials. Each competing state team has been encouraged to provide a judge for the trial rounds.

A social event will be held at Opryland theme park on Friday night following the first day of competition. And an awards banquet will conclude the event on Saturday night at the Renaissance Hotel, which will serve as headquarters for guests.

Dixon said about \$90,000 has been raised thus far to help defray some of the overall expenses of the meet, which is partly financed by \$150 entry fees.

### *Building Clean-Up Project Scheduled for May 3*

In assuring the facilities make a good impression, volunteers from the Nashville Bar Association will devote an entire day on Saturday, May 3, to housecleaning and landscaping. Attorney John Kitch, who is heading up the clean-up project, anticipates support from the 250 lawyers who participated in last year's voluntary painting of the courthouse interior.

Kitch emphasized that only those areas accessible to the general public will be cleaned and the entire project will be carried out under the supervision of the Metro General Services Department.

Kitch said the main purpose of the voluntary clean-up would be "to make the facilities more comfortable for the people who have reason to be there."

Starting time and other instructive information will be announced as the work plan develops, he added.

*When the March of Dimes kicks off its annual Walk America campaign next month, the Metro Property Assessor's Office will dedicate its participation to the memory of a special young lady. The following article provides an insight into that person in hopes that other government workers will join the dedication.*

## A Tribute to Jarquise

Jarquise Renae McDowell came into this world before she was ready.

Sadly, she left the same way.

But the six short years in between were ones of joy and inspiration for those blessed by her presence. Her effervescent smile and radiant charm hid the pain of the vicious cerebral palsy that gripped her body every breathing second.

It would be difficult to say whether Jarquise realized she wasn't a normal child. Normalcy was a luxury she never experienced. She could only assume that she was *different* from others her own age, that she lacked the motor skills to emulate their physical activities.

She accepted her fate with unrelenting courage and compensated for her weaknesses with a magnetic personality that captivated the hearts of those around her.

Some of her biggest fans were the employees of the Metro Property Assessor's office where Jarquise was a frequent guest of her grandmother Bertha Harris, a 22-year government employee.

It was during those visits that Jarquise got the chance to show off her pretty dresses -- much like the one in the photograph at right. There was always an angelic aura that lingered long after her visits had ended, some workers claimed.

Shortly after her last visit there, however, Jarquise was stricken with a double dose of illness -- pneumonia and tonsillitis. Doctors removed her tonsils and provided medication for her pneumonia, but her mother Sonya McDowell noticed that the little girl continued to have problems with her breathing.

Upon further examination, doctors discovered that a flap attached to Jarquise's esophagus was not functioning properly and that corrective surgery would be required.

The surgery was scheduled for a later date and Jarquise was sent home to wait. Upon arriving home, the little girl shocked her mother by requesting some pancakes, a food she had never wanted before.

Despite her curiosity, her mother prepared the pancakes and was pleasantly surprised when Jarquise seemed to enjoy them.

As was customary, the little girl followed the meal with a nap.

She never woke up.

The story of Jarquise is one of multiplicity in the brutal collective world of children with birth defects. Despite the advancements of medical science, the war on this many tentacled monster continues to rage at unacceptable velocity and victory remains an elusive ally.

But the thought of waving a white flag has never been entertained. Inklings of progress in the areas of medical and therapeutic research continue to bolster the determination of a firm-fisted nation bent on bringing the dreaded enemy to its knees.

The hope of eventual resolution resides in the healthy hearts of a compassionate public whose lives have been touched -- either directly or indirectly -- by the loss of an afflicted child.



**JARQUISE RENAE MCDOWELL**  
...her memory inspires fund drive

There is perhaps no greater collective force of achieving that resolution than the March of Dimes. Through its annual Walk America campaign, the organization pours astronomical amounts of donor dollars into research and development that will someday help ensure healthy starts for all infants.

This year's event here will be held on Sunday, April 27. Participants will walk a five-mile route, starting at 1 p.m. from the Centennial Park Bandshell. All the necessary paperwork is available at each department of government.

As always, there are prizes and incentives for collecting sponsorship money. Participants with at least \$75 in donations will receive an official Walk America tee-shirt and \$200-plus earns an additional sweatshirt. The individual raising the largest dollar amount will be awarded a luxurious three-night stay for two in the Bahamas (air fare included).

But for many Metro participants there is a more spiritual motivation -- the memory of a little girl named Jarquise.



Statistics compiled for the month of February

### Case Information

#### Circuit Court

New Civil Cases Filed.....	294
Civil Cases Concluded.....	347
New Divorce Cases Filed.....	320
Divorce Cases Concluded.....	288

#### General Sessions Civil

New Cases Filed.....	3,069
Executions Issued.....	2,803
Judgments Collected.....	\$522,134
Orders of Protection Petitions.....	172

#### Probate Court

New Cases Filed.....	162
Cases Closed.....	93

#### Traffic Violations

Moving Citations.....	21,588
Parking Violations.....	11,242
Total Fines Collected.....	\$297,877
Nullifications.....	1,993
Nullification Fees Collected.....	\$17,937

### Circuit Court Jury Trial Verdicts

#### Week of January 27

Case	Type	Court	Verdict
95C-1489	Med. Malpractice	3rd	Hung Jury
94C-249	Auto Accident	1st	Hung Jury
93C-1127	Auto Accident	6th (P)	\$21,500

#### Week of February 3

Case	Type	Court	Verdict
94C-2692	Slip/Fall	6th (P)	\$25,000
96C-2230	GSA/Auto Accident	1st (P)	\$2,937
94C-1195	Auto Accident	2nd (P)	\$12,733
96C-2424	GSA/Auto Accident	6th	Defendant
96C-1283	Auto Accident	Ch.II (P)	\$2,950
95C-1077	Auto Accident	3rd (P)	\$2,500
94C-2643	Auto Accident	1st (P)	\$2,210

#### Week of February 18

Case	Type	Court	Verdict
95C-2511	Auto Accident	2nd (P)	No Award
91C-1828	Auto Accident	1st	Defendant
95C-2446	Auto Accident	2nd (P)	\$1,000

#### Week of February 24

Case	Type	Court	Verdict
93C-3766	Auto Accident	3rd	Defendant
96C-374	Assault	6th	Defendant
94C-3856	Auto Accident	2nd (P)	\$10,000
95C-1582	Assault	1st	Hung Jury
90C-3159	Condemnation	6th (D)	\$180,000
95C-1972	Auto Accident	2nd (P)	\$15,000
92C-325	Contract	Ch.II	Defendant

#### AARP '55 Alive' Mature Driving Course Schedule

April 1-2 -- MNEA Building, State Fairgrounds, Nashville, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Registration: Phone 859-2327 Instructor: Ken West

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April 7&9 -- Portland Hospital, 105 Red Bud Drive, Portland, 8 a.m.-noon  
Registration: Phone 868-5500 Instructor: Fred Clinard

## April Birthdays

<b>Circuit Court Clerk</b>	<b>Traffic Violations Bureau</b>
4 Barbara Eddings	3 Gene Baker
5 Beverly Goodwin	25 Pete Page
Kelli Olin	27 Carl Smith
6 Cathy Cook	28 Eva McNaney
11 Will Cripps	<b>General Sessions</b>
18 Holly Russell	5 Jeff Filson
23 Mike Garrett	7 Andy Coomer
	<b>Probate</b>
	none

## Cheers...

Criminal Court Judge **J. Randall Wyatt** became a grandfather for the fourth time this month when daughter **Angie Monger** and her husband **Lloyd** presented him with a grandson in Jackson, Tenn. **Robert Lloyd Monger Jr.** came in ready to play football at 8 pounds, 15 ounces. This evens the score for the proud judge, who now has two granddaughters and two grandsons.

## ...Tears

Former Traffic Violations Bureau employee **Dorothy Whitmon**, 67, passed away last month at St. Thomas Hospital after suffering a stroke. She worked for the bureau from 1986-88 and also was a former Tennessee State University staff member.

Retired Nashville **Banner** reporter **Dick Battle**, 89, died Feb. 26 at his home here. He was a noted courthouse reporter for the **Banner** for 40 years beginning in 1933 until his retirement in 1973 and was instrumental in creating the metropolitan government charter. His wife **Dorothy** survives.

Attorney **William L. Underhill's** mother **Marie Clark Underhill**, 90, passed away. She was the grandmother of **Bill Underhill**, former law clerk for circuit judge **Muriel Robinson**.

Retired attorney **John R. Cheadle, Sr.**, 66, died March 10 at his home of lung cancer. Survivors include two sons (attorney **John R. Cheadle Jr.** and **Dudley Cheadle**, who is attending law school) and two daughters (**Evaline Cheadle** and **Marian Fordyce**), both attorneys.

Sympathy to two employees of our general sessions civil division who lost close family members recently. **Mary Dobbins'** mother **Evie Ford** passed away in Mansfield, Louisiana and **Kim Davenport** said goodbye to her grandmother **Marie Burns** earlier this month.

Attorney **Herman L. King**, 89, died March 11 at Baptist Hospital. He practiced law in Nashville from 1932-40 and was a publishing administrator with Baptist Sunday School Board. His wife, son and two grandchildren survive.

We also offer our belated sympathy to the family of attorney **Fred Newman**, who passed away early last month, and to deputy Criminal Court Clerk **Geraldine Searcy**, whose son **Keith** succumbed to an extended illness this month.

## Rooker Report

Published by the Davidson County Circuit Court Clerk's Office  
506 Metro Courthouse, Nashville, TN 37201

Established by **George L. Rooker (1929-1993)**,  
(Circuit Court Clerk, 1968-1993)

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**Gene Baker**..... Editor