

ROOKER REPORT

March 2003

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PHOTO BY METRO PHOTOGRAPHER GARY LAYDA

Goodbye to the Stahlman

As the call of progress lures us to temporary residence in the Metro Center, we go with the assurance of returning to a newness of prosperity and the freshness of a better working environment.

A revitalized courthouse and a shiny new courts building will welcome our return in a matter of a few years. Yet, as we embark on this venture of unprecedented magnitude, we bid final farewell to a historic landmark that has provided shelter to every government and judicial agency needing a home.

For almost one full century, the Stahlman Building has served the legal community, her proximity to the courthouse making her an ideal location for lawyers' offices. And she has been there for Metro--at various times housing multiple government departments within her spacious walls.

Since September 1999, the civil operations of the General Sessions Court have called her home. The public defender's office occupies the entire top floor of her well-built torso. But both entities will vacate her premises in the upcoming relocation program, thus becoming the last judicial offices to occupy her accommodations.

The Stahlman goes into private ownership and, as such, will be given new life as a residential property. So, on behalf of the legal community, we say goodbye with a sense of gratitude. You have served us well.

Moving Days For Courts Start April 4

Moving vans are being fueled and crews are getting their instructions as the first judicial offices prepare to vacate their present quarters for new facilities in the Metro Center.

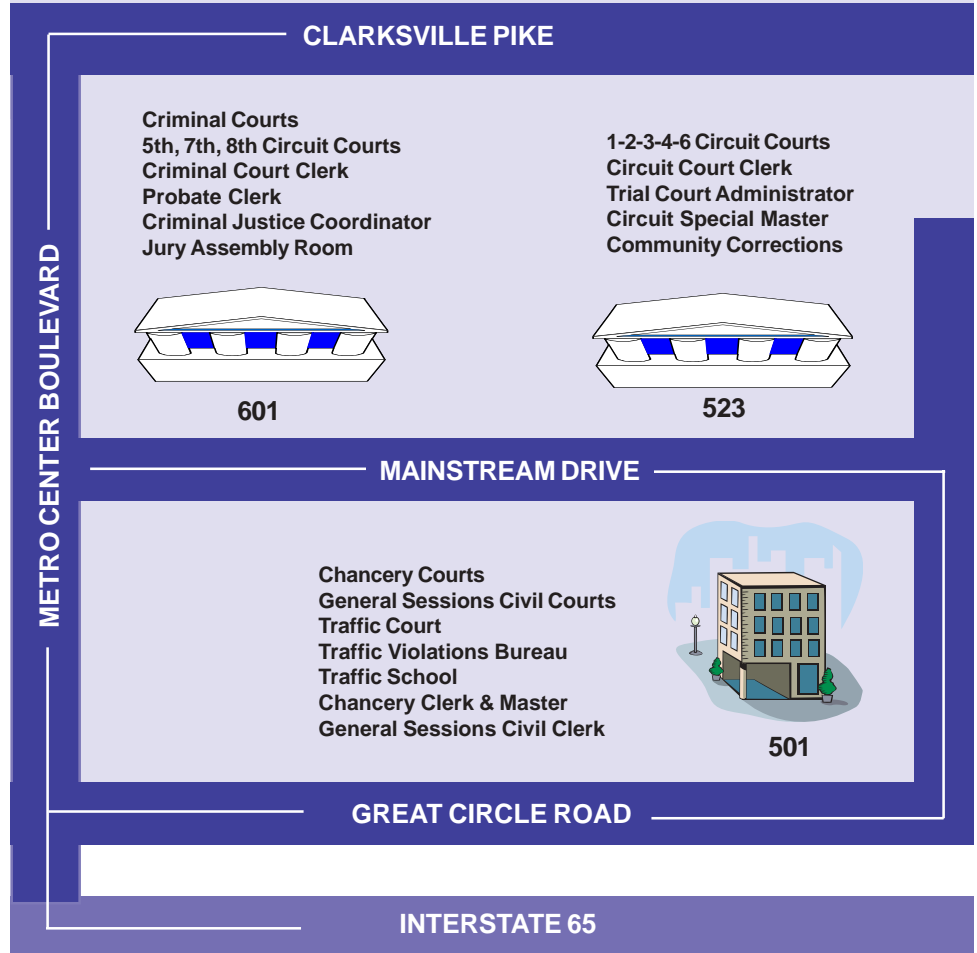
Starting on Friday, April 4, the long anticipated relocation of the courts will officially get underway, making way for an aggressive renovation and building campaign designed to meet the county's current and future judicial and governmental needs.

The relocation will involve all entities in the courthouse and the Stahlman Building and a portion of the Ben West Building.

Following the move-out, the courthouse will undergo a major renovation and a new courts building will be erected adjacent to the Ben West Building to house all General Sessions operations. The Stahlman Building will be turned over to private ownership for conversion to residential use.

Virtually all state and county courts operations will take up temporary residence in the Metro Center, located just north of

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CHEERS...



PATTY JACK

Belated congratulations to Probate bookkeeper **Patty Jack**, who became a grandmother in December. Patty's work space is rightfully decorated with pictures of **Abigail Catherine Jack**, who has provided sunshine and joy since her arrival on Dec. 19. The newest family member is the daughter of Patty's son **Billy** and wife **Stacy Jack** of Elizabethton. She recorded vital statistics of 7 pounds, 8 ounces over a 20.5-inch frame. We apologize for the late announcement.

Since March 21 was the first official day of Spring, you might say that **Jennifer Gilreath's** wedding was "the first rite of Spring." That's the day she chose to exchange vows with **Truman Borntreger** in a small ceremony for family members only. Jennifer, a deputy clerk in our General Sessions Civil Division office, was pleased that her four-year-old son **Gus** gave her away. The newlyweds will make their home in nearby Lyles.



JENNIFER



RUTH LESTER

Hats off to the *Nashville Scene* for a nice feature story on our senior Probate Court liaison clerk **Ruth Lester**, whose bubbly personality and knowledge of probate law have been a welcomed combination by both lawyers and the general public for many years. The written praise was well deserved for a 75-year-old clerk whose energy level seems never to need refueling and whose willingness to guide customers through the complicated steps of probate enhances her popularity. Thoughts of retirement have crossed her mind, she admits. But, like her, we are hoping those thoughts will just keep on going.

For those of you who have been anxiously awaiting the release of attorney **David Rutherford's** new, updated book on the history of Davidson County's courts and legal profession, just hang in there. Rutherford says he's done his part and is now waiting on the publisher to add the polish. The second edition of his 1981 *Bench and Bar of Davidson County, Tennessee* will cost \$40 a copy and promises to be worth both the wait and the cost. Going on 80 years of age and still going strong, the lawyer-historian claims his newest offering not only fills in the time gaps since the first publication, but includes anecdotal content normally shared only with fellow lawyer pals around the breakfast table. Besides, says the affable Rutherford, the book "will help settle a lot of arguments."

Speaking of history, the series of programs celebrating the legacy of the **Metro Courthouse** is drawing to a close on a successful note. Commemorative programs celebrating the events that have taken place on each floor of the 66-year-old structure have drawn strong attendance since the celebration began in January. The landmark celebration concludes this month with the criminal courts hosting a sixth floor program on March 28, followed on March 30 by the 40th anniversary celebration of Metro Government.

...TEARS

Deepest sympathy to retired Circuit Court Judge **James M. Swiggart** in the loss of his wife **Dorothy Ann Swiggart**, who passed away Feb. 25 from heart failure. She was 81. The Swiggarts had been married for 58 years.

In our February edition, we identified the late **Mary Sue Moody** as the mother of attorney **William A. Moody**. Mrs. Moody, who passed away on Jan. 27, was Mr. Moody's wife. We apologize for the error.



Photo by Jennifer Wilee

ELIZABETH (GRANNY) HARRIS, LEFT, AND JEAN HART ARE SHOWN AT THEIR RECENT RETIREMENT BREAKFAST. COMBINED, THE TWO RETIRED EMPLOYEES GAVE 62 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS BUREAU, WHICH HOSTED THE APPRECIATION MEAL.

Retirement Breakfast Honors Longtime Clerks

Together, they combined for more than six decades of service to the Traffic Violations Bureau. It was only fitting that they be given a proper salute of gratitude.

Co-workers, judges and family members did just that on March 7 during a retirement breakfast hosted by the office they served so loyally.

Given a choice, both Elizabeth (Granny) Harris and Jean Hart would have been working at their desks while such an event was taking place. They had done so many times before as others were getting send-offs. But that option was taken away by restrictive health problems too severe to accommodate their enthusiasm for their jobs.

Harris was forced to end her 42-year career on Feb. 1 after developing a blood clot in her leg six months earlier. And Hart's struggle with cancer brought her 20 years of service as a bookkeeper to a halt last May.

During gift-giving ceremonies, Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker applauded both ladies for loyalty and dedication, saying they had been great inspirations to everyone. He noted that each worker had compiled almost flawless attendance records over their long career with the office.

In response, Harris said she couldn't rightfully recall how many times she had missed work during her 42 years. "I just know that I had a lot of hours of sick leave built up (when she retired.)"

Hart said she was enjoying retirement "more and more every day" and asked that everyone pray that one day she would be cancer-free.

BIRTHDAYS

APRIL

Circuit Court Clerk

- 3 Gene Baker
- 4 Barbara Eddings
- 5 Beverly Rawls
- Kelli Olin
- 6 Cathy Garrett
- 18 Holly Russell
- Dana Terle
- 22 Jim Davis
- 23 Mike Garrett

Probate Clerk

- 11 Will Cripps

General Sessions

- 18 Ryan Hager
- 30 Judy Christopher

Traffic Violations

- 4 Stacey Holt
- 19 Jennifer Wilee
- 27 Carl Smith
- 28 Eva McNaney



JURY TRIAL VERDICTS

ABBREVIATIONS:

P	PLAINTIFF	CP	COUNTER PLAINTIFF
D	DEFENDANT	CD	COUNTER DEFENDANT
PPD	PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY	GSA	GENERAL SESSIONS APPEAL
ST	SOFT TISSUE	PUN	PUNITIVE

APPEALS

Week of February 2

CIRCUIT COURT

GENERAL SESSIONS

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
01C-2805	ACCT. MALPRACTICE	2ND	P-\$48,223			
00C-3315	MEDICAL MALPRACTICE	8TH	DEFENDANT			
99C-3494	MEDICAL MALPRACTICE	5TH	DEFENDANT			
2002-T-401	DUI/CRIMINAL	8TH	GUILTY			

Week of February 10

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
02C-207	CONTRACT	8TH	P-\$17,039			
01C-1458	AUTO/LIABILITY	5TH	DEFENDANT			
2002-T-219	DUI/CRIMINAL	8TH	GUILTY			

Soft Tissue

GENERAL SESSIONS

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
01C-3482	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	6TH	\$75,000	P-\$12,291			
01C-351	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	1ST	\$75,000	P-\$2,000			

NON-JURY TRIAL RESULTS

Week of February 24

CIRCUIT COURT

GENERAL SESSIONS

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
01C-2875	WORKERS COMPENSATION	8TH	UNDER ADVISEMENT			
01C-2060	ASSAULT	3RD*	DISMISSED			
02C-404	GSA/AUTO ACCIDENT	5TH	DISMISSED		DISMISSED	PLAINTIFF
02C-2890	GSA/CONTRACT	5TH	CP-\$1,600		P-\$4,037	DEFENDANT
98C-876	NEGLIGENCE	6TH	P-\$130,000	(D-75) (P-25)		
02C-2894	GSA/CONTRACT	8TH	P-\$3,555		P-\$4,950	DEFENDANT
01C-2680	WORKERS CCOMPENSATION	5TH	UNDER ADVISEMENT			
02C-89	WORKERS COMPENSATION	6TH	PPD-25%			
02C-83	GSA/CONTRACT	1ST	P-\$8,404		P-\$11,168	BOTH PARTIES

*--HEARD BY MARSH NICHOLS

Legal Forms Changing July 1; Short Versions Being Readied

The Tennessee Supreme Court has ordered that all judicial forms be converted in size from legal (8.5 x 14) to letter (8.5 x 11) by July 1.

The Circuit Court Clerk's Office has been in the process of redesigning forms used by the circuit, probate, general sessions civil division and traffic courts. The new forms are being printed as they are completed and approved. They also are replacing the legal size forms on our internet web site for downloading and printing.

Attorneys should be cognizant of the size change and the deadline for converting to the letter size forms.

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

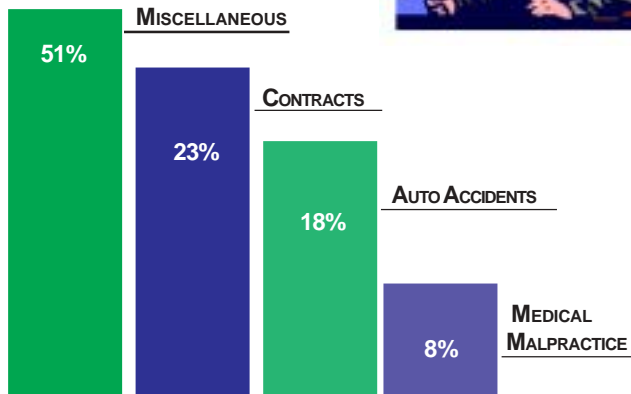
Richard R. Rooker Circuit Court Clerk
Gene Baker Editor



ADA coordinator, Gene Baker (880-3309)

TRENDS

CIVIL TRIALS BY CLASS



CASE ANALYSES



AUTO ACCIDENTS

PLAINTIFFS 5
DEFENDANTS 1

RATIO: PLAINTIFFS 5-1

MONTH-BY-MONTH

MONTH	TOTALS	JURY	NON-JURY	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	NONE
JANUARY	3	2	1	3	0	0
FEBRUARY	4	3	1	2	1	1

JURY AWARDS

MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	19,098	9,098-10,000	N/A
FEBRUARY	14,291	2,000-12,291	N/A

NON-JURY AWARDS

MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	5,770	N/A	N/A
FEBRUARY	NONE	N/A	N/A

SOFT TISSUE CASES

MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	NONE	N/A	N/A
FEBRUARY	14,291	2,000-12,291	N/A

*GENERAL SESSIONS APPEALS

MONTH	\$TOTALS	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	NONE
JANUARY	24,798	3	0	0
FEBRUARY	NONE	0	0	1

Other Classes



CONTRACTS YTD 9 PLAINTIFFS 7 DEFENDANTS 0 NO VERDICT 1

FEBRUARY AWARDS: \$30,598--TOTAL AWARDS TO DATE: \$239,949



MISCELLANEOUS
20
PLAINTIFFS 11
DEFENDANTS 4
NO VERDICT 5

MALPRACTICE
3
PLAINTIFFS 1
DEFENDANTS 2
NO VERDICT 0



Judicial Offices Packed for Move

(From Page 1)

downtown Nashville (see diagram). The General Sessions criminal division will remain in the Ben West Building, convenient to the Criminal Justice Center, the district attorney general's office and the public defender's office, which will move from the Stahlman Building to a downtown site.

A staggered moving schedule has been devised, starting on April 4 and concluding on the last day of the month. The first court operations to be leaving current facilities are the General Sessions Civil Division and the Traffic Violations Bureau, both of which will be located in the First Image Building at 501 Great Circle Road. Movers will be in action, starting at the end of business on April 4.

Other courts and affiliated offices will follow suit about a week later. With the exception of some General Sessions criminal dockets, all other general sessions, circuit, probate and traffic courts will be closed during the weeks of April 7 and April 14 and will reopen on Monday, April 21.

Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker said clerk's office personnel would accommodate customers at the new locations without interruption, but he called for patience and understanding until the new offices are fully organized. He also noted that--at some point-- a satellite office would be staffed in the Ben West Building to accommodate stamp filings of time sensitive documents, but that a date for offering that service has not yet been determined.



DATA BANK

Statistics compiled for the month of February

CASE INFORMATION

Circuit Court

NEW CIVIL CASES FILED	249
JURY	91
NON-JURY	158
CIVIL CASES CONCLUDED	261
JURY	123
NON-JURY	138
NEW DIVORCE CASES FILED	264
DIVORCE CASES CONCLUDED	244

General Sessions Civil

NEW CASES FILED	3,105
EXECUTIONS ISSUED	2,772
GARNISHMENT PAYMENTS	3,316
JUDGMENTS COLLECTED	\$612,489
ORDER OF PROTECTION PETITIONS	206

Probate Court

NEW CASES FILED	206
CASES CLOSED	179

Traffic Violations

MOVING CITATIONS	20,175
PARKING VIOLATIONS	5,183
TOTAL FINES COLLECTED	\$311,469
NULLIFICATIONS	1,744
NULLIFICATION FEES COLLECTED	\$20,925