

Rooker Report

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Social Security Numbers, Other Identifying Information Redacted From Case Examinations

Personal Data Blocked From Public Access

Litigants filing civil lawsuits no longer need to be concerned about their personal information falling into the wrong hands.

Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker announced this month that vital identifying data such as social security numbers, bank account numbers and taxpayer ID numbers would no longer appear on imaged case files accessible to the public.

"The public is no longer able to examine the original documents containing this information," Rooker said. "Files can only be viewed in our offices on public CaseLink computer terminals after they have been scanned and the personal information has been redacted."

The new policy comes amidst growing public concern over identity theft and other privacy invasion issues. It also follows a Metro Legal Department opinion in response to a request from Rooker that

disclosure of social security numbers through the clerk's CaseLink subscriber service or websites would violate state statutes and should not be distributed to the public "in any fashion."

In compliance with the opinion, Rooker immediately set in motion a major redaction program. The CaseLink service was not interrupted for the three weeks during the overhaul, but image viewing was not offered.

With literally millions of documents to be brought up to the new standard, the services of a computing system were retained to bring quick resolution for all existing documents and to provide software to redact images immediately after they are scanned.

"The initial set of 2.7 million pages of PDF files was picked up by courier on July 3, processed by a battery of servers and returned

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One-Year Term Begins in September

Robinson to Preside Over Sessions Court

Gale Robinson has been elected to serve as presiding judge over the General Sessions Court, effective September 1.

Robinson will succeed Judge Gloria Dumas, who held the position for two one-year terms during the court's transition to permanent quarters in the new Justice A. A. Birch Building.

Dumas described her role as one of "keeping the train on the track" during the adjustment period. She was also instrumental in restructuring docket scheduling to better accommodate both the court and the general public. Most recently, she imposed a dress code prohibiting disrespectful attire in the courtrooms.

It will be Robinson's second time to preside over the court's business affairs since first being elected to the bench in 1990. His first one-year term came in 1994--midway through his first elected term.

Robinson, whose late father served on the same court for a number of years, is now in his third eight-year elected term as judge of Division 1, sharing a diversified case load with 10 other judges.

As presiding judge, he will oversee the court's fiscal budget, work with each of the panel's individual specialty committees, resolve issues of dispute and promote court-related legislation during general assembly sessions.

"I am honored that my fellow judges have chosen me for this position of high responsibility," he said. "There is much work to be done as this tribunal wrestles with new challenges of both social



Photo by Margaret Larobardiere

Judge Gale B. Robinson shares office space with his late grandfather, former Sheriff Garner Robinson, and his late father, Gale Robinson, who served for many years on the General Sessions Court. The campaign posters have served as office decor for the new presiding judge throughout most of his 18 years on the bench. Robinson has sported a ponytail the past two years in support of Locks of Love, an organization that makes wigs for cancer patients from donated human hair. He says he will clip the tresses in September.

and moral conflict dictated by society's inability to settle its differences without court intervention. It is my intention and my mission

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Cheers...

Congratulations to **Samantha Taylor** of the Traffic Violations Bureau upon giving birth to a baby daughter. **Kensley Raine Taylor** arrived on June 28 with dad **Braxton Taylor** beaming at her official weigh-in statistics of 5 pound, 15 ounces and 19 inches from head to toe. Equally elated was big sister **Kira**.

A two-year courtship has ended at the altar for Deputy General Sessions Civil Division Clerk **Daniel Wiseman**, who exchanged vows with fiancée **Page Pearce Hudson** on July 26. The wedding took place just outside Birmingham at the Vestavia Country Club with the groom's father, **Robert Wiseman**, officiating. The bride is originally from Albany, Georgia and is currently employed by the Nashville firm of Thomas and Thorngren. The couple will delay their honeymoon until a later date when they plan on riding the Mississippi Queen riverboat to New Orleans.

...Tears

MIKE DIAMOND, 67, brother-in-law to Circuit Court Judge Joe P. Binkley, passed away late last month in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he resided. He was the former marketing director for Opryland Theme Park (retired) and the husband of Lou Binkley Diamond, who survives.

ALBERT K. WARD, 94, grandfather of Deputy Probate Court Clerk Kim Jackson, passed away on July 5.

JIMMY ZIRKER, 48, brother of Deputy Traffic Violations Bureau Clerk Pat Nichols, passed away on June 27 after suffering a massive heart attack. He was a nephew of Roy Bohannon, a deputy traffic warrant officer.

JOHN RUCKER SR., 66, former security coordinator for General Sessions Court, passed away on July 15. Mr. Rucker served as a security officer for the courts for 9 years before being named coordinator in 2005. Failing health forced his retirement in 2007.

New Divorce Form Addresses Insurance Issues

Divorce attorneys will want to familiarize themselves with a recently revised form relating to spousal insurance coverage.

The form is titled "Notice Regarding Insurance Coverage" and can be found on the Circuit Court Clerk's web site for downloading.

"Basically, the form was created to make sure that if one spouse is covered under the other's insurance, they will get advance notice that they will be removed," explained Chief Deputy Clerk Glenn Balletto. "It also lets the parties know about other options and the potential cost of other plans, such as COBRA."

Once the form is filed, it becomes a part of the permanent record, Balletto said.

Robinson Elected Sessions Court PJ

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Gale Robinson

One-Year Term Begins In September

to provide leadership to help bring about the highest degree of fairness to parties in those disputes."

His judicial credentials support that philosophy. During a five-year period ending in 1999, he served as a judge on the State Court of Judiciary, a position that required him to sit in judgment over internal issues arising from alleged misconduct by fellow judges.

In 1993, Robinson created a special Domestic Violence Court to deal with the growing number of socially dysfunctional issues among both individuals and family units. His expertise and personal interest in such matters has earned him wide recognition as an authority on domestic violence issues. He has been selected by the Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Community Violence as a keynote speaker during its upcoming annual fall conference in October.

A native Nashvillian, Robinson was graduated from Goodpasture Christian School in 1974. He attended the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where he received his bachelor's degree in 1980. He went on to earn his law degree from the Nashville School of Law four years later. He maintained a private law practice until his election to the bench in 1990.

Robinson is a member of the Nashville Bar Association, Tennessee Bar Association, Tennessee General Sessions Court Judges Conference, American Bar Association, American Judges Association and the Goodlettsville Masonic Lodge #271. He is a 32nd Degree Scottish Right Mason and, in 1999, was Potentate of Al Menah Temple.

In 1996, he was awarded the Jane Wheatcraft Award from the Tennessee Task Force Against Domestic Violence. That would be followed four years later by the Good Guys Award from the Nashville Women's Political Caucus.

Robinson and his wife Nancy have four children.

June Trial Verdicts

Appeals

GENERAL SESSIONS

Jury

CIRCUIT COURT

Week of June 16

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
06C-914	NEGLIGENCE	6		DEFENDANT			

Week of June 23

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
05C-2472	AUTO ACCIDENT	1		\$25,000			
*07C-3272	GSA/DETAINER	2		POSSESSION		P-POSSESSION	DEFENDANT

*--JURY WAIVED

Soft Tissue

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
04C-2323	AUTO ACCIDENT/ST	3	\$47,044	DEFENDANT			

Non-Jury

CIRCUIT COURT

Week of June 2

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
07C-1913	WRIT OF CERTIORARI	6		PLAINTIFF			
07C-961	PEDESTRIAN	5		\$20,010			
05C-3809	CONTRACT	2		\$998			
07C-3798	TRAFFIC	6		DEFENDANT			
07C-3160	TRAFFIC	6		DEFENDANT			
07C-3799	GSA/NEGLIGENCE	5		\$4,606		DISMISSED	PLAINTIFF
07C-3805	GSA/DETAINER	6		POSSESSION		P-POSSESSION	DEFENDANT
06C-2300	WORKERS COMPENSATION	2		\$20,000			
*07C-3448	GSA/DEBT	2		\$99,296		P-\$60,990	DEFENDANT

*SPECIAL NON-DOCKETED HEARING.

Week of June 9

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
*08C-3799	GSA/CONTRACT	2		\$4,749		P-\$11,467	DEFENDANT

*SPECIAL NON-DOCKETED HEARING.

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Personal Data Blocked From Public Viewing

on July 18," explained Randy Bryant, chief technician for Rooker's operations.

Bryant said new images are uploaded nightly and processed on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. "As a general rule, images are available within three business days of scanning," he added.

"We are currently in the process of reviewing documents that have been redacted and returned and are working to fine tune the configuration of their software to achieve the lowest possible error ratio," Bryant said.

Real time in-house redaction is tentatively scheduled for mid-August, Bryant noted. "In order to handle the processing load, we have acquired and installed additional servers with the processing power of 32 individual computers. To accommodate the additional storage requirements, we have also upgraded our existing image storage capacity to 6 terabytes, or over 180 million pages."

In order to best facilitate the filing process, Rooker offered the following tips:

Divorce cases: Pursuant to 36-4-106(b), social security numbers should be filed on a separate document and filed with the petition rather than listed in the petition. The separate document containing the social security number and other identifying information requested in the statute will be placed under seal when it is filed in the Clerk's Office.

Guardianships: Pursuant to 34-1-109(c), social security numbers should be given to the duly appointed fiduciary and not recited in the petition filed with the Clerk's Office.

Rooker pointed out that, unless a rule or statute requires a social security number be listed in a document, the complete number should not be used in any document filed with the Clerk. If desired by petitioner, only the last four digits should be used.

Credit Card Collections Surpass \$4 Million Mark

Traffic violators utilizing the convenience of paying their fines with credit cards, either on line or by phone, hit a milestone in mid-July.

Circuit Court Clerk Richard Rooker said credit card payments surpassed the \$4 million mark for the 18-month period the service has been offered. He estimated that credit card payments this calendar year will exceed all of the 2007 credit card collections around the first week of September.

The credit card method of payment has steadily increased since the alternative plan was introduced in January of last year. In June of this year, the latest full-month reporting period, 23.5 percent of total collections was attributed to credit card conveyances. Exorbitant gas prices have also added to the stimulus of on line and phone payments.

"There has definitely been an increase in the number of people using credit cards over other methods of payment," Rooker said.

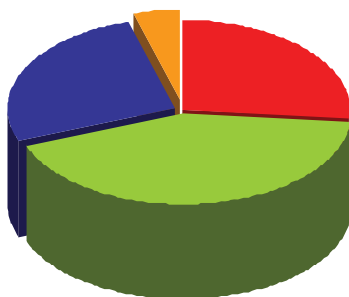
Payments over the counter and by mail continue to be the preference of most customers. During the same June reporting period, 31.1 percent chose to pay by mail while 19.6 percent paid in person at the Traffic Violations Bureau and 25.8 percent at the Traffic Warrant Office cashier's window.

Yet another incentive will soon be offered. In the near future, an automated phone system will be offered, allowing customers to make payments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even without internet access.

"We are continuously working to provide more convenience and better service to our customers," Rooker said. "With the introduction of our credit card payment system, customers can make their payment from the comfort of their home if they so choose. They no longer need to drive downtown, pay for parking and take time away from their jobs to make payments in person.

"If we can save our citizens time and money, we are being good stewards of the taxpayers' money and being responsible service providers."

Civil Trial Recap By Class



Miscellaneous	51%
Auto	27%
Contracts.....	19%
Medical Malpractice.....	3%



DATA BANK

June 2008

Case Information

Circuit Court

New Civil Cases Filed.....	247
Jury	115
Non-Jury.....	132
Civil Cases Concluded.....	214
Jury	137
Non-Jury	77
New Divorce Cases Filed	169
Divorce Cases Concluded.....	178
Domestic Petitions Filed	213
Domestic Petitions Concluded	261

General Sessions Civil

New Cases Filed.....	4,157
Executions Issued	3,697
Garnishment Payments.....	4,149
Judgments Collected.....	\$889,229
Orders of Protection Petitions.....	195

Probate Court

New Cases Filed.....	189
Cases Closed	146

Traffic Violations

Moving Citations	12,080
Total Violations.....	17,737
Parking Violations.....	6,671
Total Fines Collected	\$574,985
Nullifications	2,770
Nullification Fees Collected	\$33,253
Environmental Citations.....	331
*Credit Card Payments	4,141

*--Online and phone payments combined

Case Analyses

GENRE	JUNE	YTD
AUTO ACCIDENTS	2	20
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	1	13
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	1	6
NONE	0	1
CONTRACTS	2	14
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	1	8
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	1	6
NONE	0	0
TOTAL AWARDS	\$5,747	*\$104,200
*REPRESENTS ONLY THOSE AMOUNTS DISCLOSED.		
MEDICAL MALPRACTICE	0	2
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	0	0
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	0	1
PENDING	0	1
MISCELLANEOUS	9	39
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	6	27
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	3	11
NONE	0	1

Auto Accident Cases

	JUNE	YTD
JURY TRIALS	2	16
NON-JURY TRIALS	0	4
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	1	13
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	1	6
NONE	0	1
HIGHEST JUDGMENT	\$25,000	\$66,000
AVERAGE JUDGMENT	N/A	N/A

Soft Tissue Auto Cases

	JUNE	YTD
JURY TRIALS	1	8
NON-JURY TRIALS	0	0
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	0	6
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	1	2

General Sessions Auto Appeals

	JUNE	YTD
PLAINTIFF VERDICTS	0	5
DEFENDANT VERDICTS	0	1
NONE	0	0

Rooker Report

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(Circuit Court Clerk, 1968-1993)

Richard R. Rooker..... Circuit Court Clerk
Gene Baker Editor



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