

ROOKER REPORT

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AFTER 35 YEARS, CHANCERY'S WILLIS RETIRING

Doris Willis joined the Chancery Court Clerk and Master's office in 1965 and never had a serious thought about leaving.

Until now.



WILLIS

"You just know when it's time," she said of her decision to retire this month, leaving behind the daily routine that has marked her adult life.

After May 25 (when judges, lawyers, co-workers and courthouse associates will toast her at an open house) her new routine will be playing golf, socializing with other retired friends and helping care for her mother, who is bedridden.

Ironically, her last day on the job comes only nine days after her 35th anniversary date in the office. During those years, she has served nine chancellors and four clerk and masters.

But what she cherishes most, she says, is the personal enrichment she has received through her relationship with the people surrounding her. "You grow by the people around you," she said.

Willis has reciprocated by providing "common sense advice and going the extra mile to help lawyers on their way," said current Clerk and Master Claudia Bonnyman, who has been Willis' boss since 1989.

That speaks well for someone who provides assistance to fifty or more citizens each day. She has earned her leave.

CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS WILL BE REQUIRED

NEW PROBATE POLICY PROMOTES EFFICIENCY

A new procedure designed to provide more efficient service to attorneys practicing law in the Probate Court will be adopted on July 1, Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker has announced.

Starting on that date, the clerk's office will request that all matters heard by Probate Master Bob Bradshaw be set by appointment.

The new appointment system will apply to hearings regarding Small Estate Affidavits, Applications for Letters, Petitions to Probate, and Annual and Final Settlements in estates, guardianships and conservatorships.

Currently, those matters are accommodated on a first-come, walk-in basis, often resulting in unscheduled delays for attorneys or their representatives.

Rooker stressed that walk-ins would still be accommodated when the appointment procedure goes into effect, but they would be required to wait for scheduled hearings



BOB BRADSHAW
PROBATE MASTER

to be completed before being granted an audience with the probate master.

"The new procedure should be very easy for attorneys to follow," Bradshaw opined, "since local rules already require notification to all interested parties of hearings before the probate master.

"Therefore, a phone call to the clerk's office should not be an inconvenience to anyone practicing probate."

Rooker said such a system had been advocated by Pro-

bate Judge Frank Clement Jr. for some time as a way to provide a better work flow.

"This should make it easier on everybody involved," he added.

All appointments will be coordinated by deputy clerk Gay Parker, said Rooker, who emphasized that "appointment times will vary throughout the business day and any special request for a specific date and time will be accommodated." The phone number for appointments is 862-5980.

THE JUDGE WHO WON ELECTION AFTER HIS DEATH

When older lawyers get together to talk about the good old days, their fondest memories usually are about funny things that have happened in the courtroom and the people who characterized a particular era.

If you've ever had an opportunity to sit in on one of these sessions, you would probably agree to pay admission for a repeat performance. Not only do the stories provide excellent entertainment, they instill a sense of history not found in any other form.

Take, for example, the time when a General Sessions judge running for reelection in 1966 defeated his opponent in the June Democratic primary, despite the fact that he had died several days before the election.

That judge was the colorful Brown Taylor, who at the age of 73 had served 28 years on the General Sessions bench and was considered a shoo-in for another eight-year term until he failed to overcome pneumonia just days

before the 1966 primary.

Out of fairness to Taylor's lone opponent, Nashville attorney John I. Harris, the county's Democratic Primary Board pasted a blank piece of paper over Taylor's name on the ballot. But Taylor's popularity with the voters prevailed, precipitating a vacancy for the nomination.

The executive committee would then select attorney Joe C. Loser Jr., who went on to win the August general election as the Democratic nominee.

In casting their primary votes for a deceased candidate, the county's Democrats were symbolically echoing their appreciation for the late judge's many years of dedicated service with a flair.

Taylor endeared himself to the public immediately upon his initial election to the bench. His first act was to advertise in the local newspapers that

SEE THE JUDGE, PAGE 3



The official photo at left will grace the cover of the General Sessions Court's 1999 annual report and guide, scheduled for circulation later this month.

The only difference is that the picture, as well as the entire 17x22-inch foldout brochure, will be in full color, providing an attractive overview of the court's operations for the past calendar year.

It marks the fourth year the court has published the report for distribution to governmental and judicial agencies and the general public at no charge.

Not only does the publication chronicle each phase of the court's operations for the year (in words, statistics and charts), it serves as a valuable reference for those interested in learning how the lower court system works and its impact on the community.

CHEERS...

If you think the kid shown here is a cutie pie, you're not alone. Judges in the Nashville Photogenic Contest at Cool Springs Mall last month agreed, presenting him with the "Judge's Pick" trophy as the "most beautiful baby." He is 18-month-old **Spencer Herring**, son of circuit filing clerk **Mark Herring** and wife **Julie**. The contest, sponsored by the mall, attracted a high number of children under two years of age--all of whom were photographed by a professional photographer assigned to the event. But it was an 8x10 shot of Spencer, similar to this one, that brought home the blue ribbon. Who could argue with the judge's choice?



SPENCER

◆ **Jeff Filson**, a member of the Traffic Warrant Office team, also is showing parental pride following the birth of his second son. Jeff and wife **Alison** welcomed **Evan Clarke Filson** to the family on April 17. The new addition weighed 8 pounds, 10 ounces and measured 21.5 inches in length. He will grow to become a playmate for big brother **Adam**.

◆ When deputy general sessions clerk **Caroline Sobel** changed her name to Mrs. **J. Crouch** in March, she set off a chain reaction within our courthouse family. There have since been two other weddings and another is forthcoming.

Caroline and J. have returned to the work-a-day world (he is a teacher at Middle Tennessee State University) following a European honeymoon that included a stop in London, where they met. In case you were unable to attend the big church wedding, Caroline has a huge photo album that mirrors its splendor.

◆ While you're at it, you can also check out the wedding pictures of **Emily Slaughter**, 22, and **David Basil**, 25, who repeated vows on April 22. Emily is the daughter of general sessions cashier **Connie Colley** and **Ed Colley**. She is a senior at Middle Tennessee State University and he is an electronics engineer.

◆ Editor **Gene Baker**, meanwhile, hopes to get a couple of pictures from the wedding of granddaughter **Cari Ann Kingsbury**, who became Mrs. **Jimmy Garrett** in ceremonies at First Baptist Church in Hendersonville on May 13. The couple set sail for the Bahamas after the wedding. She is the daughter of **Lance** and **Paula Kingsbury** of Hendersonville and he is the son of **James** and **Judy Garrett**, also of Hendersonville.

◆ An Aug. 19 wedding is planned for Sheriff's Department warrant officer **David Davenport** and **Tracey Cozart** of Murfreesboro. David is the son of General Sessions court officer **Carol Crews** and **Carl Crews**. The bride-to-be is employed by Sun Trust Bank as a personal account executive. The wedding will take place at Fall Creek Falls.

◆ General Sessions security guard **John Rucker** has returned to work following bypass surgery. "I got to where I would have to stop and rest six or seven times between the Stahlman Building and the courthouse," he said. Rucker mans the security desk on the second floor of the Stahlman Building.

DRUG COURT GETS \$ BOOST FROM UNITED WAY GIVERS

The Nashville Drug Court Support Foundation got an appreciable financial boost this year from designated contributions to the United Way campaign.

Criminal Court Judge **Seth Norman**, who presides over the successful alternative punishment court, said supporters of the program pledged \$3,514 to the foundation--a 57 percent increase over the previous year's gifts.



NORMAN

The funds will go toward defraying operating costs of the drug court program, which is administered by the Davidson County Community Corrections Program under judicial direction of Norman.

The drug court concept is gaining nationwide momentum in recognizing that drug addiction can be treated and persons who have an addiction can become law-abiding, productive members of the community, Norman said.

The concept is to hold non-violent felony offenders accountable for their actions while treating their drug addiction. The program is a minimum of 12 months in length.

Complete information about the drug court program or how to make a contribution to the foundation is available by calling 862-8370, ext. 8495.

June Birthdays

General Sessions
3 Sandra Perryman
14 Kim Clary

Circuit Court Clerk

1 Ashley Rooks
2 Dan Vincent
14 Skyla Carnahan
17 Mary Stephens
21 Virginia Laarz
24 Ronnell Griffin

Traffic Violations

8 Stacey Woods
13 Samantha Crawford
27 Joanie Young
29 Teresa Johnson

Probate Clerk
none

...TEARS

Condolences to Chancellor **Carol McCoy** in the April 15 death of her mother **Catherine Barnes McCoy**, 79, of Tampa, Fla., who passed away at her daughter's home here where she had been staying while undergoing treatment for colon cancer.

Sympathy to attorney **Rose Palermo** in the April 19 death of her father **Carmine C. "Charlie" Palermo**, a stroke victim. He was 88.

Elvin C. Chance, 92, grandfather of General Sessions deputy clerk **Del Mix** and great-grandfather of deputy circuit clerk **Daren Phillips**, passed away April 19.

Aline Randolph of Monterey, maternal grandmother of traffic date entry clerk **Robin Smith**, passed away April 27 of heart failure at a Cookeville Hospital. She was 80 years of age.



JURY TRIAL VERDICTS

ABBREVIATIONS:

P	PLAINTIFF	CP	COUNTER PLAINTIFF
D	DEFENDANT	CD	COUNTER DEFENDANT
ST	SOFT TISSUE	GSA	GENERAL SESSIONS APPEAL
REC	RECOVERY	TCPA	TN. CONSUMER PROTECT ACT

Week of April 10

CIRCUIT COURT

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT
99C-2370	GSA/ASSAULT	1ST	DEFENDANT	
97C-2033	AUTO ACCIDENT	2ND	(P)	\$448
97C-2039	CONTRACT	6TH	(P)	\$1,200
97C-2926	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	3RD*	(P)	\$3,150
98C-1638	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	3RD	(P)	\$39,000
98C-2938	AUTO ACCIDENT	1ST	(P)	\$45,000
98D-2532	CRIMINAL/MURDER	5TH	HUNG JURY	

*--JURY WAIVED

NON-JURY TRIAL RESULTS

Week of April 24

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT
99C-2967	GSA/AUTO ACCIDENT	5TH	UNDER ADVISEMENT	
99C-2901	GSA/AUTO ACCIDENT	1ST*	(P)	\$5,800 (P-45) (D-55)
99C2369	GSA/PROPERTY DAMAGE	3RD	(P)	\$2,504
99C-3322	GSA/CONTRACT	6TH	P-\$975/CP-\$325	
98C-2310	WORKERS COMP	5TH	UNDER ADVISEMENT	
99C-3588	GSA/WARRANT TO RECOVER	3RD	UNDER ADVISEMENT	
99C-3258	GSA/CONSUMER FRAUD	5TH	(P)	\$1,650
99C-3551	METRO APPEAL	6TH	\$50 FINE	
99C-15	WORKERS COMP	8TH	(P)	65% DISABILITY
99C-60	WORKERS COMP	1ST	(P)	\$73,800
99C-3502	GSA/CONTRACT	8TH	DEFENDANT	
98C-2436	WORKERS COMP	8TH	UNDER ADVISEMENT	
99C-3503	GSA/TCPA	6TH	(P)	\$1,950
99C-2308	GSA/WARRANT TO RECOVER	1ST	(P)	\$15,000
00C-38	WORKERS COMP	6TH	(P)	32% DISABILITY
00C-188	GSA/CONTRACT	3RD	(P)	\$960
00C-311	GSA/TCPA	1ST	PENDING	
99C-3524	DAMAGES	1ST	(P)	\$30,000
98C-2976	DAMAGES	8TH	(P)	\$22,500
99C-2890	DAMAGES	8TH	(P)	\$46,292
99C-2738	DAMAGES	8TH	(P)	\$19,812

*--HEARD BY SPECIAL MASTER MARSH NICHOLS

APPEALS

GENERAL SESSIONS

JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
DISMISSED	PLAINTIFF

APPEALS

GENERAL SESSIONS

JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
DISMISSED	PLAINTIFF
P-\$5,500	DEFENDANT
P-\$1,889	DEFENDANT
TRANSFERRED	
P-POSSESSION	DEFENDANT
P-\$1,610	DEFENDANT
D-\$200 FINE	PLAINTIFF
DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF
P-\$1,887	DEFENDANT
P-\$5,000	DEFENDANT
P-\$1,475	DEFENDANT

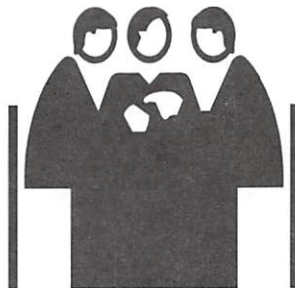
APRIL SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES

CASES CONSIDERED 11

BY CLASSIFICATION

- Auto Accidents 7
- Negligence 1
- Personal Injury 1
- Wrongful Dog Death 1
- Human Rights Violation 1

(Source: Megan Gregory, Case Coordinator)



DISPOSITIONS

- Settled 8
- Not Settled 3

THE JUDGE

(FROM PAGE 1)

all clients owing him legal fees for services he provided in his private law practice could "consider all debts paid."

Taylor would later gain national attention in a case involving a weekend crackdown on persons operating vehicles without drivers licenses.

About 142 persons had been arrested and brought before Taylor to face the music. Remembering that he did not have a drivers license himself, the judge proceeded to fine himself before fining other offenders \$2 and court costs.

During his long career on the bench, Taylor's sharp wit often brought gales of laughter from courtroom audiences.

It was a style that would later be emulated by the late General Sessions Judge Edward Gale Robinson.

But that's another story.

TRENDS



CASE ANALYSES

AUTO ACCIDENTS

PLAINTIFFS 25
DEFENDANTS 6

RATIO: PLAINTIFFS 4.1-1

MONTH-BY-MONTH

MONTH	TOTALS	JURY	NON-JURY	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	NONE
JANUARY	12	8	4	6	5	1
FEBRUARY	9	5	4	9	0	0
MARCH	6	5	1	5	1	0
APRIL	6	4	2	5	0	1
YEAR TO DATE	33	22	11	25	6	2

JURY AWARDS

MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	77,000	2,000-60,000	7,500
FEBRUARY	85,0040	1,762-45,000	12,786
MARCH	14,723	1,258-7,500	1,988
APRIL	87,598	448-45,000	21,075

NON-JURY AWARDS

MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	271,989	1,500-260,000	5,242
FEBRUARY	22,900	1,950-15,000	2,975
MARCH	8,756	N/A	N/A
APRIL	5,800	N/A	N/A

SOFT TISSUE CASES

MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	17,000	2,000-8,000	7,000
FEBRUARY	8,777	1,762-7,015	N/A
MARCH	14,465	1,615-7,500	2,175
APRIL	42,150	3,150-39,000	N/A

*GENERAL SESSIONS APPEALS

MONTH	TOTALS	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	NONE
JANUARY	3	3	0	0
FEBRUARY	3	3	0	0
MARCH	1	1	0	0
APRIL	2	1	0	1
YEAR TO DATE	9	8	0	1

OTHERS



CONTRACTS YTD PLAINTIFFS DEFENDANTS NO VERDICT
21 16 0 6

APRIL AWARDS: \$23,018-- TOTAL AWARDS TO DATE: \$75,391



MISCELLANEOUS

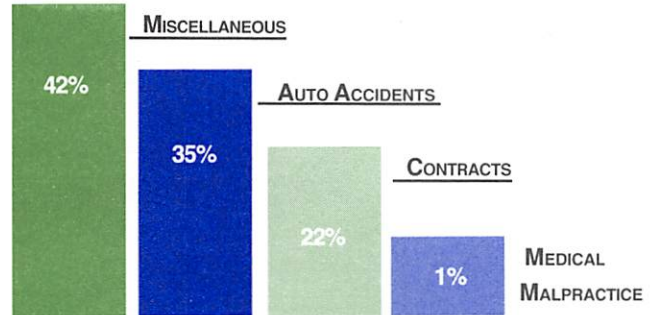
39
PLAINTIFFS 25
DEFENDANTS 7
NO VERDICT 7

MALPRACTICE

1
PLAINTIFFS 0
DEFENDANTS 1
NO VERDICT 0



CIVIL TRIALS By CLASS



DATA BANK

Statistics compiled for the month of April

CASE INFORMATION

Circuit Court

NEW CIVIL CASES FILED	211
CIVIL CASES CONCLUDED	231
NEW DIVORCE CASES FILED	269
DIVORCE CASES CONCLUDED	251

General Sessions Civil

NEW CASES FILED	2,687
EXECUTIONS ISSUED	2,722
GARNISHMENT PAYMENTS	3,132
JUDGMENTS COLLECTED	\$512,620
ORDER OF PROTECTION PETITIONS	188

Probate Court

NEW CASES FILED	161
CASES CLOSED	119

Traffic Violations

MOVING CITATIONS	18,903
PARKING VIOLATIONS	7,449
TOTAL FINES COLLECTED	\$393,536
NULLIFICATIONS	1,678
NULLIFICATION FEES COLLECTED	\$20,091

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