

**MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE**

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT**



**455 N. Lamar, Suite 100  
Jackson, Mississippi, 39202  
601-359-1273**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2024 ANNUAL REPORT.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LEADERSHIP.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Commission Members .....	4
Alternate Commission Members .....	4
Executive Director .....	4
Contact Information .....	4
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TYPES OF COMPLAINTS THE COMMISSION MAY CONSIDER.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Judicial Misconduct .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>A. Improper Courtroom Behavior .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>B. Improper or Illegal Influence .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>C. Improper Conduct Outside the Courtroom .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>D. Other Violations .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>2. Physical or Mental Disability .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. Complaints Outside the Commission’s Jurisdiction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>COMPLAINT PROCESS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Filing a Complaint .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Initial Review.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Commission Review .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Investigation .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Subsequent Commission Review .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Formal Complaint Proceedings .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Mississippi Supreme Court Review .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Potential Sanctions: .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Summary of Services Provided by Commission Staff .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SOURCE OF THE COMPLAINTS.....</b>	<b>12</b>

<b>TYPES OF JUDGES RECEIVING COMPLAINTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>DISPOSITION OF COMPLAINTS.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>LEADERSHIP BIOGRAPHIES .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ALTERNATE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>23</b>

# MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE

## LEADERSHIP

**Chairman:** Judge David Ryan Bruhl\*  
**Vice-Chairman:** Col. (R) Silvanus Johnson\*

### Commission Members

Judge Smith Murphy (Resigned 2024)  
Judge Stanley A. Sorey (Became Member June 2024)  
Judge Jim Persons  
Judge Richelle Lumpkin (Resigned April 2024)  
Judge Veldore Young Graham (Appointed April 2024)  
Patricia W. Bennett, Esquire  
Judge David Ryan Bruhl  
Col. (R) Silvanus Johnson  
Edward J. Langton

### Alternate Commission Members

Judge Stanley A. Sorey  
Judge Richelle Lumpkin (Appointed Alternate May 2024)  
Judge Stephen T. Bailey  
Judge Edwin Y. Hannan  
Judge Wes Curry (Resigned 2024)  
Judge Chris McBrayer (Appointed July 2024)  
Jennifer I. Johnson, Esquire  
Jeffery M. Adcock  
Charlie Jackson

*(\*Also serving as Commission Members)*

### Executive Director

Rachel L. Wilson



### Contact Information

**Telephone:** 601-359-1273 / **Facsimile:** 601-354-6277  
**Website:** [judicialperformance.ms.gov](http://judicialperformance.ms.gov)  
**Email:** [mailbox@mcojp.ms.gov](mailto:mailbox@mcojp.ms.gov)

## INTRODUCTION

Established in 1979 through a constitutional amendment by the Mississippi Legislature and the State's voters, the Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance serves to uphold judicial standards, investigate allegations of judicial misconduct or disability, and protect both the public and the judiciary from misconduct and unfounded claims.

The Commission's jurisdiction encompasses all state-level judicial officers, including those serving on the Mississippi Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Circuit Courts, Chancery Courts, County Courts, Municipal Courts, Justice Courts, and any other judicial officers performing state functions.

Comprised of seven members, the Commission includes one circuit court judge, one chancery court judge, one county court judge, one justice court judge, two laypersons with no judicial or legal background, and one practicing attorney with a minimum of ten years of experience in Mississippi. Each member, along with an appointed alternate, serves a six-year term, after their initial term, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives from the judiciary, legal community, and the public in evaluating complaints.

The Commission's primary objectives are to protect the public, enforce rigorous judicial conduct standards, and maintain confidence in the judiciary's integrity and independence. Complaints can be submitted by any individual, including litigants, attorneys, law enforcement officers, and concerned citizens who believe a judge has engaged in misconduct or is impaired in their duties. To facilitate accessibility, the Commission accepts written complaints via its website, email, mail, or fax; however, verbal complaints are not accepted.

Judicial misconduct is primarily defined by Section 177A of the Mississippi Constitution and the Mississippi Code of Judicial Conduct. Such misconduct may involve bias, inappropriate demeanor, denying parties a fair opportunity to present their cases, or failing to render decisions promptly and fairly. Upon receiving a complaint with specific allegations that could constitute misconduct, the Commission is obligated to conduct an investigation. If the complaint is found to lack merit or pertains to legal interpretations best addressed through appellate review, it will be dismissed. Throughout this process, strict confidentiality is maintained, with complaints becoming public records only when submitted to the Mississippi Supreme Court for review.

I extend my gratitude to the judiciary, court staff, legal professionals, and the public for their support in enabling the Commission to fulfill its constitutional mandate. Special thanks are due to the Commission's staff and members for their unwavering dedication to ensuring public

trust in our judicial system. For any inquiries regarding the Commission's work or this report, please feel free to contact our office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Wilson" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Rachel L. Wilson  
Executive Director

## TYPES OF COMPLAINTS THE COMMISSION MAY CONSIDER

The Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance carefully evaluates various types of complaints to ensure fairness, judicial accountability, and adherence to ethical standards. Complaints typically fall into three categories: judicial misconduct, physical or mental disability, and matters outside the Commission's jurisdiction. Each complaint undergoes a thorough review and investigation to maintain the integrity of the judiciary.

### 1. Judicial Misconduct

The **Mississippi Code of Judicial Conduct** establishes ethical standards for judges, governing their behavior both on and off the bench. Judicial misconduct can take several forms, including:

#### *A. Improper Courtroom Behavior*

Judges are expected to maintain professionalism and fairness in the courtroom. Complaints in this category may involve inappropriate demeanor, mistreatment of attorneys, litigants, witnesses, or other participants in the judicial process. Examples include racist or sexist remarks, sleeping on the bench, inattentiveness, or substance abuse. Additionally, judges may be disciplined for administrative failures, such as unduly delaying rulings or neglecting cases under advisement.

#### *B. Improper or Illegal Influence*

Judges must remain impartial and base their rulings solely on the evidence presented in a case. **Canon 2B** of the Code of Judicial Conduct prohibits judges from allowing personal, familial, social, or political relationships to influence their decisions. **Canon 3E** further mandates that judges recuse themselves from cases where they or their family members have a personal interest in the outcome.

Improper influence may include accepting gifts, bribes, loans, or favors that could compromise judicial independence. Additionally, **Canon 3B(7)** prohibits ex parte communications, where a judge engages in private discussions about a case with one party without the other party's knowledge or participation.

#### *C. Improper Conduct Outside the Courtroom*

A judge's ethical obligations extend beyond the courtroom. **Canon 4A** permits the Commission to investigate behaviors in a judge's personal or professional life that could undermine public confidence in the judiciary. Such conduct may include criminal activity, inappropriate speech or affiliations, lewd behavior, or any action that could compromise the integrity of judicial office.

#### *D. Other Violations*

This category encompasses a broad range of judicial misconduct, including interference in attorney-client relationships, expressions of bias or prejudice, improper campaign activities, public commentary on pending cases, failure to disqualify from cases where a conflict of interest exists, or using judicial authority to advance personal interests.

### **2. Physical or Mental Disability**

The Commission also reviews allegations regarding a judge's physical or mental fitness to serve. Complaints may involve conditions such as alcohol or substance abuse, debilitating illnesses, mental health disorders, or cognitive decline. If there is reasonable cause to believe a judge is impaired, the Commission has the authority to require an evaluation by a licensed physician of its choosing.

### **3. Complaints Outside the Commission's Jurisdiction**

The Commission frequently receives complaints from individuals dissatisfied with a judge's ruling. However, the Commission **does not** have the authority to modify, reverse, or review judicial decisions—that responsibility belongs to the appellate courts.

Additionally, the Commission does not have the authority to determine whether a judge should recuse themselves from a case, as this issue is also within the jurisdiction of appellate courts. Finally, the Commission **does not** oversee complaints against **federal judges**, as those matters fall under the jurisdiction of the federal judicial disciplinary system.

Through its investigative and enforcement authority, the Commission ensures that complaints within its jurisdiction are addressed while upholding the independence and fairness of Mississippi's judicial system.

# COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Commission follows a structured and transparent process when handling allegations of judicial misconduct. From the initial review to formal proceedings, each step reflects a commitment to due diligence, fairness, and justice.

## **Filing a Complaint**

The process begins when the Commission receives a written complaint alleging judicial misconduct. Complaint forms are available by mail, fax, and email, and can also be accessed and submitted electronically through the Commission's website at <https://www.judicialperformance.ms.gov>.

## **Initial Review**

Upon receiving a complaint, a staff member reviews it to confirm that the allegations are against a sitting state court judge. If the complaint falls within the Commission's jurisdiction, it is assigned a case number. A written notification is sent to the complainant acknowledging receipt of the complaint, providing the case number, and informing them of the date the Commission will review it. Prior to the Commission meeting, members receive copies of the complaints for review.

## **Commission Review**

At the Commission's regularly scheduled meetings, complaints are formally reviewed. The Commission may dismiss a complaint due to a lack of evidence, because it involves matters subject to appellate review, or because it falls outside its jurisdiction. If the Commission determines there is a possibility of judicial misconduct, it orders an investigation. Written notification of the Commission's decision is provided to the complainant.

## **Investigation**

During the investigation, witnesses are interviewed, relevant documents are collected and examined, and an investigative file is compiled. The assigned investigator has two months to complete their findings and present them to the Commission at its next meeting.

## **Subsequent Commission Review**

Following the investigation, the Commission may take one of the following actions, with written notification provided to all relevant parties:

- Dismiss the complaint for the reasons cited above.
- Dismiss the complaint but issue a letter of instruction to the judge.
- Determine there is probable cause to file a formal complaint.

## **Formal Complaint Proceedings**

If a formal complaint is filed, the judge is served with a written copy of the complaint and has 30 days to respond. The judge has the right to legal representation. Following this, the judge and the Commission may enter settlement negotiations or proceed to a hearing.

In a formal hearing, the judge has the opportunity to present evidence and call up to two-character witnesses. A three-member panel then determines whether the judge committed misconduct or dismisses the case. Written notification of the panel's decision is sent to the judge and the complainant.

## **Mississippi Supreme Court Review**

If the panel finds that misconduct has occurred, the Commission may take informal action or submit a written recommendation for disciplinary measures to the Mississippi Supreme Court. The Supreme Court reviews the Commission's findings and may either uphold the recommendation, impose a greater or lesser sanction, or dismiss the case.

### **Potential Sanctions:**

- Memorandum of Understanding
- Private Admonishment
- Public Reprimand
- Suspension
- Fine
- Removal from Office

This rigorous process ensures that allegations of judicial misconduct are thoroughly examined while maintaining the integrity of the judicial system. All parties involved receive written notifications at each stage of the process, reinforcing the Commission's commitment to transparency and due process.

## **Summary of Services Provided by Commission Staff**

The Commission's dedicated staff, under the leadership of Executive Director Rachel L. Wilson, delivers a broad range of essential services, including complaint processing, investigations, training, and community outreach. Their unwavering commitment reflects the Commission's dedication to excellence and public service.

In 2024, the Commission received 422 new complaints against Mississippi judges. In addition to these initial filings, 163 addendums were submitted to supplement original complaints. Over the course of the year, the Commission convened 6 times, conducted investigations into 214 complaints, and initiated formal proceedings in 10 cases.

Beyond complaint handling and investigations, the Commission staff actively engaged in judicial education and ethics training. In 2024, staff members served as presenters at 10 training sessions and conferences focused on judicial ethics. The Commission also received 280 complaints that fell outside its jurisdiction and responded to 2,811 telephone inquiries regarding the judicial system, interpretations of the Code of Judicial Conduct, and the complaint process.

Additionally, Commission staff serves as a valuable resource for Mississippi court clerks, county administrators, and judges, offering guidance and support to ensure the effective administration of justice. Staff members also contribute to community engagement efforts, participating in numerous outreach programs across the state.

The Commission staff further supports the judicial election process by serving as an administrative resource for judicial elections and assisting the Judicial Election Oversight Committee. In 2024, the Committee issued public statements regarding judicial elections, reinforcing the Commission's role in upholding integrity within the judicial system.

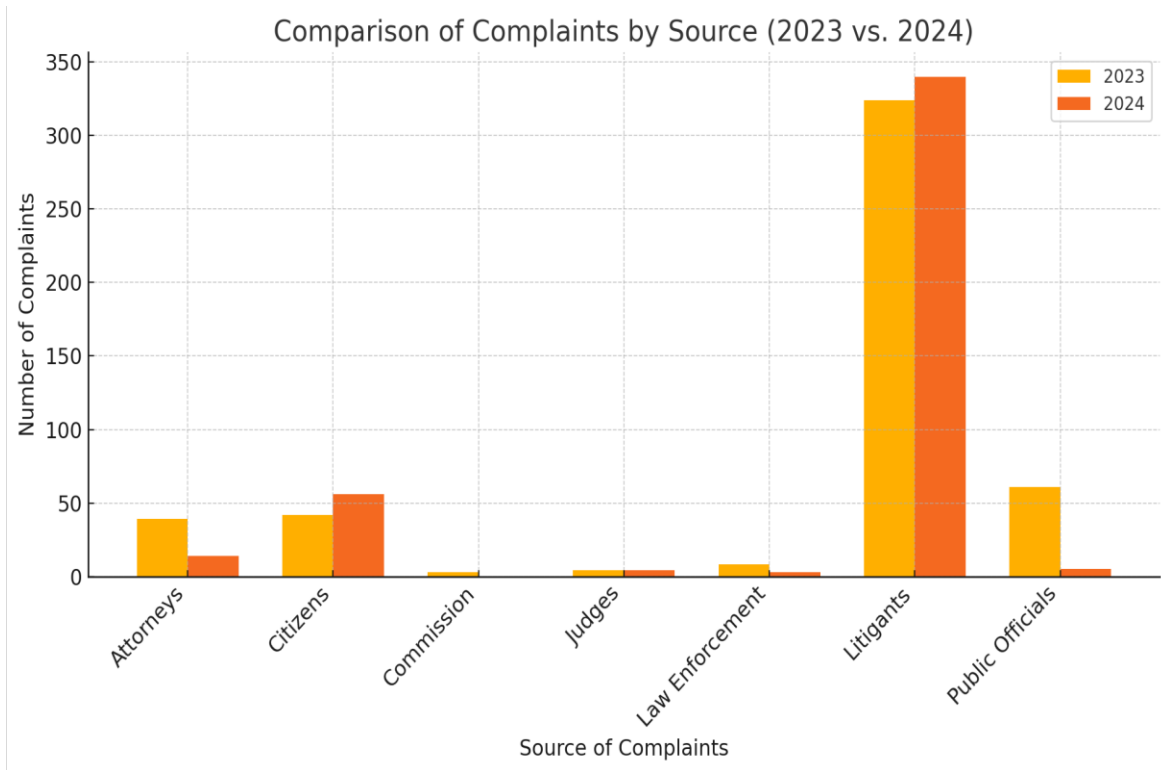
The Commission employs a staff of five including:

Executive Director – Rachel L. Wilson  
Senior Staff Attorney – Ashley May  
Staff Attorney – Sherrie L. DeWolf  
Chief Investigator - Danny L. Perry  
Office Manager – Hunter Buxton

## SOURCE OF THE COMPLAINTS

A breakdown of complaint sources sheds light on the diverse range of individuals and entities contributing to the Commission's caseload. Attorneys, citizens, judges, and law enforcement officers all play a role in upholding judicial accountability.

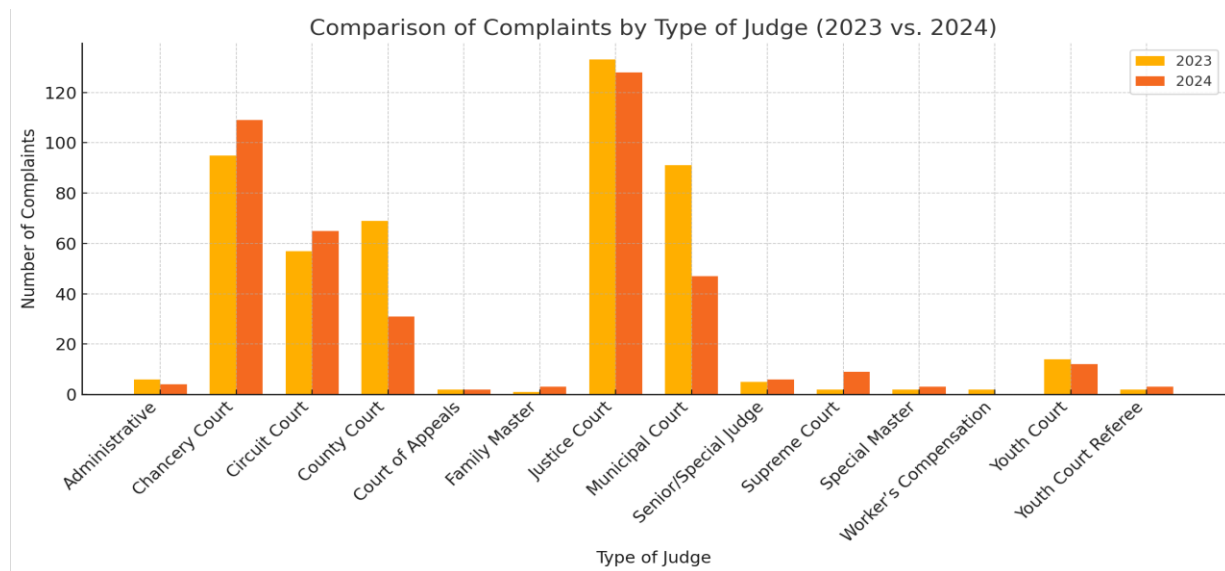
	2023	2024
Attorneys	39	14
Citizen	42	56
Commission	03	00
Judge	04	04
Law Enforcement	08	03
Litigant	324	340
Public Official	61	05
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>422</b>



## TYPES OF JUDGES RECEIVING COMPLAINTS

The Commission's oversight extends across various judicial positions, ensuring accountability and adherence to standards at all levels. From circuit court judges to municipal court judges, each category receives scrutiny to maintain judicial integrity.

	2023	2024
Administrative	06	04
Chancery Court	95	109
Circuit Court	57	65
County Court	69	31
Court of Appeals	02	02
Family Master	01	03
Justice Court	133	128
Municipal Court	91	47
Senior/Special Judge	05	06
Supreme Court	02	09
Special Master	02	03
Worker's Compensation	02	00
Youth Court	14	12
Youth Court Referee	02	03
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>422</b>



## DISPOSITION OF COMPLAINTS

Transparency in the handling of complaints is paramount, as reflected in the detailed breakdown of dispositions. Whether dismissed, pending investigation, or resulting in sanctions, each case receives careful consideration to uphold the Commission's mandate.

	2023	2024
<b><u>Complaints Dismissed</u></b>		
Dismissed:		
Appellate Review	63	105
Lack of Evidence	273	162
Lack of Jurisdiction	01	02
<b><u>Complaints Currently Pending at Commission</u></b>		
Formal Complaint	09	06
Pending Investigation	16	18
New Complaints Pending	79	108
<b><u>Sanctions Imposed</u></b>		
Informal Commission Action	02	12
Memorandum of Understanding	34	02
Resigned/Retired	00	01
Inactive Status	00	00
Private Admonishment	04	03
Public Reprimands/Suspension	00	00
Removed	00	00
Dismissed	00	02
Currently Pending at Supreme Court	00	01
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>422</b>

## **DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Commission's disciplinary recommendations highlight its dedication to maintaining accountability and integrity within the judiciary. By submitting these recommendations to the Mississippi Supreme Court, the Commission ensures that judicial misconduct is addressed swiftly and appropriately.

In 2024, the Commission filed a disciplinary recommendation with the Mississippi Supreme Court, which was not resolved within the same calendar year.

This case is Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance v. Municipal Court Judge Carlos E. Moore (2024-JP-00121-SCT).

## **LEADERSHIP BIOGRAPHIES**

Profiles of Commission leadership and members provide insight into the diverse expertise and backgrounds contributing to the Commission's work. From experienced judges to legal professionals, each member brings valuable perspectives to uphold judicial standards.

### **Judge David Ryan Bruhl, Chairman**

David Ryan Bruhl is a partner at Foxworth, Shepard & Bruhl, P.A., a law firm located at 702 Main Street in Columbia, Mississippi. He earned his Juris Doctor degree, graduating cum laude, from Mississippi College School of Law in 2011. After beginning his legal career in Tylertown, Mississippi, Ryan joined Foxworth & Shepard in Columbia in 2018. His areas of expertise include real estate law, probate law, estate planning and trusts, and corporate law.

In 2014, Ryan was appointed Municipal Judge by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of Tylertown. In 2015, he was elected as one of the Justice Court Judges for Walthall County.

In 2018, Chancellor Debbra K. Halford appointed Ryan to serve as Family Master, Special Master for Commitments, and Youth Court Referee for Walthall County. Ryan is actively involved in various community development projects.

He is a past president of the Walthall County Chamber of Commerce and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Walthall County Dairy Festival and Christmas in the Park.

He is also a member of the Varnel Masonic Lodge and previously served on the Board of Directors of the Southwest Mississippi Community College Alumni Association. Ryan is married to Jennifer Stringer, and they have two children. The family attends Tylertown Baptist Church.

In 2023, Judge Bruhl was elected Chairman of the Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance, reflecting his dedication to upholding judicial integrity and accountability.

### **Col. (R) Silvanus Johnson, Vice-Chairman**

Col. Johnson is a retired Medical Services Officer. Colonel Johnson also served as a Special Education and Biology learning strategy teacher at Mendenhall High School. He earned the Mississippi Meritorious Service Award and was named teacher of the year for the 2013-2014 school year. He is a graduate of Jackson State University and was the Senior Assistant Professor of the Military Science Department.

Col. Johnson was the first African American enlisted soldier, to enter the Mississippi Army National Guard. Additionally, he is the first and only African American member of the Board of Directors for the Mississippi Military Museum at Camp Shelby. Col. Johnson is a life member of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. being selected as the brother of the Year, obtaining the Outstanding Achievement Award, and many more honorable awards. He is married and the father of two adult daughters and serves as a deacon and treasurer for the Sylvarena Missionary Baptist Church. He currently serves the Commission as lay member.

## **MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Judge Smith Murphey (Resigned 2024)**

Judge Murphey joined the 17th Circuit bench in January 2011. The district includes DeSoto, Panola, Tallahatchie, Tate and Yalobusha counties. Judge Murphey previously served as chair, vice-chair and secretary treasurer of the Conference of Circuit Judges.

He previously served as an Assistant District Attorney of the 17th Circuit District for almost 15 years. He is former president of the Mississippi Prosecutors Association and former president of the Prosecutors Section of the Mississippi Bar. He taught trial techniques and constitutional law nationally to prosecutors for the National Advocacy Center and the National District Attorneys Association. He has served as an instructor in constitutional law for police cadets at the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy and Mississippi Justice Court Judges Professional Judicial Development courses. He has been a member of the Project Safe Childhood Task Force. He was a founding member of two multi-disciplinary task forces on child abuse.

Judge Murphey is a member of the Batesville Rotary Club and the Panola Partnership. He is a long-time volunteer at the Panola County Food Pantry. He has served as an elder, deacon, and trustee for the Batesville Presbyterian Church.

Judge Murphey earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Mississippi and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law. He served for two years as a law clerk for former Supreme Court Justice James L. Roberts Jr. of Pontotoc.

#### **Judge Stanley A. Sorey (Became Member June 2024)**

Judge Sorey has served on the 13th Circuit Court bench since January 2016. He is senior judge of the district that includes Covington, Jasper, Simpson and Smith counties. He was in private law practice for more than 16 years before he was elected Circuit Judge. He served as Smith County Prosecutor and municipal prosecutor for the towns of Mize and Taylorsville. He was board attorney for the Smith County Board of Supervisors for 10 years. He was president of the Smith County Bar Association for 14 years.

Judge Sorey served for six years in the Mississippi National Guard, including active duty during Operation Desert Storm.

Judge Sorey earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi College and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law. He also attended Jones County Junior College, Copiah-Lincoln Community College and the University of Southern Mississippi.

#### **Judge Jim Persons**

Judge Persons was elected as a chancellor of the Eighth Chancery District of Harrison, Hancock and Stone counties in November 2002 and took office in January 2003. He practiced law in Jackson from 1967 until 1974, then moved his practice to the Gulf Coast. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Millsaps College, a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law, and a L.L.M. in taxation from New York University. He is a past president of the Harrison County Bar Association and the Russell-Blass-Walker Chapter of the American Inns of Court. He was inducted as a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation in 2011 and received the Mississippi Bar Distinguished Service Award in 2017.

#### **Judge Richelle Lumpkin (Termed Out April 2024)**

Judge Lumpkin obtained her Juris Doctorate from Mississippi College School of Law in 1990. She was in private practice for 20 years focusing her practice in the areas of criminal defense, family law, personal injury, real estate and general litigation. During this time, she also served as Youth Court Referee and Municipal Court Judge. In November of 2010 she was elected as the first County Court Judge of Pearl River County and currently serves in that position. Judge Lumpkin is a member of the Mississippi Bar Association, the Pearl River Bar Association and a past member of the Mississippi Board of Bar

Commissioners. Judge Lumpkin resigned from the Commission as required following her appointment to Circuit Court Judge.

### **Judge Veldore Young Graham (Appointed April 2024)**

Judge Veldore F. Young-Graham has been serving on the Lauderdale County Court in Mississippi since 2007.

Born and raised in Meridian, Mississippi, she graduated from Meridian High School in 1987. She then attended Xavier University of Louisiana, where she completed her degree requirements in December 1990. Her legal education began at Harris Manchester College at the University of Oxford in England, after which she returned to the United States and earned an American law degree from Mississippi College School of Law in the mid-1990s.

Judge Young-Graham started her legal career in private practice before transitioning into public service. She worked as a public defender for Lauderdale County for three years before accepting a position as an assistant district attorney. In 2007, she was appointed to the Lauderdale County Court, where she continues to serve, presiding over cases and upholding the law with integrity and commitment.

Beyond her judicial responsibilities, Judge Young-Graham remains actively engaged in the community. She has pursued further education at Meridian Community College, enrolling in courses such as computer skills and culinary arts to enhance her personal and professional development. She is also a frequent public speaker, participating in events such as Black History Month celebrations, where she shares her experiences and insights with the community.

Her contributions have not gone unnoticed. In 2023, she was honored by the League of Women Voters of East Central Mississippi for her dedication and service. Through her commitment to the legal profession and active involvement in the community, Judge Young-Graham has made a lasting impact in Meridian and Lauderdale County.

### **Patricia W. Bennett, Esquire**

Patricia W. Bennett was the Dean of the Mississippi College School of Law and the Henry Vaughan Watkins and Selby Watkins McRae Professor of Law. A Forest native and Mississippi College Law graduate, Bennett dedicated her career to the law and legal profession. She's spent 27 years teaching at the law school in downtown Jackson.

Dean Bennett's areas of expertise are litigation, criminal law and procedure. Bennett serves as the director of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Center at MC Law. She

teaches trial practice, mediation, advocacy and criminal procedure. The Tougaloo College graduate will give up her teaching duties temporarily while serving as dean.

Before joining the MC Law faculty in 1989, Bennett worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice. Her government service also includes stints as Assistant District Attorney for Hinds and Yazoo counties and as a Special Assistant Attorney General with the Mississippi Attorney General's Office in Jackson. For eight years, Bennett served as a JAGC officer in the U.S. Army Reserve and the Mississippi National Guard.

Bennett's numerous professional affiliations include being elected a Fellow of the American Bar Association Foundation in 2015. Created in 1955, the ABA group is an honorary organization of attorneys, judges and legal scholars. Bennett is a member of the Mississippi Bar Association, the Magnolia Bar Association and the Mississippi Women Lawyers Bar Association. She was named the Distinguished Professor of the Year in 2014, the university's highest teaching award. She is the outgoing president of the Charles Clark Chapter of the American Inn of Court in Jackson. Bennett has served as a visiting law professor at Harvard, Emory and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Dean Bennett was elected in January 2017 to serve as President of the Mississippi Bar. She served as President-Elect of the Mississippi Bar from July 2017 to July 2018 and was sworn in as President in July 2018 by Chief Justice William Waller, Jr. of the Mississippi Supreme Court.

Patricia Bennett and her husband, Claude, a building contractor, are Clinton residents. She worships at Morning Star Baptist Church in Jackson.

## **Edward J. Langton**

Edward J. "Ed" Langton is a prominent figure in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, recognized for his extensive contributions to the local banking and real estate sectors, as well as his philanthropic efforts.

Throughout his professional career, Langton has played a significant role in the financial industry. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Board and CEO of Grand Bank in Hattiesburg, demonstrating his leadership in banking. In addition, he is the founder, Chairman, and CEO of Mortgage Funding Corporation, further solidifying his influence in the mortgage sector. Beyond banking, Langton is actively involved in real estate as a broker with Signature South Real Estate LLC, reflecting his commitment to the local market.

His philanthropic efforts have also left a lasting impact on the community. In 2004, employees of Grand Bank established the Edward J. "Ed" Langton Scholarship in his honor. This scholarship is awarded annually to a Pine Belt area high school student,

recognizing academic excellence, community involvement, and financial need. In 2009, the Langton family donated \$200,000 to The University of Southern Mississippi to fund the construction of the Centennial Gateway at the main entrance of the Hattiesburg campus, further underscoring his dedication to education and community development.

A proud alumnus of The University of Southern Mississippi, class of 1970, Langton has maintained a strong connection to his alma mater. Through his professional accomplishments and philanthropic contributions, he has made a significant and lasting impact on the Hattiesburg community, particularly in the fields of banking, real estate, and education.

## **ALTERNATE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES**

Alternate members play a crucial role in ensuring continuity and representation within the Commission. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences complement the Commission's efforts to maintain accountability and public trust.

### **Judge Stanley A. Sorey**

Judge Sorey has served on the 13th Circuit Court bench since January 2016. He is senior judge of the district that includes Covington, Jasper, Simpson and Smith counties. He was in private law practice for more than 16 years before he was elected Circuit Judge. He served as Smith County Prosecutor and municipal prosecutor for the towns of Mize and Taylorsville. He was board attorney for the Smith County Board of Supervisors for 10 years. He was president of the Smith County Bar Association for 14 years.

Judge Sorey served for six years in the Mississippi National Guard, including active duty during Operation Desert Storm.

Judge Sorey earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi College and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law. He also attended Jones County Junior College, Copiah-Lincoln Community College and the University of Southern Mississippi.

### **Judge Richelle Lumpkin (Appointed Alternate May 2024)**

Judge Lumpkin obtained her Juris Doctorate from Mississippi College School of Law in 1990. She was in private practice for 20 years focusing her practice in the areas of criminal defense, family law, personal injury, real estate and general litigation. During this time, she also served as Youth Court Referee and Municipal Court Judge. In November of 2010 she was elected as the first County Court Judge of Pearl River County and currently serves in that position. Judge Lumpkin is a member of the Mississippi Bar Association, the

Pearl River Bar Association and a past member of the Mississippi Board of Bar Commissioners. Judge Lumpkin was appointed back to the Commission in February 2024 and now serves as the alternate Circuit Court member.

### **Judge Stephen T. Bailey**

Judge Bailey has served as a chancellor of the First Chancery District since Feb. 1, 2018. Judge Bailey was appointed to a vacancy, then elected to a full term in November 2018. The First Chancery District includes Alcorn, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tishomingo and Union counties. He previously served as a prosecutor in Lee County Youth Court and Tupelo Municipal Court. He began his private law practice in 1996. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

### **Judge Edwin Y. Hannan**

Judge Hannan was re-elected on Oct. 28 as chairman of the Conference of County Court Judges. Officers of the Conference of County Court Judges were elected by their colleagues during the Fall Trial and Appellate Judges Conference in Jackson. Judge Hannan, of Madison, has served as conference chairman since 2015.

Judge Hannan began his service as Madison County Court Judge in January 2007. He previously served for more than nine years as Madison Municipal Judge. He practiced law for 25 years before he was elected to the Madison County Court bench. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and the University of Mississippi School of Law.

### **Judge Wes Curry (Resigned 2024)**

Judge Curry was elected as a Forrest County Justice Court Judge in 2011. He was appointed as Hattiesburg Municipal Judge in August 2017. He practices law with Curry & Curry PLLC in Hattiesburg, MS. Judge Curry served as president of both the Hattiesburg Area Young Lawyers and the South-Central Mississippi Bar Association. He serves as the SCMBA representative on the board of Mississippi Legal Services, and on the Mississippi Board of Bar Commissioners. Judge Curry attended the University of Mississippi for both undergraduate and law school. During law school, he served as a law clerk for Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Michael Sullivan. He later served as a law clerk for Judge Billy Bridges of the Mississippi Court of Appeals. Judge Curry is a member of First Presbyterian Church, where he has served as a deacon and currently serves as an elder. Judge Curry serves the Commission as the alternate Justice Court Judge member. Judge Curry resigned from the Commission as required following his appointment to Circuit Court Judge.

### **Judge Chris McBrayer (Appointed July 2024)**

Judge Christopher "Chris" McBrayer was first elected as the Justice Court Judge in Clay County Mississippi in 2015. He was born and raised in West Point, Mississippi. Judge McBrayer and his wife have two children.

### **Jennifer Ingram Johnson, Esquire**

Jennifer Ingram Johnson practices with her mentor and father, Carroll H. Ingram, as the law firm of Ingram, PLLC, in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Jennifer earned her Juris Doctorate from the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky in 1998, and since that time has concentrated her litigation practice in the fields of Catastrophic Personal Injury, Medical Negligence, Commercial and Business Torts, Consumer Fraud, Product Liability, National Multi-District Litigation, and Eminent Domain. In 2013, Jennifer completed the Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation, a 40-hour legal training course in problem solving and negotiation skills and has since that time continually met the standards for inclusion in the Mississippi Bar Association's Mediator Directory. Jennifer is actively involved in the Mississippi Bar Association, the Mississippi Association for Justice, and the American Association for Justice, and has held leadership positions in each. She currently serves as Chair of the Committee for Professional Responsibility with the Mississippi Bar. Jennifer has been accepted into membership by ABOTA, the American Board of Trial Advocates, as one of the youngest female members nationwide, and has already become actively involved in promoting ABOTA's national program, Civility Matters. Jennifer is frequently invited as a guest lecturer and presenter at Continuing Legal Education programs and at State-wide Association meetings. In addition to her Professional Association activities, Jennifer serves her local community as Chair of the Advisory Board for the Children's Center for Communication and Development. Before attending law school, Jennifer received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Minor in Music from The University of Mississippi in 1993. She currently resides in Hattiesburg, Mississippi with her husband, Dr. Wes Johnson and her two daughters, Aubrie Ann and Alleigh.

### **Jeff Adcock**

Jeffery Adcock is a native of Biloxi, Mississippi and graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Business Administration. After earning a Master's of Business Administration, he moved to Jackson, Mississippi. After a career in state government that included a variety of positions and responsibilities in several different agencies, he became the Director of Administration for the State Auditor's Office.

After serving in this position under four different State Auditors, Mr. Adcock retired from state government in 2009. After retirement from state government, Mr. Adcock has been involved in real estate management and investment. Mr. Adcock serves the Commission as an alternate lay member.

### **Charlie Jackson**

Charlie Jackson has dedicated his career to serving the citizens of Mississippi through various roles in both state and local agencies.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 2024 Annual Report of the Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance demonstrates a strong commitment to maintaining judicial integrity, accountability, and public trust. Through transparent procedures, thorough investigations, and cooperative efforts, the Commission continues to uphold its constitutional duty and the principles of justice.