

Rooker Report

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SPACING OUT

SESSIONS JUDGES WRESTLE WITH DOCKET REALIGNMENT TO SUIT UPCOMING COURT EXPANSION

With court expansion just around the corner, General Sessions judges are groping with the task of assigning space to best accommodate additional dockets and personnel associated with them.

It's not an easy task, given the variety of case genre.

The idea is to physically separate criminal dockets from civil case dockets without causing inconvenience to clerks and other court personnel specializing in each type.

Caught in the middle are Metro traffic cases, classified as civil but destined to remain in the Ben West Building, which otherwise will be exclusively devoted to criminal dockets. But because of the large clerical staff needed to service the massive volume of paperwork associated with traffic cases, relocation of those dockets would not be practical at present time.

One other exception to the physical grouping under current proposals being considered by the judges could be the weekly civil order of protection docket. Even though all other civil dockets will be heard in new facilities at the Stahlman Building, judges are discussing the possibility of relocating order of protection hearings to the third floor of the courthouse. Criminal dockets currently assigned there will

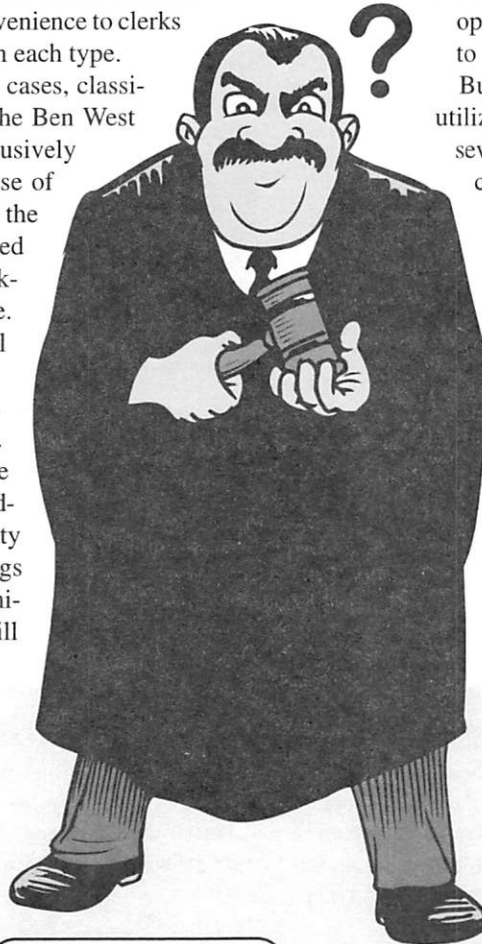
be moved to the Ben West Building.

Should that proposal be adopted by the judges, the docket clerk for the General Sessions Civil Division will be required to commute between the Stahlman Building and the courthouse. Some consider such a prospect to be self-defeating in light of the civil court expansion project, which will require clerical operations to relocate in the Stahlman Building to be convenient to the new courtrooms.

But judges apparently want to retain maximum utilization of the two third floor courtrooms, since several of them maintain adjacent offices and clerical staff there. They plan to retain the weekly revoked driver's license docket in one courtroom while designating the other for pre-determined lengthy hearings on non-specified types of cases.

While nothing is set in concrete at this point, the clock is running. Two additional judges will take office in September and a definite organizational plan must be in place to accommodate the expansion.

From a facility standpoint, work crews are continuing to prepare the second floor of the Stahlman Building for construction of



SEE COURT SHUFFLE, PAGE 3

STAHLMAN BUILDING

COURTROOM 1

CIVIL DOCKETS

COURTROOM 2

CIVIL DOCKETS

COURTROOM 3

CIVIL DOCKETS

METRO COURTHOUSE

COURTROOM 1

? REVOKED DRIVER'S LICENSE
? ORDERS OF PROTECTION

COURTROOM 2

? PRE-SET SPECIAL HEARINGS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER

COURTROOM 1

CRIMINAL JAIL DOCKET

PROPOSED COURTROOM 2

? CRIMINAL JAIL DOCKET

BEN WEST BUILDING

COURTROOM 1

CRIMINAL DOCKETS

COURTROOM 2

TRAFFIC DOCKETS

COURTROOM 3

CRIMINAL DOCKETS

COURTROOM 4

CRIMINAL DOCKETS

Cheers...

Sue DuMont took a parttime job with the county government in 1957, probably never realizing that four decades later she would still be around to pick up a retirement check. But after upgrading to fulltime status and excelling as a judicial deputy clerk, she was hooked on public service as a career. She thinks now, however, that she has done her time and, come March 31, will say goodbye to the courthouse that has been her official second home for 39-plus years. She will take fond memories with her, along with sad ones. Three of the four bosses she has served will not be around to see her off. Former circuit court clerks Alf Rutherford and George L. Rooker have both passed away, as has Probate Judge Jim Everett. But current clerk Richard Rooker says he plans to be on hand when fellow workers in the probate office host a retirement luncheon in her honor on March 26 -- a fitting tribute to a job well done.



Sue DuMont

◆ Another member of the Traffic Violations Bureau staff has resigned to accept a position with the Metro Police Department. **Anita Stewart** bid adieu on Feb. 27, joining co-worker **Kelly Hollingsworth**, who entered the police training academy earlier in the month.

◆ When **Mark Herring**, a file clerk in our circuit office, learned that his church was seeking volunteers for missionary work in Haiti, he readily made himself available. He is now counting the days until his April departure for a mission that will benefit an orphanage on behalf of Riverside Baptist Church. We send along our admiration and best wishes for a safe and productive nine-day mission.

◆ After dating for the better part of eight years, traffic docket clerk **Beverly Swafford** and former Metro Codes employee **Virgil G. Bryant** chose Valentine's Day to affirm a lifetime commitment. The couple tied the knot at The Wedding Chapel in Springfield, then honeymooned in Gatlinburg.

◆ Meantime, two deputy circuit court clerks who work side-by-side on our customer counter and whose birthdays both fall on April 5-- **Beverly Goodwin** and **Rebecca Self** -- have something else in common -- upcoming wedding dates.

◆ Beverly will marry longtime beau **Lanier Rawls** in a May 16 private ceremony. Rawls, a United Parcel Service employee, presented Beverly with an engagement ring last Christmas and is now ready to deliver a matching band. After exchanging vows, the couple will jet off to an unspecified island in the Caribbean.

◆ Rebecca and fiance **Bruce Harborth** will return to the scene of their first meeting -- a rural German dance hall in their native Texas - -to repeat their vows. And, just so folks don't get the wrong impression, the dance hall is "a really neat folksy, family, German culture type place," says the excited bride-to-be. The ceremony, to be followed by "a really neat folksy, family, German culture type" reception, will take place on June 6.



April Birthdays

Circuit Court Clerk	Probate	Traffic Violations	General Sessions
3 Gene Baker	11 Will Cripps	25 Pete Page	5 Jeff Filson
4 Barbara Eddings		27 Carl Smith	
5 Beverly Goodwin		28 Eva McNaney	
Kelli Olin			
Rebecca Self			
6 Cathy Cook			
18 Holly Russell			
23 Mike Garrett			

...Tears

The Nashville legal community lost another role model last month with the passing of former General Sessions Judge **Robert Murphy**, who succumbed to respiratory failure while confined to Baptist Hospital. He was 75 years old. He devoted most of his adult life to the legal profession -- a



Judge Murphy

productive career highlighted by 17 years of service on the bench. His snow white mane and distinguished looks fit the stereotypical profile of the position. Following his unsuccessful bid for a third eight-year term in 1990, he returned to private practice and remained active until his fatal illness. Much of his wisdom was gained through vast travel experiences abroad. He developed a passion for bullfighting during frequent visits to Spain and enjoyed expounding on his expertise of the sport to anyone who would listen. His ability to graphically relate his experiences endeared him to people of all social status. His professional philosophy of equality was no different, as supported by his strong belief that every individual is entitled to his day in court. We salute his contributions.

◆ We are equally saddened by the passing of former Metro councilman **Billy Spain**, who met a tragic death at his Madison home on Feb. 19. In addition to his productive service to the community, he was a family man whose surviving children include **Penny Hubbell**, a cashier in the circuit court clerk's office. We extend our condolences to his widow and other surviving family members.

◆ Deepest sympathy also to **Margaret Blair**, longtime deputy in our General Sessions Civil Division office, whose grandmother **Cornelia Morehead** passed away on Feb. 3.

◆ Former Metro Sheriff **John Frazier** suffered the loss of his wife **Martha (Cindy) Frazier** on Feb. 26. She was a clerk with the Metro Police Department before relenting to leukemia. Both she and her husband were patients at Vanderbilt Hospital at the time of her death.

Timely Reminders

◆ DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME goes into effect on Sunday, April 5. That means one hour of lost sleep until Autumn when you'll be paid back. Just don't forget to pay up first.



◆ THE ANNUAL MARCH OF DIMES WALK-AMERICA event will be held on Sunday, April 26 and employees are encouraged to participate -- either by walking or sponsoring others. Entry forms are available in each department. The five-mile walk will originate and conclude at Centennial Park. The route will be the same as last year.

Rooker Report

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

Richard R. Rooker Circuit Court Clerk
Gene Baker Editor

NORMAN ROBINSON, chief of court security for Nashville's state trial courts, will be host to representatives from 10 counties during a three-day court security seminar to be conducted by the U. S. Marshals Service April 14-16. The event will focus on...



NORMAN ROBINSON

SECURING THE COURTROOM



Is the threat of violence in the courtroom abated by the confiscation of potential weapons at security checkpoints?

Not entirely.

While the presence of metal detectors at the Metro Courthouse each year prevents thousands of life-threatening items from entering the premises, there are no mechanisms for controlling human emotion that can erupt from the outcome of court cases.

For that aspect, there are court security officers specially trained to detect potentially explosive situations and respond in a preventive mode. So says Norman Robinson, chief of court security for Davidson County's state trial courts, who will play host next month to 75 such officers seeking to learn the latest techniques in courtroom security.

A three-day seminar conducted by the U. S. Marshals Service will upgrade support personnel from Davidson and nine other surrounding counties on state-of-the-art equipment and techniques relevant to preserving courtroom decorum. Classes will take place April 14-16 in the jury assembly room of the courthouse.

The seminar will not interfere with normal court business, Robinson said, because judges will be attending a judicial conference on those dates.

Court personnel from all four divisions of Criminal Court, six Circuit Courts and the Davidson County Sheriff's Department have enrolled for the classes.

Training topics -- among others -- will include judicial risk management, physical security aids, high threat trials, sequestered juries, identifying contemporary threat groups, explosive recognition and searches, officer survival and dealing with prisoners in court.

"The seminar will provide a comprehensive and complete curriculum to be used as a guideline for implementation by the participants," said Robinson. "Students will be acquainted with the expanding importance of practicing implementation of plans, policies and procedures to enhance the mission of judicial court security and personal security within the judicial family."

The three-day course is an abbreviated version of the normal five-day program conducted at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia, Robinson added.

PUTTING THE MOVE ON DEADBEAT TENANTS

Deadbeat tenants of the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) are finding themselves on the outs much quicker these days.

The agency has increased its court appearance frequency for detainer warrants from once a month to twice weekly, sharply accelerating eviction of tenants who fail to pay their rents.

Normally, about 325 such cases are brought before the court each month. Under the previous arrangement, it took about a month to get a detainer case on the docket, plus the statutory 10-day wait before service of process to effect eviction.

The detainer cases are now being heard each Tuesday and Thursday on the 9 a.m. General Sessions civil docket.

COURT SHUFFLE: TUNING UP FOR UPCOMING EXPANSION

(From Page 1)

three new courtrooms, judicial offices and a new home for the clerk's civil division office. Once the clerk's office vacates its present quarters in the Ben West Building, the space there will be readied for new tenants.

Current plans call for the ground floor area to be occupied by the court's Pre-Trial Release staff, a small satellite office for the criminal court clerk and a new judges' conference room.

Space currently occupied by Pre-Trial Release in the Criminal Justice Center, combined with a small area donated by the sheriff's department, will be converted to a second mini-courtroom to accommodate a growing number of jail docket cases.

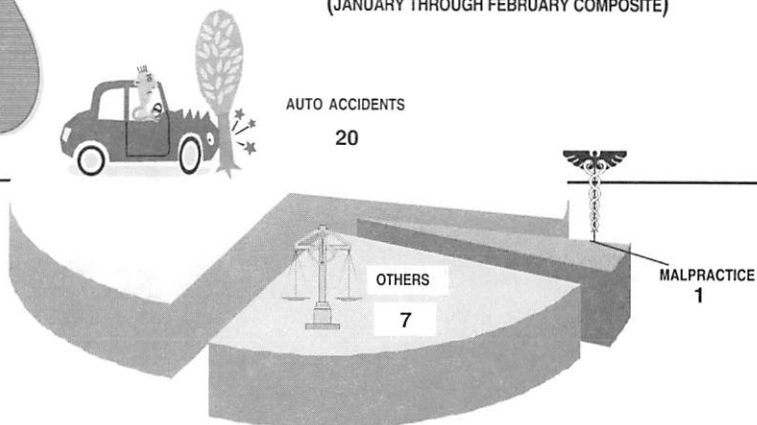
Once the new system is in place, visitors to the court venues can expect to face an elaborate security screening process, similar to the one at the Metro Courthouse. Judges have approved installation of metal detectors at the main entrances of the Ben West Building and at the entry to the second floor courtrooms in the Stahlman Building.

Meanwhile, a study is being conducted to determine the feasibility of a new courts building. Which poses the probability that today's remedies will be nothing more than tomorrow's memories.

TRENDS

Jury Trials by Classification

(JANUARY THROUGH FEBRUARY COMPOSITE)



DATA BANK

Statistics compiled for the month of February

CASE INFORMATION

Circuit Court

NEW CIVIL CASES FILED	231
CIVIL CASES CONCLUDED	400
NEW DIVORCE CASES FILED	264
DIVORCE CASES CONCLUDED	257

General Sessions Civil

NEW CASES FILED	2,866
EXECUTIONS ISSUED	2,818
JUDGMENTS COLLECTED	\$536,856
ORDER OF PROTECTION PETITIONS	180

THE JANUARY LISTING OF EXECUTIONS ISSUED SHOULD HAVE READ 3,234. A MISPRINT CAUSED THE FIGURE TO READ 23,234. WE REGRET THE ERROR.

Probate Court

NEW CASES FILED	160
CASES CLOSED	124

Traffic Violations

MOVING CITATIONS	23,923
PARKING VIOLATIONS	10,385
TOTAL FINES COLLECTED	\$334,955
NULLIFICATIONS	2,836
NULLIFICATION FEES COLLECTED	\$25,524

SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES

	FEBRUARY	YTD
TOTAL CASES CONSIDERED	11	29
Auto Accidents	7	18
Negligence	0	2
Assault	0	1
Store Injury	0	1
Wrongful Death	1	1
Condemnation	0	1
Indecent Exposure	0	1
Contract Dispute	1	1
Slip & Fall	1	1
Defamation	1	1
Medical Malpractice	1	1

DISPOSITIONS

	FEBRUARY	YTD
Settled	4	10
Pending settlement	0	5
No settlement reached	2	2
Trials with jury verdicts	0	1
Dismissals	0	3
Summary judgments	0	0
Pre-conference settlements	2	5
Post-conference settlements	2	2
Non-suits	0	0
Bankruptcies	0	0
Continued	1	1

FEBRUARY JURY TRIAL VERDICTS

Week of February 2

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT
96C-1503	MED. NEGLIGENCE	1ST	HUNG JURY
97C-2008/2017	AUTO ACCIDENT	5TH	DEF/CNTR. PLTF
96C-785	PERSONAL INJURY	6TH	(P) \$40,250
97C-1051	GSA AUTO	5TH	DEFENDANT
95C-3246/3354	AUTO ACCIDENT	3RD	HUNG JURY

Week of February 9

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT
96C-2071	AUTO ACCIDENT	2ND	(P) \$49,778
96C-4091	AUTO ACCIDENT	5TH	(P) \$50,000
97C-1142	GSA AUTO	2ND	DEFENDANT

Week of February 23

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT
95C-4161	PERSONAL INJURY	6TH	DEFENDANT
96C-3195	AUTO ACCIDENT	5TH	(P) \$4,676
96C-3197			
97C-215			
95C-4183/4401	AUTO ACCIDENT	1ST	(P) \$3,500
96C-950	AUTO ACCIDENT	2ND	DEFENDANT
97C-1855	GSA AUTO	CRIM. 1	(P) \$1.00
97C-1596	CRIMINAL	5TH	NOT GUILTY

FEBRUARY NON-JURY TRIAL RESULTS

Week of February 17

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT
96C-2237	WORK COMP	1ST	(P) \$76,075
96C-428	WORK COMP	5TH	(P) 7.5% Dis.
95C-2901	DAMAGES	5TH	(P) \$6,500
96C-2883	AUTO ACCIDENT	1ST	(P) \$15,000
94C-2721	SLIP/FALL	1ST	DEFENDANT
96C-2849	AUTO ACCIDENT	1ST	(P) \$34,000
97C-1124	AUTO ACCIDENT	6TH	(P) \$4,500
97C-133	DAMAGES	6TH	(P) \$3,461

*GENERAL SESSIONS APPEALS

Jury	*CASES ALSO LISTED IN 'JURY TRIAL VERDICTS' SECTION.					
CASE	TYPE	GS JUDGMENT	APPEALED BY	CIRCUIT JUDGMENT		
97C-1051	AUTO	(P) \$750	(P)	DEFENDANT		
97C-1142	AUTO	DEFENDANT	(P)	DEFENDANT		
97C-1855	AUTO	\$5,000	(D)	(P) \$1.00		
Non-Jury	CASE	COURT	TYPE	GS JUDGMENT	APPEALED BY	CIRCUIT JUDGMENT
	97C-1687	5TH	CONTRACT	DEFENDANT	(P)	PENDING
	97C-1309	6TH	CONTRACT	(P) \$5,136	(D)	DEFENDANT