

Rooker Report

January 2007

Published by the Davidson County Circuit Court Clerk's Office

Vol.14, No. 12

COMING HOME!

Civil Trial Courts Return To Courthouse on Feb. 12

February will be homecoming time for the county's civil trial courts as they return to their permanent place of residence after almost four years of waiting for an extreme makeover of the historic Metro Courthouse.

On Monday, February 12, the court clerks' offices and affiliated operations will open for business in the renovated majestic building that has been their "home" for more than half a century--finalizing the return to downtown for all of the county's judicial operations.

General Sessions and Criminal Court operations returned last June with the completion of the new Justice A. A. Birch Building, located directly across the street from the courthouse.

Pending the "grand re-opening" date, it will be business as usual at the temporary locations in Metro Center where clerks' offices will remain open through Friday, February 9.

"Our customers will not be inconvenienced by the move," said Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker. "Our Metro Center offices will remain open through Friday and re-open on Monday at the courthouse."

Much has changed since the courthouse was vacated in 2003 for a mega-million-dollar overhaul. A five-level underground parking garage and a beautiful courtyard plaza now provide an impressive first impression of the county's judicial center, accentuated by a historic structure of detailed architectural transformation. Accumulated viruses of time have been cured; marble and polished brass are no longer blurred by bad lighting, and an aura of historical importance prevails throughout the hallowed hallways.

Patrons not only will be impressed with the much-improved exterior and

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SATELLITE OFFICE FILINGS TO BE DISCONTINUED

Effective February 12, 2007, the General Sessions Civil Division Office in the Justice A. A. Birch Building will no longer accept satellite office filings for the Circuit Court Clerk's Office and the Chancery Court Clerk and Master's Office. All filings for those offices should be made in the respective clerks' offices located on the third floor of the Metro Historic Courthouse beginning February 12.

On-Line Credit Card Payment Service Adds New Convenience for Motorists

Davidson County traffic violators received another shot of convenience this month with the addition of an on-line credit card payment option adopted by the Traffic Violations Bureau.

The new cyber service, announced by Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker, is the second major policy shift within the past year to improve accommodations for the driving public. Just months earlier, the adoption of a mail-in pleadings form enabled cited motorists to satisfy their payment obligations without appearing in person. As a result, crowded courtrooms and waiting lines at cashier windows are things of the past.

The on-line credit card payment service takes convenience a step further by giving customers the ability to make their payments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week merely by accessing the Traffic Violations Bureau's website at WWW.NASHVILLE.GOV/CIRCUIT/TRAFFIC and providing certain information, including citation number, the calculated amount owed and credit or debit card number.

"Through the utilization of resources offered by technology, we have

the ability to make it more convenient for the public to conduct business with our office," said Rooker.

In addition to traffic and parking, customers may also use the service to satisfy other citations issued by a Metro Nashville-Davidson County law enforcement officer. Following is a list of citations eligible for on-line credit card payment:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| ◆ Traffic | ◆ Parking | ◆ Misdemeanor |
| ◆ Parking Warrants | ◆ Public Works | ◆ Environmental |
| ◆ Metro Codes | ◆ Fire | ◆ Water |

Complete details for options in responding to a citation and paying assessed charges may be found on the website. Payments may still be made by mail or, for those customers who prefer paying in person, an ATM machine is available outside the traffic office lobby on the ground floor of the Justice A. A. Birch Building.

CHEERS...

General Sessions judges have named **John Slate** as director of the court's Traffic Education Program following the recent retirement of **Wayne Curry**.

Curry left the position at the end of the year after 16 years of service that included a 14-year stint as program manager of the court's traffic school program, which to date has won 25 National Safety Council awards for curriculum and teaching excellence.



SLATE

Slate, a veteran member of the court's driver safety program, was the logical choice for the director's position, having served as office manager of the DUI Safety Center for 12 years prior to becoming manager of the education program in 2005.

Since joining the department, Slate has been instrumental in improving the cash receipt process by helping produce a "point of sale" procedure that enabled the implementation of the On-Line Traffic School.

Slate earned a Master's Degree in public service management from Cumberland University at Lebanon where he completed graduate work in 2005.

Cynthia Greene, a fourth-year student at the Nashville School of Law, has been selected to receive the **Holly Russell Scholarship** for the current academic year.

Greene, the youngest of five children and a former public school teacher, becomes the third recipient of the \$1,000 grant, given annually in memory of the late Circuit Court Clerk deputy assignment clerk. Her selection was announced by Dean **Joe C. Loser, Jr.**, a former circuit court judge.

Ms. Greene joins **Marjorie Fann** and **Teresa Luna** in receiving financial assistance from the scholarship fund. She earned a bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University in 2003 following her graduation from Hunters Lane High School four years earlier. She was a staff member of Tennessee Supreme Court Justice **A. A. Birch, Jr.**, prior to his retirement from the bench last August.



GREENE

Retired General Sessions Court Judge **John P. Brown** has established temporary residence in Russia after being selected by the American Bar Association to serve as a Rule of Law specialist in the Eurasian country of Georgia.



BROWN

He was one of three American lawyers chosen to help advance legal reform in emerging democracies. His one-year assignment will find him working with the judiciary and the local bar there in strengthening judicial institutions, legal profession development, legal education, human rights and anti-corruption.

Brown and wife **Anne** will reside in Tbilisi, Georgia during the one-year assignment.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

BIRTHSTONE: **AMETHYST**

Circuit Court Clerk
7 Belinda Collins
Tracy Cartwright
19 Mickey Brissette

Traffic Violations
26 Macy Hill

General Sessions Civil
25 Diana Reed
27 Tiffany Long

Traffic Warrants
4 Jessie Woodard
11 Marie Roberts
21 Rick Kimery
25 Antonio Lanier

Probate Clerk
None

Retirements

When **Mary Carter** signed on as a court officer for General Sessions Judge **Leon Ruben** on February 1, 1989, she had no idea it would turn into an 18-year career.

It finally came to an end on January 31 as co-workers, family and friends gathered at the Justice A. A. Birch Building for a retirement breakfast in her honor.

"I am definitely ready for this," she said, shaking off any doubts about leaving the work force. "I really want to do it."

Working for the court system was "a great experience...a very learning experience," she said, adding that she now looks forward to spending more time with her husband of 41 years, **Desmond Carter**, who retired from the Metro Police Department less than three years ago after 40 years on the force.

The apple of the couple's eye is their granddaughter **Gloria**, who will be on the receiving end of some quality time that also will be shared with their son **Jimmy** and daughter **Vikki**.

A retirement party was held on January 4 for **John Rucker**, who helped provide security for the General Sessions Court in a number of capacities for 10 years before becoming Security Coordinator in 2004.

Rucker was hired by the court in 1996 after spending two years overseeing the Metro Courthouse parking lot and building security as an employee of Wackenhut. He was assigned exclusively to the Night Court until reorganization required the court to operate from several venues and a regular rotation was implemented for the security team.

Rucker was promoted to Security Coordinator in 2004 following the retirement of **Frank Halliburton**. He and wife Bernice have five children, 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

...TEARS

ROGER PATE, 68, father of General Sessions Civil Division deputy clerk Samantha Hutton, passed away on January 9 from heart complications. He was a resident of Ashland City.

LEON BINKLEY, 83, grandfather of deputy archives clerk Chance Rainey, passed away on January 3 at a local nursing home.

CHARLES HERBERT O'BRIEN, 86, former chief justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court, died on January 18 from complications of diabetes. He served on the high court for seven years until 1994 when he retired shortly after being named chief justice.

DOROTHY S. STEPHENSON, 81, mother of State Trial Court Administrator Larry Stephenson, passed away on January 19 following a somewhat brief bout with cancer.

VONDELL MCLENDON, 83, mother of Davidson County Property Assessor Jo Ann North, passed away in Marshall, Texas on January 20.

ALLEN R. CORNELIUS, 86, retired Criminal Court of Appeals judge whose judicial career included extensive service on both the courts of General Sessions and Criminal Court, died on January 22 after a long illness. Before his appellate court assignment in 1978, he served for ten years on the General Sessions bench, followed by 11 years on Criminal Court.

GEORGE PHILLIPS LINEBAUGH, JR., a former longtime Night Court Commissioner for General Sessions Court, passed away on January 25 in Knoxville due to complications of Parkinson's disease. A graduate of the University of Tennessee Law School, he maintained a practice in Nashville for 40 years, often sitting as a special judge on the General Sessions Court and serving on the Night Court.

DECEMBER JURY TRIALS

APPEALS

GENERAL SESSIONS

Week of December 4

CIRCUIT COURT

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
05C-146	AUTO ACCIDENT	5		DEFENDANT			

Week of December 11

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
04C-3043	SLIP/FALL	5		DEFENDANT			

Soft Tissue Auto Cases

CASE	PRAYER	COURT	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	GENERAL SESSIONS	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
04C-546	\$204,000	2	\$2,881				
04C-376		6	\$55,500				
05C-2795		2	\$6,459				

There were no non-jury trials in December

Judges, Clerks Stand Up for Homeless Vets

When the Operation Stand Down coalition brought 297 homeless veterans together for its 14th annual reunion at the National Guard Armory in October, judges and court clerks were on hand to offer direction to those needing help with legal issues.

According to Circuit Judge Carol Soloman, a participant in the event, a total of 200 veterans sought guidance in resolving legal matters, such as child support, drivers license suspension, divorce and drug and alcohol abuse.

"We didn't offer legal advice," Soloman pointed out, "but we were able to steer them in the right direction for resolving their issues." To that end, employees from the Criminal Court Clerk's Office and the Circuit Court Clerk's Office used laptop computers to access court records to provide the current status of their individual cases and to make them aware of procedures for pursuing a resolution.

In addition to legal guidance, the veterans--ranging in age from 23 to 77--received medical, dental and eye exams, immunization shots, home cooked meals, movies, books and the opportunity to visit 24 social service agencies for information and services.

Since 1993, the coalition has grown to more than 100 participating organizations under the direction of Lt. Col. Bill Burleigh (U.S. Army, retired), who serves as executive director.

In February

The Rooker Report kicks off its 15th year as a monthly publication.

Our anniversary issue will focus on court news of interest, stories about people and their contributions to the legal system, up-to-date statistical information, trends and the most recent trial results from the civil courtrooms.

COMING HOME!

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internal aesthetics of the grand old building, they will be treated to a more convenient navigation of the courts' clerical operations..

All clerk's offices--Circuit Court, Probate and Chancery-- will be located on the third floor, eliminating confusion for the general public and providing greater convenience for attorneys doing clerical business in more than one court.

Courtrooms are equally coordinated. All four Chancery Courtrooms will be located on the fourth floor, as well as Sixth Circuit Court, with the seven other divisions of Circuit Court occupying space on the fifth and six floors. First, Second, Third and Fifth Courts will be located on the fifth floor with Fourth, Seventh and Eighth courtrooms on the sixth floor, along with the Trial Court Administrator's Office.

The jury assembly room will be located on the ground floor. A second jury assembly room will also be located in the Birch Building.

CHANGES OF NOTE

Beginning on February 1, General Sessions civil cases in Courtroom 5D will be divided into two dockets to better accommodate litigants who are represented by counsel.

Only those cases represented by attorneys will be assigned to the regular 9 a.m. docket. A separate docket for pro se cases will be called at 10 a.m.

Also, parties in Order of Protection cases are reminded of a change in docket time appearance that went into effect on January 1. The new docket time is 8:30 a.m. with parties required to be present at 8:15 a.m.

A new state statute now requires the appropriate spouse in a divorce/separation action to provide written notification to the opposing spouse of pending termination of insurance coverage. The notice must be sent by certified mail at least 30 days prior to the insurance termination date. Appropriate forms are available at the Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

CASE ANALYSES

GENRE	DECEMBER	YTD
AUTO ACCIDENTS	4	44
•PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	3	26
•DEFENDANT VERDICTS	1	13
•NONE	0	5
CONTRACTS	0	33
•PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	0	26
•DEFENDANT VERDICTS	0	3
•NONE	0	4
TOTAL AWARDS	NONE	\$195,648
MEDICAL MALPRACTICE	0	2
•PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	0	0
•DEFENDANT VERDICTS	0	2
MISCELLANEOUS	1	4
•PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	1	71
•DEFENDANT VERDICTS	1	15
•NONE	0	14

Auto Accident Cases

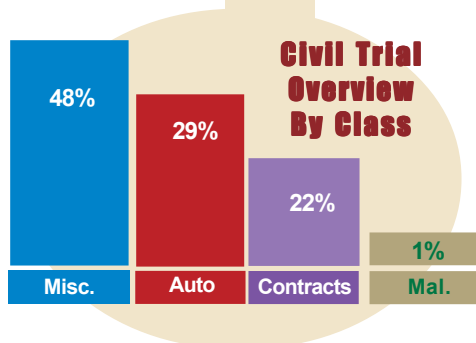
	DECEMBER	YTD
JURY TRIALS	4	31
NON-JURY TRIALS	0	13
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	3	27
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	1	12
NONE	0	5
HIGHEST JUDGMENT	\$55,500	N/A
AVERAGE JUDGMENT	N/A	\$6,459

Soft Tissue Auto Cases

	DECEMBER	YTD
JURY TRIALS	3	15
NON-JURY TRIALS	0	1
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	3	13
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	0	2
PENDING	0	2
HIGHEST JUDGMENT	\$55,500	N/A
AVERAGE JUDGMENT	N/A	\$6,459

General Sessions Auto Appeals

	AUGUST	YTD
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	0	5
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	0	3
NONE	0	2



DATA BANK

Statistics compiled for the month of December

CASE INFORMATION

Circuit Court

NEW CIVIL CASES FILED	198
JURY	98
NON-JURY	100
CIVIL CASES CONCLUDED	214
JURY	132
NON-JURY	82
NEW DIVORCE CASES FILED	60
DIVORCE CASES CONCLUDED	79
DOMESTIC PETITIONS FILED	267
DOMESTIC PETITIONS CONCLUDED	181

General Sessions Civil

NEW CASES FILED	3,253
EXECUTIONS ISSUED	2,986
GARNISHMENT PAYMENTS	3,689
JUDGMENTS COLLECTED	\$693,591
ORDER OF PROTECTION PETITIONS	126

Probate Court

NEW CASES FILED	131
CASES CLOSED	141

Traffic Violations

MOVING CITATIONS	10,958
TOTAL VIOLATIONS	19,484
PARKING VIOLATIONS	4,776
TOTAL FINES COLLECTED	\$588,065
NULLIFICATIONS	3,735
NULLIFICATION FEES COLLECTED	\$44,824

Rooker Report

Published by the Davidson County Circuit Court Clerk's Office
523 Mainstream Drive, Nashville, TN 37228

Internet @ www.nashville.gov/circuit

Established by George L. Rooker (1929-1993)

(Circuit Court Clerk, 1968-1993)

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If you have a disability and require assistance, please contact 862-5204