

ROOKER REPORT

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CHIEF AIDE GARRETT RETIRING

Carole Garrett, chief deputy administrator to Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker, has announced her retirement, effective Oct. 20.

Garrett, 52, will close out a career spanning more than 15 years, much of which has been focused on the General Sessions Civil Division office where she began her service.

"I just have other exciting things to do," Garrett said in explaining her retirement plans. "I'm looking forward to working in the yard and doing things with the family."



GARRETT

Rooker praised Garrett's record of dedicated service, touting her as "a valuable asset who will be sorely missed."

Garrett joined the General Sessions office on Feb. 1, 1984 and was elevated to the chief clerk position in October of the following year. She headed that department until 1992 when she was named chief deputy administrator to then-Circuit Court Clerk George L. Rooker, who passed away a year later.

The late clerk had implemented a computer sys

SEE, GARRETT, PAGE 2



CD-ROM OFFERS NEW DIMENSION

Over the past four years, video recordings have revolutionized the way civil court proceedings are presented and preserved as official court records.

Now, an advanced form of technology that could streamline the judicial process even more is undergoing experiment with promising results.

Just as videotapes eliminated the need for written transcripts in civil trials, the arrival of a digital storage medium is offering an alternative method of recording with greater clarity and speedier reproduction capabilities.

The new technology, currently being tested in the courtroom of Sixth Circuit Judge Tom Brothers, allows up to eight hours of audio-video signals to be stored in a CD-ROM and "burned" onto a compact disk ready for viewing in a matter of minutes.

Conversely, the duplication of videotapes must be done in real time, meaning six hours of dubbing for six hours of trial proceedings.

In addition to the timesaving factor, trial runs thus far indicate that CD sound and picture quality are superior to that of videotapes. The disks also are about one-fifth as costly to purchase, take up far less space to store and have ten times longer shelf life.

■ How the Video Courtroom Works (See Page 2)

However, the digital system at this point is only in a testing phase under the scrutiny of Advisory Commission on Technology to the Tennessee Supreme Court, which will evaluate its possible acceptance as official court record. Videotapes currently are the only electronic recordings approved by the high court for appeal purposes.

The digital "advanced streaming" format is being utilized in conjunction with the existing videotaping process, which remains the official record.

Because the digital mechanism is compatible with the existing recording system, equipment replacement is not necessary. Therefore, only minimal expense would be incurred for a permanent

SEE NEW CD-ROM CONCEPT, PAGE 2



JUDGE BROTHERS

AFTER 40 YEARS ON JOB, 'GRANNY' STILL TICKING AT 83

Retirement is the farthest thing from her mind. And why shouldn't it be?

Elizabeth Harris is barely 83 years old.

Shucks, she's only drawn a Metro paycheck for a mere 40 years.

Retire?

Naah. What would she do with herself?

And what would the Traffic Violations Bureau do without her?

Since Oct. 3, 1960, the lady known affectionately as "Granny" has carried out an assortment of duties in the traffic bureau, for the most part typing letters to motorists who fall short of their fine obligations or have erred for a variety of reasons.

It is a somewhat monotonous job, perhaps, but an important one that suits Granny to a tee. You might say it is one of the ingredients that makes

each day a rewarding experience for her. The rest of the recipe is made up of the long-term friendships she has formed with her fellow workers and the opportunity to remain active and productive.

Despite her age, her energy level has not waned in the least, testimony to good physical health and a spiritual mentality she credits for her endurance.

"I give all the credit to God for allowing me to have the good health to keep going," she said.

Her almost flawless attendance record attests to the fact that she, indeed, has kept going. She long ago hit the maximum number of unused sick



'GRANNY' HARRIS

days an employee is allowed to accumulate.

Dependability, punctuality and steady production were assets cited by Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker in recognition of Mrs. Harris' 40th anniversary, which came just five days after her 83rd birthday on September 28.

While four decades of service have been mostly fulfilling for Mrs. Harris, they have not come without a major share of tragedy. Just four years after becoming a civil servant, a heart attack took the life of her husband, attorney John I. Harris, Sr. Her grief would be repeated 12 years later when the same fate struck her son, attorney John I. Harris, Jr.

Since that time, she has focused her life on three grandsons, watching each become successful in his own field of endeavor.

And, of course, coming to work every day.

CHEERS...

For more than ten years, **Betty Thompson's** smile has brightened days for fellow employees of the Circuit Court Clerk's office where her primary assignment has been in the child support division. But come Oct. 20, she will try a new routine she hasn't experienced since January 1990 when she began riding to work with husband **Marvin Thompson**, a veteran court officer for General Sessions Judge **Bill Faimon**. On that day, she will trade in the work-a-day life for one of leisure, opting for early retirement accorded by her years of service. That will probably take some getting used to, she says, because hubby is not joining her in retirement. Sounds like adjustments are imminent on both sides.



THOMPSON

◆ Another familiar face in the court system departed on Sept. 29 when **Tracey Jones** gave up her job as office manager of the Metro Safety Center to become a fulltime mom. Her exit came after eight years with the center where she started as a data entry operator and grew into the position of administrative services officer. She is married to Metro employee **Chuck Jones**.

◆ As you may have read in this column before, internal auditor **Jan Yearwood** has incurred numerous health problems over the past couple of years, causing concern among her many friends and co-workers. But she keeps bouncing back from each ordeal, using her catty sense of humor to downplay the seriousness of it all. Her latest visit to the hospital left her with a surgically implanted defibrillator/pacemaker mechanism to help regulate her heartbeat. "You might say that I am now super charged," she laughed upon returning to work recently. "Should your car battery go dead, give me a jingle and I think I can jump start it." Now, that's spirit!

...TEARS

Deepest sympathy to attorney **Phillip Duer** and family in the untimely death of his seven-year-old nephew **Grant Hayden Duer**, son of **Harry** and **Tracie Duer**. The youngster passed away on Oct. 11 after a sudden illness.

Cletus W. McWilliams, 73, who spent 15 years as executive secretary of the Tennessee Supreme Court, lost his battle against cancer on Sept. 18.

GARRETT ENDS CAREER WITH CLERK

(FROM PAGE 1)

tem in 1991 to streamline services in all four of the departments under him and Garrett was chosen to help make the transition from manual to an automated system.

Her first administrative assignment was to supervise a reorganization of the Probate clerk's office, which had just been transferred from the county clerk's control to the circuit court clerk.

She was the logical choice after becoming the first clerk in Davidson County to be certified as a public administrator.

Garrett later would apply similar services to the Traffic Violations Bureau and General Sessions office, following addition of computer technology in those departments.

Of the high-tech advancements, Garrett noted that "the work is the same; just the tools for doing it have changed."

Following a year's leave of absence in 1997 to help care for her ailing mother, Garrett returned to assist in the construction of a new General Sessions Civil Division office in the Stahlman Building where she has since maintained headquarters.

Garrett said she was most proud of "the growth of individual employees" who have helped develop a "conscientious and caring (general sessions) office committed to meeting the needs of the legal community and individuals alike."

November Birthdays

Circuit Court Clerk

3 Monica England
11 Bill Riggs

General Sessions

23 Ross Barton

Probate Clerk

1 Ruth Lester

Traffic Violations

5 Bo Frensley
12 Dixie Gibson
13 Patsy Jackson
24 Dinah Williams
26 Rhonda Hall
Nick Lane

NEW CD-ROM CONCEPT GETS COURTROOM TESTING

(FROM PAGE 1)

upgrade. The original investment for equipping each courtroom for audio-video recording was around \$50,000.

Besides Brothers, electronic recording is being utilized by Second Circuit Judge Marietta Shipley and Fourth Circuit Judge Muriel Robinson.

Brothers, long an advocate of the video courtroom concept and a member of the advisory commission, gives high points to the CD-ROM system, which was developed by Microsoft and adapted locally by Jefferson Audio-Video Services of Louisville, the same vendor who installed the original equipment.

In addition to the obvious advantages, Brothers applauded the flexibility offered by the CD format, noting that it can be downloaded to any variety of computer for review by attorneys -- either at home, at the office or in the courtroom.

Videotapes as official court records were first accepted by state appeals courts in 1994 with Williamson County being the first to utilize electronic transcription. Brothers' courtroom followed two years later, launching his crusade for uniform acceptance of the procedure by all state civil courts.

Brothers has written articles for judicial publications extolling the advantages of video taping courtroom proceedings. Among the most tangible benefits, he points out, is the cost savings to trial participants.

Because electronic taping eliminates the necessity of a written transcript (an option that remains open to attorneys at their own expense) trial participants are spared the cost of hiring a court reporter or stenographer, resulting in a per diem savings of thousands of dollars.

How the Video Courtroom Works

◆ A self-contained automatic video recording system accurately chronicles events taking place in the courtroom, utilizing seven obscure cameras that pan all areas except the jury box.

◆ The system's central control unit is linked to voice-activated microphones that have been strategically placed around the courtroom (the judge's bench, attorney's tables, the witness box, and so on). As any individual speaks, a color video camera "slaved" to each microphone automatically records the individual onto one or more VHS videotapes and a CD digital storage unit.

◆ Having multiple, flexible recording devices ensures that high-resolution records are immediately available at the end of the trial day. For example, both attorneys may request the record in his or her preferred format -- either VHS videocassette or digital disk.

◆ The central control unit is equipped with multiple videocassette recorders and capable of producing additional videotapes when requested in advance by one or both attorneys in a particular case.

◆ In addition, the digital storage device features both read and write capability, allowing disk copies to be made from the original or "master" disk recording on demand.

◆ The system has the ability to play back any portion of the court record during the proceedings. One videocassette recorder is designated for "instant review," enabling the judge or attorneys the option of reviewing any portion of the video record at any time.

◆ To assist the review of the record, an index is prepared that identifies events, such as cross examination, by both current time and tape time. Using the index makes it possible to quickly locate specific incidents on the tape.

◆ The videotape becomes the official court record.



JURY

TRIAL VERDICTS

ABBREVIATIONS:

PLAINTIFF	COUNTER PLAINTIFF
DEFENDANT	COUNTER DEFENDANT
SOFT TISSUE	GENERAL SESSIONS APPEAL
PERMANENT PARTIAL	TN. CONSUMER PROTECT ACT

Week of September 11

CIRCUIT COURT

CASE	TYPE	COURT		VERDICT	PCT. FAULT
97C-1975	PERSONAL INJURY	6TH	(P)	HUNG JURY	
97C-2456	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	1ST	(P)	\$14,671	(D-100)
97C-1815	SLIP/FALL	8TH		DEFENDANT	
97C-3342	PERSONAL INJURY	2ND		DEFENDANT	
99C-1363	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	3RD	(P)	\$300	(P-25 D-75)
99C-2248	GSA/AUTO ACCIDENT	1ST	(P)	\$2,700	

Week of September 18

CASE	TYPE	COURT		VERDICT	PCT. FAULT
99C-2757	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	8TH	(P)	\$9,375	ADMITTED
98C-1051	MEDICAL MALPRACTICE	5TH		DEFENDANT	
98C-3237	MEDICAL MALPRACTICE	6TH	(P)	\$1,221,364	(P-48.5 D-51.5)
00C-1328	GSA/AUTO ACCIDENT	1ST	(P)	\$1,410	
99C-1955	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	3RD	(P)	\$6,376	ADMITTED
99C-1351	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	1ST	(P)	\$103,000	(D-100)

APPEALS GENERAL SESSIONS

JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
P-\$1,800	DEFENDANT

GENERAL SESSIONS

JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
P-5,409	DEFENDANT

NON-JURY TRIAL RESULTS

CIRCUIT COURT

Week of September 5

CASE	TYPE	COURT		VERDICT	PCT. FAULT
00C-921	GSA/DETAINDER	1ST		DISMISSED	
00C-1689	GSA/CONTRACT	6TH	(P)	\$5,700	
00C-1324	GSA/CONTRACT	1ST		DECLARATORY	
99C-1747	CONTRACT	1ST	(P)	\$16,000	
99C-702	CONTRACT	6TH		DEFENDANT	
00C-1534	GSA/CONTRACT	8TH	(P)	\$1,130	
98C-2399	SLIP/FALL	8TH		DIRECTED	

Week of September 25

CASE	TYPE	COURT		VERDICT	PCT. FAULT
00C-176	AUTO ACCIDENT	8TH	(P)	\$18,152	
99C-1572	PERSONAL INJURY	1ST	(P)	\$24,000	
98C-1775	AUTO ACCIDENT	8TH	(P)	\$14,782	
98C-1366	SLIP/FALL	2ND		DEFENDANT	
99C-1694	WORKERS COMPENSATION	8TH		UNDER ADVISEMENT	
99C-2951	WORKERS COMPENSATION	5TH		UNDER ADVISEMENT	
00C-918	GSA/CONTRACT	5TH	(P)	\$10,448	
00C-1038	GSA/CONTRACT	8TH	(P)	\$2,586	

APPEALS GENERAL SESSIONS

JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
P-\$525	DEFENDANT
P-\$2,300	PLAINTIFF
DISMISSED	PLAINTIFF

JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
P-\$10,448	PLAINTIFF
P-\$2,000	DEFENDANT

SEPTEMBER

SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES

CASES CONSIDERED	9
Auto Accidents	6
Breach of Contract	2
Robbery	1

(Source: Megan Gregory, Case Coordinator)



DISPOSITIONS

Settled	8
Not Settled	1

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS OCT. 29

Darkness will come earlier, starting Sunday Oct. 29. That's when Daylight Savings Time comes to an end at 2 a.m.

You should set your clocks back one hour when retiring Saturday night.

It will give you an extra hour of sleep. That will make up for the hour you lost last Spring.



TRENDS

CASE ANALYSES



RATIO: PLAINTIFFS 4.6:1

AUTO ACCIDENTS

PLAINTIFFS 62
DEFENDANTS 14

MONTH-BY-MONTH

MONTH	TOTALS	JURY	NON-JURY	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	NONE
JANUARY-MARCH	27	18	9	20	6	1
APRIL-AUGUST	47	39	8	33	8	6
SEPTEMBER	9	7	2	9	0	0
YEAR TO DATE	83	64	19	62	14	7

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
MAY	71,357	200-35,000	4,519
JUNE	105,896	308-61,500	14,696
JULY	149,169	1,498-50,000	12,208
AUGUST	7,860	443-5,305	2,112
SEPTEMBER	137,832	300-103,000	6,906

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-AUGUST	49,919	N/A	N/A
SEPTEMBER	32,934	14,782-18,152	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
MAY	39,696	200-35,000	1,498
JUNE	95,833	308-61,500	17,012
JULY	32,713	1,498-25,473	10,904
AUGUST	5,305	N/A	N/A
SEPTEMBER	133,722	300-103,000	10,140

*GENERAL SESSIONS APPEALS

MONTH	TOTALS	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	NONE
JANUARY-MARCH	7	7	0	0
APRIL-AUGUST	13	10	1	2
SEPTEMBER	2	2	0	0
YEAR TO DATE	22	19	1	2

OTHERS



CONTRACTS YTD PLAINTIFFS DEFENDANTS NO VERDICT
57 41 5 11

AUGUST AWARDS: \$34,864-- TOTAL AWARDS TO DATE: \$220,636

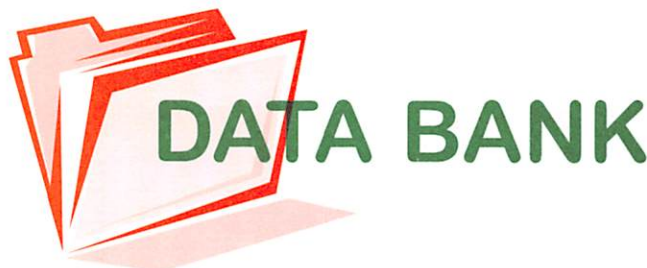
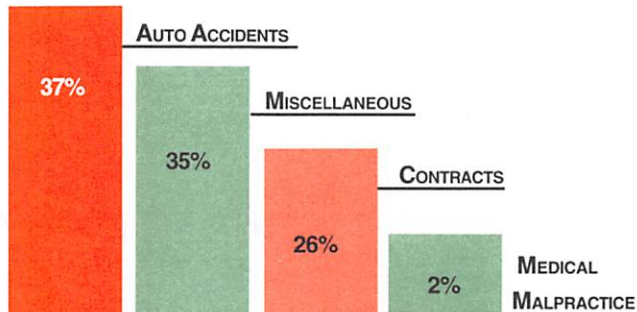
MISCELLANEOUS

76
PLAINTIFFS 44
DEFENDANTS 19
NO VERDICT 13

MALPRACTICE

5
PLAINTIFFS 1
DEFENDANTS 3
NO VERDICT 1

CIVIL TRIALS By CLASS



Statistics compiled for the month of September

CASE INFORMATION

Circuit Court

NEW CIVIL CASES FILED	280
CIVIL CASES CONCLUDED	341
NEW DIVORCE CASES FILED	238
DIVORCE CASES CONCLUDED	234

General Sessions Civil

NEW CASES FILED	2,860
EXECUTIONS ISSUED	2,855
GARNISHMENT PAYMENTS	3,434
JUDGMENTS COLLECTED	\$549,770
ORDER OF PROTECTION PETITIONS	192

Probate Court

NEW CASES FILED	149
CASES CLOSED	196

Traffic Violations

MOVING CITATIONS	17,932
PARKING VIOLATIONS	6,383
TOTAL FINES COLLECTED	\$345,976
NULLIFICATIONS	1,564
NULLIFICATION FEES COLLECTED	\$18,732

ROOKER REPORT

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