

# 2020 Annual Report To The Community



## Administrative Office of the Courts

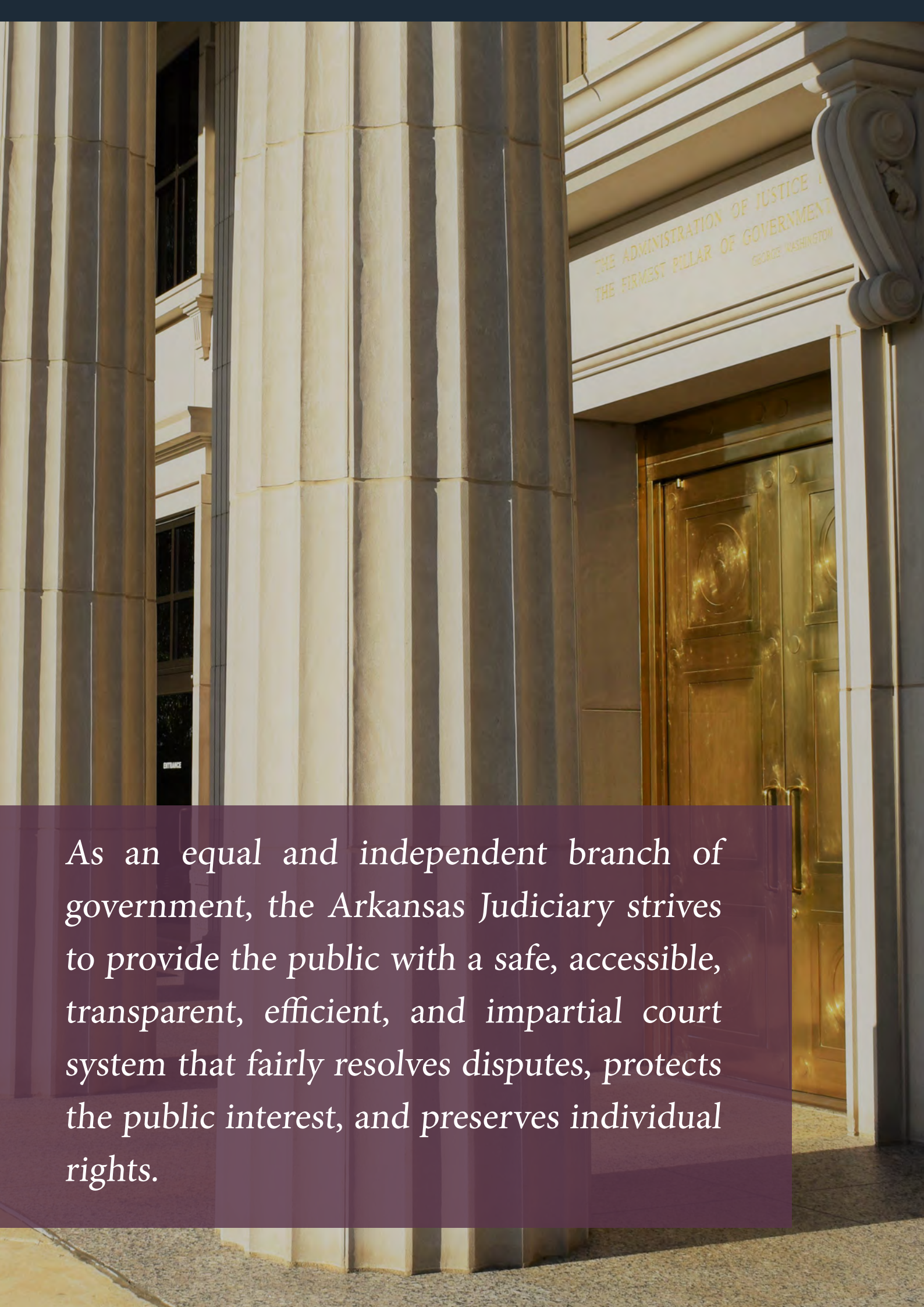
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*As an equal and independent branch of government, the Arkansas Judiciary strives to provide the public with a safe, accessible, transparent, efficient, and impartial court system that fairly resolves disputes, protects the public interest, and preserves individual rights.*

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# Introduction

No one could have predicted the impact COVID-19 would have on our communities. Our hearts go out to those who have struggled with the disease and families who have lost loved ones this year.

It is often said that the judiciary is the slowest of the three branches of government to act. In this case, we would dispute that assumption. Our court system quickly adapted to the situation in remarkable ways. Through strong teamwork and a dedicated effort to keep the courts open to the public to ensure that the administration of justice continues, we developed creative ways to serve Arkansans during this challenging time and demonstrated our resilience.

To effectively inform the public, we added a Coronavirus informational page to our website with up-to-date information about the courts. We encouraged judges to begin using technology like videoconferencing to hold court hearings and offered training to the court community to ensure smooth implementation. Thousands of virtual hearings have now been conducted, and interpreting services are being provided during remote court proceedings using the simultaneous interpretation feature in Zoom.

Our existing online services that allow the public to access court information and attorneys to electronically file documents became crucial. Accepting online payments also became more important. We have worked this year to continue to improve the quality and availability of these services.

There has also been exciting progress with regard to providing high quality training for the state's judges on topics that go beyond using video conferencing technology. In April, the Administrative Office of the Courts began to roll out an online content management system known as Talent LMS. The system is an online repository for judges and court staff and will revolutionize the way we create and disseminate educational content. Examples of training materials include courses on judicial ethics, improving clarity and understanding in legal writing, and updates on recent changes to the law.

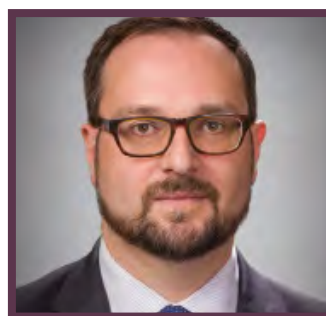
As the learning content system grows and is filled with legal training programs, the judiciary will have an extensive resource of information to draw from at any time. For example, if a judge is faced with a rare and complex type of proceeding, he or she will be able to immediately take a refresher course on how to preside over it, thereby building new competencies and diminishing legal error. Programs and instruction we formerly had to wait to receive at an in-person annual meeting can be delivered immediately and then remain accessible for years to come.

In this report, you will find more information on developments within the judiciary over the past year, including our efforts to improve the child welfare system, expanding electronic filing of court documents, reimagining juvenile justice, and helping provide civics education to Arkansans.

We hope you stay safe, and we look forward to continuing to serve you in 2021.



Chief Justice John Dan Kemp  
Arkansas Supreme Court



Marty Sullivan, Director  
Administrative Office of the Courts

# Arkansas Court System

The Arkansas court system consists of three levels:  
district, circuit, and appellate courts.

## State and Local District Courts

These courts handle traffic violations, misdemeanor criminal offenses, and violations of state law and local ordinances. District Courts also handle civil disputes involving contracts, matters of damage to personal property, and recovery of personal property.

District court judges are elected to 4-year terms.

## Circuit Courts

These are trial courts with general jurisdiction over most criminal and civil matters. This includes jury trials or bench trials (a judge only). Circuit court judges hear all types of cases: juvenile, civil, criminal, domestic relations, and probate.

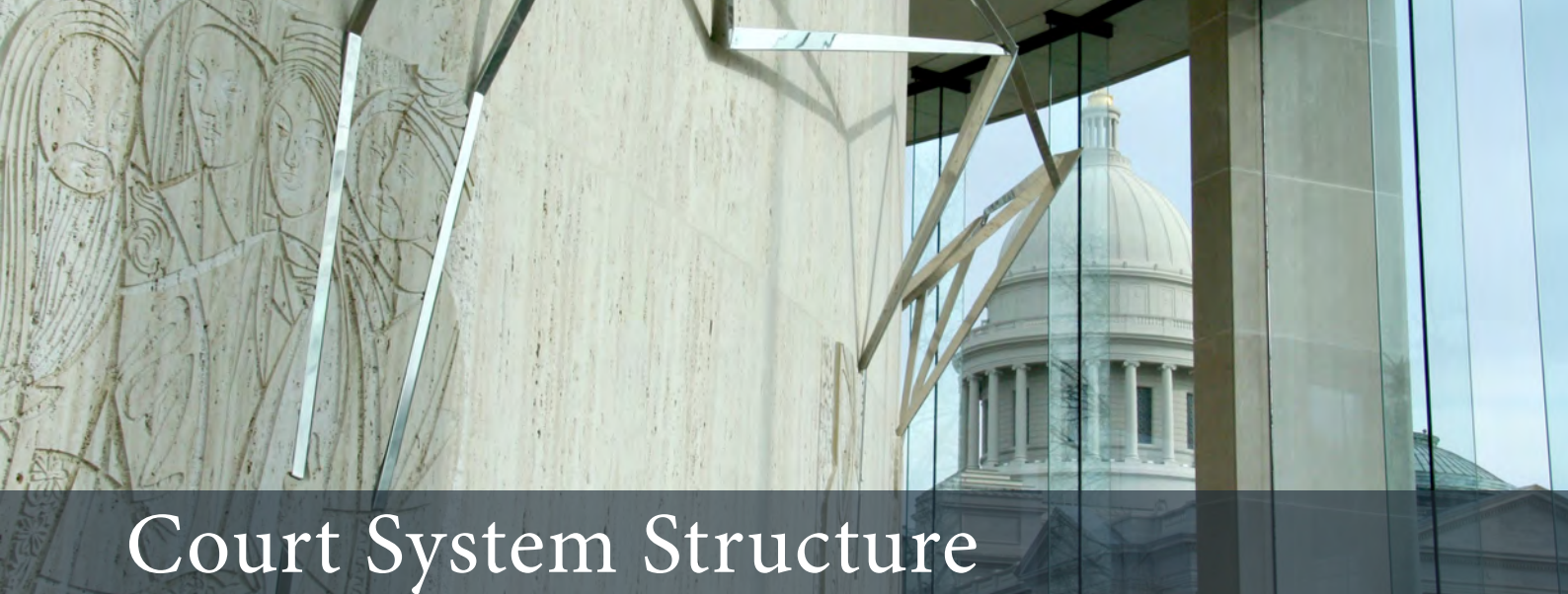
Circuit court judges are elected to 6-year terms.

## Appellate Courts

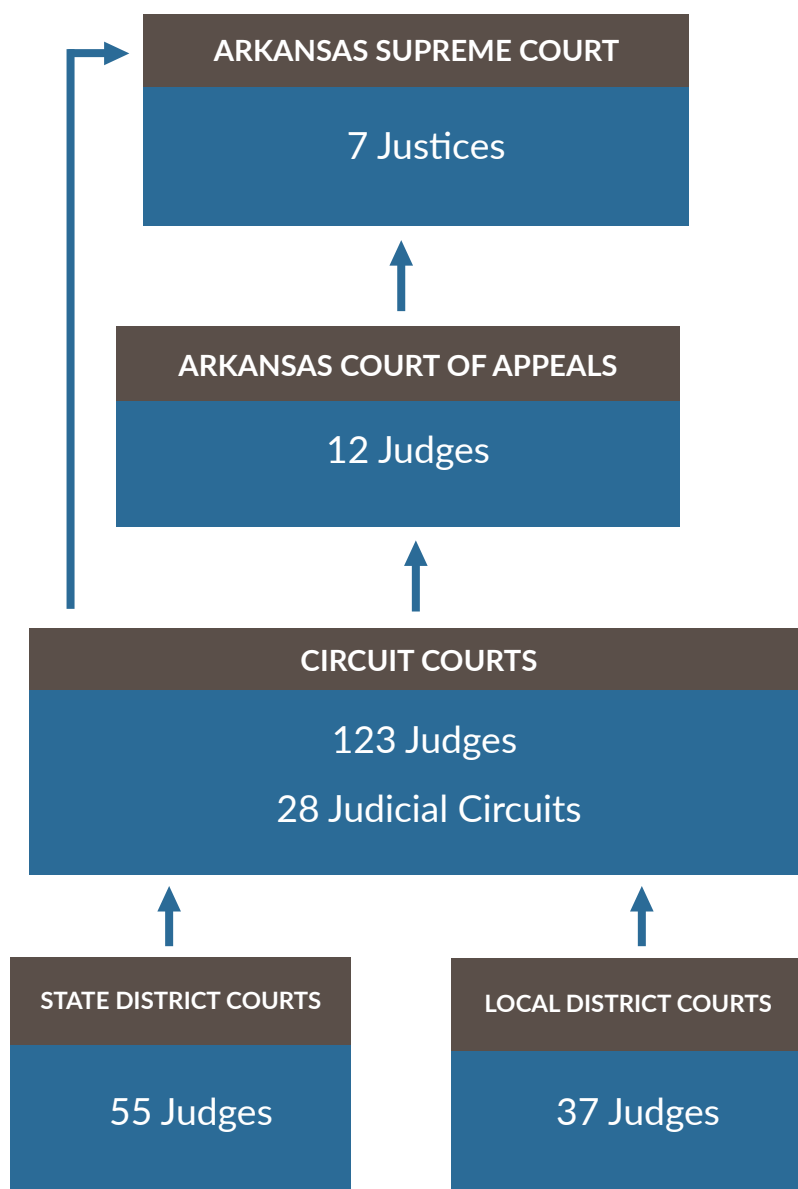
A party who loses at trial has the right to appeal the case to an appellate court and argue that certain unfavorable rulings and determinations compromised the fairness of the outcome.

There are two state appellate courts: the Arkansas Court of Appeals and the Arkansas Supreme Court. These judges and justices are elected to 8-year terms. The Arkansas Supreme Court has the discretion to hear any case decided by the Court of Appeals.

In addition to discretionary review, the Arkansas Supreme Court hears cases involving the interpretation of the Constitution, all criminal cases where the punishment is life in prison or the death penalty, election matters, and cases regarding the discipline of judges or attorneys.



# Court System Structure



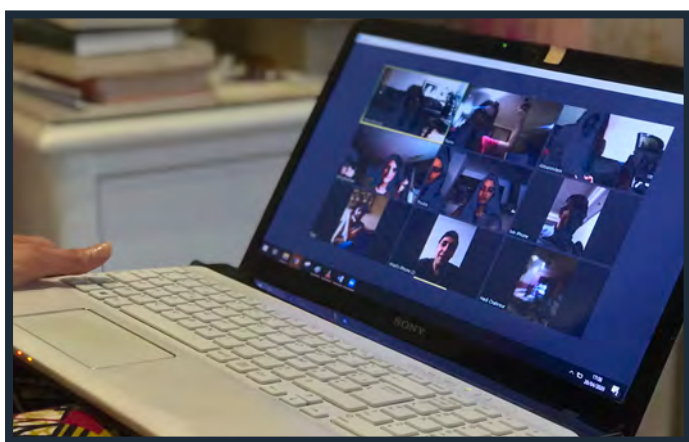
Total Number of Judges:  
**234**



# Keeping Arkansas Courts Open

State court operations have always relied heavily on in-person proceedings. When a public health emergency was declared by the governor in March, it became clear that judges in the state would need to find a way to strike a proper balance between the protection of public health and the protection of an individual's right to access the court system.

Keeping Arkansas courts open to the fullest extent while ensuring the health and safety of the public was a challenge. What follows are just some of the many ways the state's courts adjusted operations to keep courts open:



## Zoom Video Conferencing

Courts had to quickly create new remote processes, and Zoom video conferencing technology was a key part of doing so across Arkansas. The Supreme Court's Commission on Children, Youth & Families had already been using Zoom video conferencing in child welfare cases. The Commission's familiarity with the technology and willingness to train others made it possible to implement video

conferencing throughout the judiciary in a timely manner.

Many judges are now holding hearings and trials through Zoom. Litigants without internet access could come to the courtroom in person where a large screen displays the various parties in the case and allows them to participate in the call.

However, Judge Robert Herzfeld, a circuit judge in Saline County, said, "in the majority of my cases, all attorneys, parties, and witnesses are participating from their own Zoom platforms. This is often from the attorney's office but also frequently from a cell phone, especially in juvenile cases."

## Drive-Through Court

Judge Butch Hale of Sherwood District Court started to conduct drive-through plea and arraignments over the summer. "The idea came from my Chief Clerk, Grace Gault," said Judge Hale.

Defendants would stay in their car and communicate with him through an iPad held up by the bailiff.





“When we worked out their matter, they pulled forward to a clerk who handed them their paperwork, and off they went,” said Judge Hale.

Judge Hale noted that he received positive feedback on the drive-through court set up. However, the drive-through court came to an end when school started in August.

“We share a street with the school’s drop-off and pick-up, so traffic became an issue,” explained Judge Hale.



The El Dorado Municipal Auditorium was used for jury trials.

## Large Event Centers

Many judges have turned to large event centers to make social distancing possible. Making use of a venue’s audio system can make it easier to understand witnesses whose voices might otherwise be muffled when speaking through a mask.

## Texting Apps

In District Judge Stephanie Casady’s courtroom in Bryant, a texting app is being used to combat the spread of COVID-19. When litigants arrive in the parking lot, large signs direct them to text the court.

“Once we receive their text, we call them and try to handle as much of their business as possible over the phone. This cuts down on the time that the litigant has to spend inside our building. These measures allow access to justice, while protecting court staff and litigants,” said Judge Casady.



Litigants who do not have a cell phone can go to the clerk's window. The clerks are separated by glass and people may come inside one at a time. A Zoom terminal located in the lobby allows litigants to communicate with Judge Casady if needed.

“For trial settings, the prosecutor works from her office inside city hall. I work from my office inside city hall. The litigants use the Zoom terminal in the clerk's lobby for a guilty plea. There is also a computer that is set up in the courtroom and it is used by the defendant and their attorney, if they have one,” explained Judge Casady.

## Court Signage

To ensure social distancing is maintained at all times, judges and their staff are using signage to carefully direct traffic within the courthouse.

“I set a limit of ten people in the courtroom at one time, five court staff and five other individuals,” said Craighead County District Judge Tommy Fowler.

“We also have five individuals ready out in the lobby waiting on blue Xs on the floor that are six feet apart. They are brought in when the courtroom is cleared. Then, we have five more people being screened outside. It is an assembly line that safely moves people along and removes almost all touch points.”

Judge Fowler uses a take-a-number system so court participants can know when it is their turn to come inside the courthouse or into the courtroom. He also uses arrows of different colors on the floor to direct traffic based on what plea was entered.

“They follow red arrows out of the front door if they entered a not guilty plea and set their matter for trial. They follow yellow arrows back to probation if they received pre-trial diversion or probation on their plea of guilty. They follow green arrows up to the front window to make payment arrangements if they entered a guilty plea,” explained Judge Fowler.



**STAY SAFE**

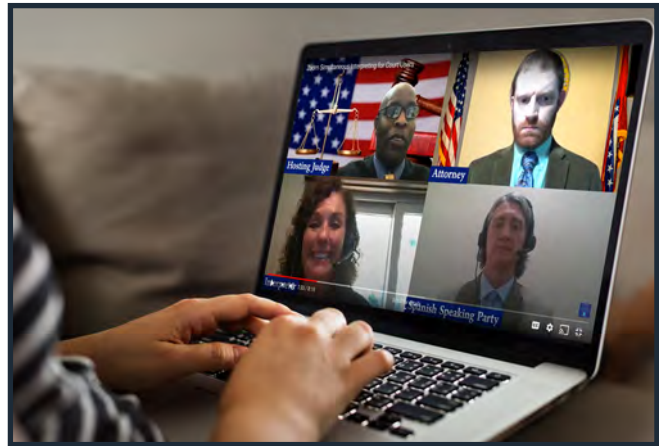
## Virtual Interpreting Technology For Language Access

The Interpreter Services Division had long been interested in using virtual interpreting technology to serve those with limited English proficiency. The service became essential during the pandemic.

In order to implement the technology, it was necessary to provide training materials for interpreters, attorneys, and judges.

Using remote technology as a tool to bridge language barriers reduces the time and expense of interpreters traveling to courts around the state.

Virtual interpreting also allows for simultaneous interpreting in real-time and therefore takes less time than traditional consecutive interpreting, which involves the interpreter waiting until the speaker finishes a sentence to interpret what was said.



The Interpreter Services Division partnered with the Judicial Education Division and the Commission on Children, Youth & Families to create an instructional video demonstrating the simultaneous interpreting feature available in Zoom video conferencing. Courts across Arkansas and beyond have used the training video to learn how to utilize the technology.

To view the video and learn more about how remote simultaneous interpreting improves the court experience, visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/ArkansasRemoteInterpreter>

### A Lasting Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about many changes and judges found ways to serve their communities despite challenges. Judge Robert Herzfeld notes that the new processes that came along with holding court remotely proved to be a benefit.

“I have held more than three hundred hearings and trials over Zoom. It really is all about logistics. How do witnesses testify? How do you handle evidence? How do you ensure that parties have the ability to talk to their attorneys appropriately? Once you answer those questions, in many ways, Zoom is even easier than ‘in person’ court,” said Judge Herzfeld.



Many judges intend to continue using remote technology to improve access to the courts even after the public health crisis abates.

“In any given pre-COVID-19 week, we would start the day with hundreds of people gathered in the courtroom at one time. Even after the threat of COVID-19 passes, we will continue to use our texting app in some way. We will continue to stagger appearance times and limit the number of people that are inside at one time. We will also use the information collected through the app to text litigants about fines that are past due and upcoming court dates,” said Judge Casady.

Other judges say they were surprised to learn just how efficient remote communications can be.

“Thanks to my great staff, I have learned and been impressed with how many things can be handled over the phone or by Zoom, Skype, or WebEx. I do not see any reason to stop once we are out of this pandemic,” said Judge Hale.

Judge Hale said the importance of e-services should not be underestimated, which he explains is something he learned at a seminar on e-courts.

“A major topic was how to help defendants handle their court matters without them having to come to court. This saves them from having to miss work or hire a sitter to watch the kids. More importantly, studies indicate a higher level of satisfaction with the judiciary when courts adapt like that. COVID-19 has forced us to address and adapt much quicker than planned.”

Judge Hale notes that one of the best ways judges across the state continue to learn and innovate is by communicating with other judges who are in similar situations and realizing we are all in this together.

“Calling other judges to see what they are doing has been invaluable,” said Judge Hale.



Installing plexiglass barriers in Arkansas courtrooms has also been a way to keep the public safe, as seen in this photo of the Drew County Courthouse.





# Personal Protective Equipment

When the pandemic began in March, it became clear that the cost and availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) could become a significant barrier to normal court operations in many parts of Arkansas. PPE was needed to help keep Arkansans who use the court system safe, as well as the state’s judges and court staff.

“Courts provide essential services to the public and must be safe and accessible. Our task continues to be trying to achieve a balance between maintaining access to the courts and protecting public health,” said Dan Kemp, Chief Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court.

The Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which supports the state’s court system, acquired several large shipments of PPE that were then made available to circuit and district courts in each of Arkansas’s 75 counties. Supplies included disposable masks, reusable cloth masks, medical grade thermometers, bottles of hand sanitizer, and latex gloves.

“The public expects, as it should, to be safe when entering our courts. That is always our goal. From the beginning, we identified personal protective equipment as a top priority in achieving that goal,” said County Judge Barry Moehring of Benton County.

“I was relieved that the AOC was able to acquire the amounts of PPE that it did. For some of the counties in our circuit, proper safety measures would have been implemented, but it would have come with a huge financial burden, assuming we could even have found all the PPE we would need,” said Circuit Judge Hamilton Singleton of the 13th Judicial Circuit.

“Our Committee is pleased to assist with the provision and distribution of personal protective equipment to courts around the state as it furthers the Committee’s mission to protect the health and welfare of all participants in Arkansas courts,” said Circuit Judge Gordon W. “Mack” McCain, Jr., who is chair of the judiciary’s Committee on Security and Emergency Preparedness.



# Distribution of PPE to Arkansas Courts



Supreme Court Police Officer Robert Alpe assists Joni Clark, wife of Judge David Clark of the 20th Judicial Circuit, in loading PPE into her car to take back to courts in the community.



Judge Charles Yeargan of the 9th Circuit West comes to the Justice Building in Little Rock to pick up PPE for courts in his community.

## By The Numbers



738,125  
masks



1,042,500  
gloves



15,675  
bottles of  
hand sanitizer



272  
thermometers



# Improving Child Welfare and Beyond

The Arkansas Supreme Court’s Commission on Children, Youth & Families is dedicated to improving how children and their families in the state interact with the courts. The Commission is chaired by Supreme Court Justice Rhonda Wood and consists of judges, lawmakers, the secretaries of the Education and Human Services departments, attorneys, juvenile officers, mental health experts, and other government and community leaders around the state.

Over the past year, the Commission has been working on several projects, including the use of video conferencing to benefit children in foster care. What it could not have predicted, however, was how the processes and materials it created would assist all Arkansas courts with videoconferencing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“They quietly laid the groundwork to support video conferencing in courts long before anyone had ever heard of COVID-19,” said Arkansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Dan Kemp.

## Implementation of Video Conferencing

Last year, the Commission studied how the use of video conferencing could benefit children in foster care by helping them participate in their court hearings without traveling long distances or missing school. Foster care youths’ low participation in their case plans is often attributable to the child being placed in a home that is not in his or her home county, where hearings in their case will take place.

This year, the Commission began a pilot project in Sebastian and Greene counties that allowed youth to participate through video conferencing. The project involved judges and court staff, as well as representatives from the Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Children and Family Services, and the Department of Education. The project team created guidelines and resources to support the pilot courts.



“Video conferencing has certainly been a benefit to the families in my court. It has allowed the judiciary to continue to help people have access to the courts when it has not been safe to appear in person. For the children, it has allowed them to meaningfully participate in court without having to travel long distances or miss out on their education,” said Sebastian County Circuit Judge Shannon Blatt.

Circuit Judge Barbara Halsey of the 2nd Judicial Circuit in northeast Arkansas says video conferencing has provided more benefits than she expected, even beyond making it easier for children, foster parents, relatives, and professionals from schools and daycares to attend a court hearing.

“It seems to me that children are more engaged in the court process when they appear by Zoom than when they appear in person. If that is indeed true, I have not yet figured out the reason. Perhaps it is the experience with the technology. Perhaps it is the minimal disruption in their daily schedules. Perhaps the technology makes them feel more protected, as opposed to feeling intimidated by a courthouse experience. I just know that it is a positive experience, and I am so happy to have been a part of bringing it to our courts.”



**“It seems to me that children are more engaged in the court process when they appear by Zoom than when they appear in person.**

**Perhaps the technology makes them feel more protected, as opposed to feeling intimidated by a courthouse experience.”**

**-Judge Barbara Halsey**



## In-Depth Study of Juvenile Recidivism

To continue improving juvenile justice, the Commission decided to study whether juvenile services are effective at reducing future delinquency and incarceration.

The Commission has worked since 2015 to implement validated risk assessments in the juvenile justice system. These assessments are designed to determine in an empirical way whether a newly arrested youth is at risk of hurting someone else. This has an impact on decisions like the level of supervision needed.

Having an objective assessment can reduce implicit bias in juvenile justice proceedings and ensure that youths receive the services tailored to prevent their future recidivism. To measure juvenile recidivism consistently across the state, it was necessary to first create a uniform definition that would serve as the standard.

In June 2020, the Commission approved the first statewide definition of juvenile recidivism for courts to consistently measure whether services are effective at preventing future delinquency. The Commission has engaged five judicial districts in a pilot study to create and implement best practices for data collection and analysis related to juvenile recidivism.

The Commission believes this project will create a template for districts statewide to analyze juvenile recidivism and improve programming to reduce future delinquency.

## Adoption of a Strategic Plan

The Commission identified a need to create a Strategic Plan to guide its work for the next several years. The Commission Chair worked with Commissioners and the Commission Administrator to create a framework for planning major projects and evaluating success.

In August 2020, the Commission voted to accept the Strategic Plan to guide its work through at least October 2023. The Strategic Plan balances the need for setting long-term priorities with the need to remain agile for responding to emerging needs in juvenile justice and child welfare.

One Commission goal focuses on educational outreach to families to improve or even prevent court involvement. The Commission also plans to collect and analyze data on racial disparities among families and stakeholders in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems to reduce disparate outcomes for minority families.

The Strategic Plan will soon be available at [arcourts.gov](http://arcourts.gov).



## Specialty Courts

Specialty courts are dedicated to ending the cycle of crime. It is not uncommon for an offender to commit one crime and then later go on to commit another, more serious crime.

These courts aim to stop the revolving door and are based on the idea that if you treat the root cause of the problem, you are more likely to solve the problem. For example, if an offender suffers from drug or alcohol addiction, it can be more effective to address that issue rather than send the individual to prison.

Specialty courts like drug court, mental health court, and veterans treatment court focus on non-violent offenders who are at high risk of re-offending. Other specialty courts, like HOPE Court and Swift Court, are intensive supervision programs that aim to reduce crime and drug use among offenders who are on probation.

Judicial districts are not required to establish these types of programs. The judges who oversee specialty courts are agreeing to take on the additional responsibilities that are involved, which include coordinating with community organizations and resources to support the individual, requiring regular court appearances, overseeing attendance at treatment sessions with licensed healthcare professionals, and conducting frequent and random testing for drug and alcohol use.

Upon successful completion of a specialty court program, the participants graduate. Graduation is often a powerful moment, as participants tell their stories and talk about their journey to graduation day.



# Pioneers of Specialty Courts

Specialty courts require an innovative approach by a pioneering judge. This year, seventeen specialty court judges will be retiring. To honor their hard work, we asked them to tell us more about their time overseeing a specialty court, what motivated them to be a specialty court judge, and some of the highlights of their career.

**Q: Why did you volunteer to oversee a specialty court program in your jurisdiction?**

“Having been a federal prosecutor for twenty years and handling numerous drug-related offenses after getting on the bench, I knew we needed to try something different to help break the endless cycle and to help offenders get control of their lives.”

*-Judge J. Michael Fitzhugh, Adult Drug Court*

“It provided the opportunity to try to change some offenders for the better who might not be successful in traditional criminal justice system responses.”

*-Judge Gary Arnold, Drug Court and HOPE Court*

“I had overseen juvenile court and knew that weekly review of participants worked.”

*-Judge Gary Cottrell, Drug Court*

**Q: What advice do you have for a future judge of a specialty court program?**

“Specialty Courts in many ways are the most satisfying courts, even though they are time intensive. It is the opportunity for a judge to see the fruits of his or her time in having a chance to spend one-on-one time with each participant. It enables the court to grow a relationship with a participant and to establish trust and faith in knowing for all actions there are consequences but also opportunities of growth.”

*-Judge William Randal Wright, SWIFT Court and Juvenile Drug Court*

“Try to learn something about the offenders beyond their criminal conduct. Let them know you are genuinely interested in them being successful.”

*-Judge Gary Arnold, Drug Court and HOPE Court*

“Do not take credit for the successes but simply rejoice in them.”

*-Judge Grisham Phillips, Drug Court*

“Always stay involved with the participants in the program and let them know that you are there for them in their effort to succeed.”

*-Judge Jerry Ryan, Drug Court*

“Be ready to change your way of thinking about the individuals who have committed crimes who enter your program because, once they are separated from their drug and alcohol addiction, there will emerge really decent people not very different than you and members of your family.”

*-Judge Gordon Webb, Adult Drug Court*

“Our program is comprised primarily of individuals with extensive criminal histories. Patience is very important in order to give these men and women every opportunity after setbacks to complete probation and become successful citizens.”

*-Judge Eddy R. Easley, Swift Court*

“It will be some of your most rewarding moments on the bench as well as a few heartbreakers. It is some of the most meaningful work you can do as a judge.”

*-Judge Mary McGowan, Adult Drug Court and Veterans Treatment Court*

## Retiring Specialty Court Judges

Hon. Gary Arnold

Hon. Charles Clawson

Hon. Gary Cottrell

Hon. Brent Davis

Hon. Eddy Easley

Hon. Harold Erwin

Hon. Michael Fitzhugh

Hon. Bynum Gibson

Hon. David Henry

Hon. Ann Hudson

Hon. Mary McGowan

Hon. Wade Naramore

Hon. Grisham Phillips

Hon. Sam Pope

Hon. Jerry Ryan

Hon. Gordon Webb

Hon. Ralph Wilson

Hon. John Homer Wright

Hon. William Randal Wright

Hon. Charles Yeargan



**Q: Please tell us about one of your proudest moments as a specialty court judge.**

“Every graduation! 150 so far. It is hard not to be emotional seeing someone take the time and effort to correct a mistake and acknowledge that in front of all the participants.”

*-Judge Charles Yeargan, Drug Court*

“When the immediate family, including children, of a graduating participant thanked me for giving their father back to them.”

*-Judge Ralph Wilson, Adult Drug Court*

“One of the new participants in my drug court had a rough start and was not abstaining from using. In one of the early staffings I learned he had only one set of clothes, a raggedy pair of shoes, and no stable residence. He was placed in a 45-day treatment program. I managed to acquire several pairs of jeans and a few pairs of shoes, and I delivered them to the treatment facility.

I had no further contact with him until a few years later when he was scheduled to graduate from the county drug court program and wanted me to be in attendance. At his graduation I learned he had established stable employment, stayed clean, and become an exemplary participant in all regards. In his graduation speech he made mention that having a judge take interest in helping him in that way made him realize the drug court program could really help him to straighten out his life.

The opportunity to have such a positive impact on someone’s life is something that drug court provides for the presiding judge that most other judicial duties do not. It has been a very meaningful experience to have the privilege to preside over a specialty court.”

*-Judge Brent Davis, Drug Court*

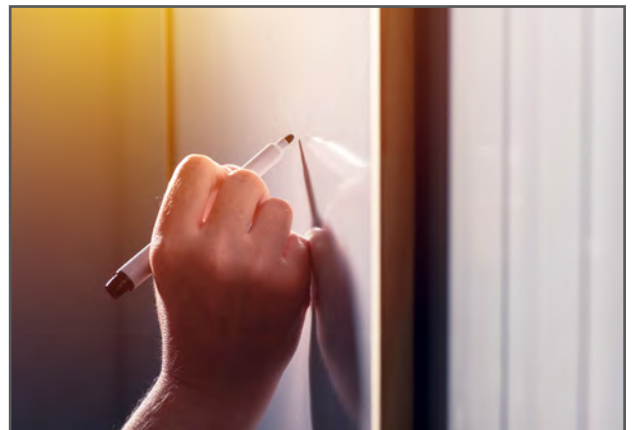
“One that sticks out was a young man that had fought his addiction demons and consistently failed before coming into drug court. He was an excellent writer and wrote a book about his drug addiction journey.”

*-Judge J. Michael Fitzhugh, Drug Court*

# Reimagining Juvenile Justice: Training for Frontline Staff

Young offenders should be kept safe and on track for long-term success while still being held accountable for their actions.

A new initiative came to Arkansas this year aiming to develop the capacity of juvenile justice professionals to support, divert, and redirect youth in the court system to appropriate and fair justice options - including those requiring a high degree of cross-system collaboration and coordination.



Reimagining Juvenile Justice (RJJ), sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a professional development curriculum now being offered by the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Juvenile Division to provide training for juvenile officers and other frontline staff working with young offenders and their families. AOC Juvenile Division staff attended a train-the-trainer seminar at the School & Main Institute in Colorado to learn how to teach the curriculum and bring it to Arkansas.

The curriculum encourages juvenile justice professionals to build on young people's strengths and assets and to center their work in racial and ethnic equity. Professionals also learn how to navigate and collaborate with other public systems to fully access resources for young people and provide alternatives to justice system involvement and incarceration.



# Juvenile Justice: More Information For Judges

When a young offender appears before a judge, a decision by the judge on what happens next is based on more than just instinct. Arkansas has a risk and behavior health screening that is completed by juvenile officers.

The validated screening tools are based on empirical research that has been done on adolescent behavior. When a youth comes into the juvenile justice system, an intake screening tool is used to determine if he or she can be safely diverted from formal court processing. Other screening tools include substance use screening, behavioral health screening, and a systematic assessment that determines how likely a young person might be to become violent.

The information gathered from these instruments are entered into a database. A Social History and Pre-Disposition Report is created and provided to the parties and the judge hearing the case prior to disposition. The judge utilizes the information generated to help better provide services that match the priority needs each youth possesses in order to better address the criminogenic risks that are driving the delinquent behavior.









# A Virtual Oath

Swearing-in ceremonies for new attorneys traditionally take place in person in the Arkansas Supreme Court courtroom. Taking the oath of attorney is not just a ritual. It is a requirement to begin practicing law. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person ceremonies were not possible this year.

However, the Supreme Court ensured the pandemic would not hamper a new lawyer’s entry into the state Bar Association by holding two virtual swearing-in ceremonies - one in the spring and one in fall. Between the two ceremonies, the oath of attorney was administered remotely by Chief Justice Dan Kemp to 173 participants, who were then welcomed into the legal profession by all members of the Arkansas Supreme Court.

The ceremonies included a slideshow featuring a photo of each new attorney next to an image of their newly-attained attorney’s license.

“You have completed a long educational journey that has culminated with the passage of the Arkansas Bar Exam under very unusual and trying circumstances,” said Chief Justice Kemp.

He urged the new attorneys to work hard, keep their word, speak the truth, and treat opposing counsel with respect and consideration.

“Treat each matter you work on as the most important thing that you are doing because it may be the most important thing in your client’s life.”

Justice Karen Baker told the Fall 2020 class that in her eight years as liaison to the Arkansas Board of Law Examiners, their group managed the highest pass rate despite the challenges and concerns that came along with the attorneys finishing their education and exam preparation online.

# Connecting with the Public

The Arkansas Supreme Court's Public Education Program created a video tour of the Justice Building in Little Rock to keep its tour program active during the pandemic, since in-person tours remain suspended.

The tour can be viewed by the public at:

[www.arcourts.gov/tour](http://www.arcourts.gov/tour)

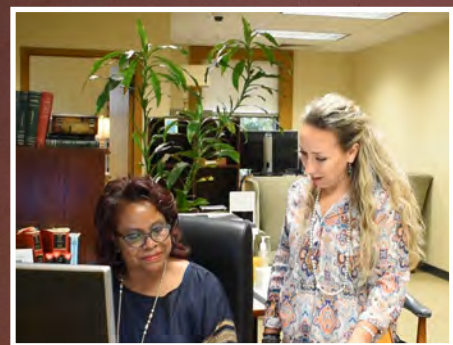
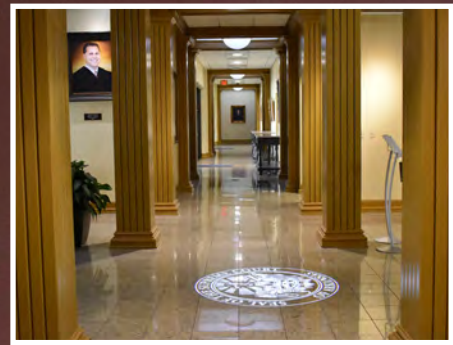
“After watching the virtual tour, teachers have the option of scheduling a virtual Q-and-A with a justice or other judge to talk more about Arkansas’s judicial branch of government,” said Arkansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Dan Kemp.

The Justice Building is home to the Arkansas Supreme Court and the Arkansas Court of Appeals. The tour includes a visit to the justices’ conference room and the courtroom. Viewers can even get a view from the bench.

The video features Chief Justice Dan Kemp and Justice Rhonda Wood of the Arkansas Supreme Court, as well as Stacey Pectol, the Clerk of the Courts.

Topics covered in the tour video include:

- Various features of the Justice Building
- The difference between state and federal courts
- The process for deciding an Arkansas Supreme Court case







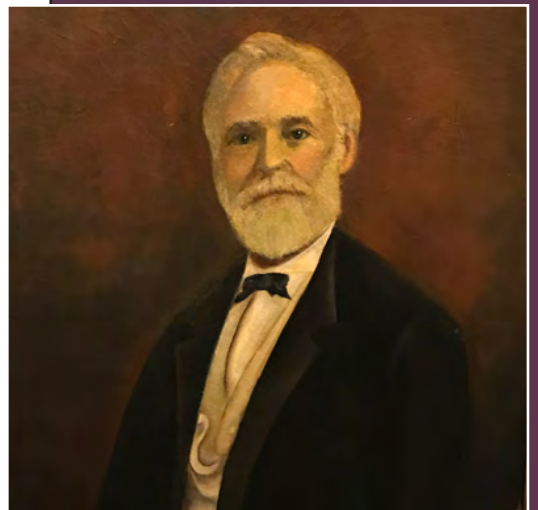
## Preserving the Past

Many portraits of the former justices of Arkansas's high court currently hang throughout the Justice Building in Little Rock.

Over the past several years, the Administrative Office of the Courts has been working on a project to preserve these artifacts to restore them to their natural beauty and protect them from future deterioration.

The portrait collection represents the unique experiences and knowledge that each justice brought to the Supreme Court. A few examples include a justice who spearheaded voter reform, a justice who helped found Ducks Unlimited, and a justice who served as president of both Arkansas State University and the University of Arkansas.

When an Arkansas Supreme Court justice retires from the bench, the family of the justice may commission an artist to create the justice's portrait to preserve his or her likeness.



### Justice Daniel Ringo

A badly-damaged 19th Century portrait of Chief Justice Daniel Ringo has been restored and now hangs in the lobby of the Justice Building. In 1836, Ringo became the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Arkansas and helped to develop the foundation for the legal system in Arkansas. He served until 1844 and died in 1873. He is buried in Mount Holly Cemetery in Little Rock.



# Public Access To The Courts

## Court Records

At [caseinfo.arcourts.gov](http://caseinfo.arcourts.gov), the public has access to Arkansas court case details. The database allows a user to search by person, business, or case type, as well as by judgments against a person or a business. Cases and dockets can also be searched by date.

**AOC PUBLIC CourtConnect**



Administrative Office of the Courts  
CourtConnect Website

- Search by person name, business name or case type
- Search for judgments against a person or business
- Display case information and activities
- Cases filed by date search
- Docket filings by date search

## Court Caseload Statistics

At [tinyurl.com/JusticeStats](http://tinyurl.com/JusticeStats), the public has access to detailed court caseload data provided by the Office of Research and Justice Statistics. Users can search by case or charge across various circuits and counties in Arkansas.

In the coming year, the Office will be adding features to provide visual summaries of these data.

Issue Area

Start Date

End Date

Report Type





# Arkansas Court Caseloads

## Supreme Court 2019

	Filings	Dispositions
APPEAL BY STATE	0	3
APPELLATE FELONY	30	28
APPELLATE MISDEMEANOR	1	1
CAPITAL DEATH	1	1
CAPITAL LIFE W/O PAROLE	4	10
CIVIL APPEAL CIRCUIT	45	42
CIVIL PETITION FOR REVIEW	22	51
CRIMINAL PETITION FOR REVIEW	14	26
DEPT WORKFORCE SERVICE	2	0
DHS JUVENILE APPEAL	3	2
INCARCERATED CIVIL APPEAL	69	72
INTERLOCUTORY APPEAL	11	14
JUVENILE CIVIL APPEAL	2	2
ORIGINAL ACTION	9	2
POST CONVICTION APPEAL	49	58
POST CONVICTION DEATH	3	1
PROBATE APPEAL	2	3
WORKER'S COMPENSATION	1	0
WRIT OF CERTIORARI - CR	8	8
WRIT OF CERTIORARI - CV	9	6
WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS - CV	1	1
WRIT OF MANDAMUS - CR	7	10
WRIT OF MANDAMUS - CV	10	9
WRIT OF PROHIBITION - CR	2	2
WRIT OF PROHIBITION - CV	5	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>355</b>

All appellate and circuit court data comes from information entered into the Arkansas Judiciary's online data system.

In some counties, data forms are submitted on paper, so data entry into the system can be delayed and may be incomplete.

## Court of Appeals 2019

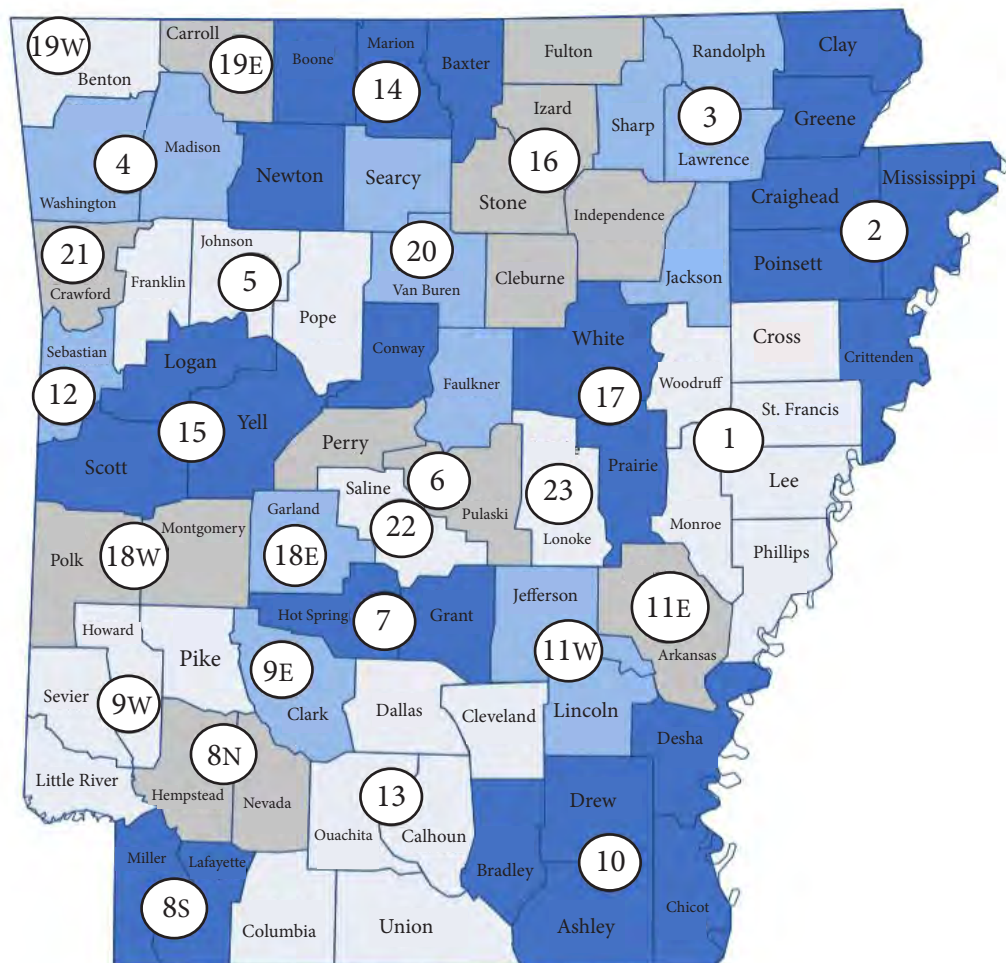
	Filings	Dispositions
APPELLATE FELONY	220	197
APPELLATE MISDEMEANOR	12	11
CIVIL APPEAL ADMINISTRATIVE	8	3
CIVIL APPEAL CIRCUIT	220	171
DEPT WORKFORCE SERVICE	306	320
DHS JUVENILE APPEAL	87	91
INCARCERATED CIVIL APPEAL	2	4
INTERLOCUTORY APPEAL	15	12
JUVENILE CIVIL APPEAL	0	1
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY APPEAL	7	9
ORIGINAL ACTION	0	1
POST CONVICTION APPEAL	30	31
PROBATE APPEAL	19	18
WORKER'S COMPENSATION	36	32
WRIT OF CERTIORARI - CV	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>902</b>



## Circuit Courts 2019

	Filings	Dispositions
CIVIL	41,473	43,974
<b>CRIMINAL</b>	<b>56,998</b>	<b>52,816</b>
DOMESTIC RELATIONS	48,293	45,609
<b>JUVENILE</b>	<b>19,817</b>	<b>19,624</b>
PROBATE	19,673	17,545
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>186,254</b>	<b>179,568</b>

## Arkansas Judicial Circuits



## District Courts 2019

	Filings	Dispositions
APPEALS	1,738	1,498
CIVIL - OTHER	17,507	14,067
CONTRACTS	4,554	3,230
DWI 1	9,511	32
DWI 2	1,246	9,339
DWI 3	310	9,011
DAMAGE TO PERSONAL PROPERTY	75	1,338
DEBT COLLECTION	16,700	286
FELONIES BOUND OVER	9,941	2,953
LOCAL ORDINANCE	36,529	32,965
MISDEMEANOR - DV	5,687	8,940
MISDEMEANOR - DRUG	12,361	3,663
MISDEMEANOR - OTHER	265,673	172,249
MISDEMEANOR - PERSON	2,820	2,300
MISDEMEANOR - PROPERTY	9,891	7,762
MISDEMEANOR - PUBLIC ORDER	22,103	17,370
MISDEMEANOR - WEAPON	1,437	1,009
PARKING	37	27
RECOVERY OF PERSONAL PROPERTY	73	21
SMALL CLAIMS	5,495	2,524
TRAFFIC MISDEMEANOR	66,643	60,322
TRAFFIC VIOLATION	228,346	197,589
VIOLATION - OTHER	55,400	51,666
CONTEXTE COURT CRIMINAL - OTHER	273,284	245,247
CONTEXTE COURT CIVIL - OTHER	17,093	11,961
Grand Total	1,064,454	857,369



For more detailed Arkansas court data, go to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/JusticeStats>

# Arkansas Supreme Court



**Chief Justice John Dan Kemp**  
Mountain View, AR  
Elected: 2016



**Justice Karen Baker**  
Clinton, AR  
Elected: 2010



**Justice Courtney Hudson**  
Fayetteville, AR  
Elected: 2010



**Justice Josephine Hart**  
Mountain View, AR  
Elected: 2012



**Justice Rhonda Wood**  
Conway, AR  
Elected: 2014



**Justice Robin Wynne**  
Fordyce, AR  
Elected: 2014



**Justice Shawn Womack**  
Mountain Home, AR  
Elected: 2016



# Arkansas Court of Appeals



Chief Judge Rita W. Gruber  
District 6, Position 1



Judge Ray Abramson  
District 1, Position 1



Judge Phillip Whiteaker  
District 1, Position 2



Judge Bart Virden  
District 2, Position 1



Judge Mike Murphy  
District 2, Position 2



Judge Robert J. Gladwin  
District 3, Position 1



Judge Kenneth S. Hixson  
District 3, Position 2



Judge Brandon Harrison  
District 4, Position 1



Judge Meredith B. Switzer  
District 4, Position 2



Judge Mark Klappenbach  
District 5



Judge Larry D. Vaught  
District 6, Position 2



Judge Waymond M. Brown  
District 7

# Arkansas Circuit Judges

Hon. Tonya Alexander	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 6
Hon. Gary Arnold	22nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Andrew Bailey	14th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Blake Batson	9th East Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Cristi Beaumont	4th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. William Benton	11th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Shannon Blatt	12th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Sandra Bradshaw	10th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Wiley Branton, Jr.	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 08
Hon. Troy Braswell	20th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Earnest Brown, Jr.	11th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 6
Hon. Beth Bryan	4th Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. Robin Carroll	13th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Ken Casady	22nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Keith Chrestman	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 8
Hon. David Clark	20th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Charles Clawson, Jr.	20th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Ken Coker	5th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Cathleen Compton	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 03
Hon. Tom Cooper	9th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Gary Cottrell	21st Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. James Cox	12th Judicial Circuit, Div. 6
Hon. Duncan Culpepper	8th North Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Brent Davis	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Gunner DeLay	12th Judicial Circuit, Div. 7
Hon. Jodi Dennis	11th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. Xollie Duncan	19th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. Eddy Easley	7th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Barbara Elmore	23rd Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Harold Erwin	3rd Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Michael Fitzhugh	12th Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. H.G. Foster	20th Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. Tim Fox	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 6
Hon. Teresa French	10th Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. Bynum Gibson	10th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Alice Gray	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 12
Hon. Robin Green	19th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Wendell Griffen	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. David Guthrie	13th Judicial Circuit, Div. 6
Hon. Alex Guynn	11th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Barbara Halsey	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 7
Hon. Brent Haltom	8th South Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Craig Hannah	17th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Lee Harrod	16th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Marcia Hearnberger	18th East Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Annie Hendricks	12th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. David Henry	11th East Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Robert Herzfeld	22nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 4



# Arkansas Circuit Judges

Hon. Pamela Honeycutt	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Sandy Huckabee	23rd Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Ann Hudson	1st Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. Michelle Huff	3rd Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Tom Hughes	17th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Scott Jackson	19th East Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Patricia James	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 11
Hon. Leon Jamison	11th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Kirk Johnson	8th South Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Leon Johnson	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Carlton Jones	8th South Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Brad Karren	19th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Edwin Keaton	13th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Deanna “Suzie” Layton	14th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Mark Lindsay	4th Judicial Circuit, Div. 6
Hon. Richard Lusby	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Doug Martin	4th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Gordon “Mack” McCain	5th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. David McCormick	15th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Marc McCune	21st Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Mary McGowan	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 9
Hon. Don McSpadden	16th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Mike Medlock	21st Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Holly Meyer	16th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Chalk Mitchell	1st Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Richard Moore	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 15
Hon. Christopher Morledge	1st Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Wade Naramore	18th East Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Ashley Parker	23rd Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Mark Pate	17th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Bill Pearson	5th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Randy Philhours	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 11
Hon. Grisham Phillips	22nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Chris Piazza	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Mackie Pierce	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 17
Hon. Sam Pope	10th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Richard Proctor	1st Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. John Putman	14th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Jerry Don Ramey	15th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Rob Ratton	3rd Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Mike Reif	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 13
Hon. Melissa Richardson	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 9
Hon. Dan Ritchey	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 10
Hon. Quincey Ross	10th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Jerry Ryan	18th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Doug Schrantz	19th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 6
Hon. John Scott	19th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Barry Sims	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 7



# Arkansas Circuit Judges



Hon. Hamilton Singleton	13th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Thomas Smith	19th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Vann Smith	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 14
Hon. Terry Sullivan	15th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Dennis Sutterfield	5th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Stephen Tabor	12th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. David Talley, Jr.	13th Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. Joanna Taylor	4th Judicial Circuit, Div. 7
Hon. Mary Thomason	13th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. John Threet	4th Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Cindy Thyer	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Joyce Warren	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 10
Hon. Susan Weaver	20th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Tim Weaver	16th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Gordon Webb	14th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. Morgan “Chip” Welch	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 16
Hon. Chris Williams	7th Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Lynn Williams	18th East Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Dion Wilson	1st Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Ralph Wilson	2nd Judicial Circuit, Div. 5
Hon. Herbert Wright	6th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4
Hon. John Homer Wright	18th East Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. William Randal Wright	8th North Judicial Circuit, Div. 1
Hon. Robert Wyatt, Jr.	11th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Charles Yeargan	9th West Judicial Circuit, Div. 2
Hon. Stacey Zimmerman	4th Judicial Circuit, Div. 3
Hon. Leigh Zuerker	12th Judicial Circuit, Div. 4

# State District Judges

**Hon. Bruce Anderson**

28th District  
Composed of Bradley County and Drew County

**Hon. Wren Autrey**

37th District  
Composed of Lafayette County and Miller County

**Hon. Rita Bailey**

31st District  
Composed of Pulaski County

**Hon. Charles “Chuck” Baker**

5th District  
Composed of Crawford County

**Hon. Jack Barker**

35th District  
Composed of Union County

**Hon. Don Betterton**

18th District  
Composed of Mississippi County, Osceola District

**Hon. David Boling**

19th District  
Composed of Craighead County

**Hon. Claire Borengasser**

6th District  
Composed of Sebastian County, Fort Smith District

**Hon. Don Bourne**

8th District  
Composed of Pope County

**Hon. Kim Bridgforth**

29th District  
Composed of Lincoln County and Jefferson County

**Hon. Ray Bunch**

1st District  
Composed of Benton County

**Hon. Chris Carnahan**

9th District  
Composed of Faulkner County and Van Buren County

**Hon. Stephanie Casady**

32nd District  
Composed of Saline County and the City of Alexander in Pulaski County

**Hon. Jeff Conner**

1st District  
Composed Benton County

**Hon. Mark Derrick**

23rd District  
Composed of Prairie County and White County

**Hon. Jason Duffy**

10th District  
Composed of Baxter County and Marion County

**Hon. Vic. Fleming**

31st District  
Composed of Pulaski County

**Hon. Tommy Fowler**

19th District  
Composed of Craighead County

**Hon. Melinda French**

27th District  
Composed of Chicot County and Desha County

**Hon. Phillip Green**

29th District  
Composed of Lincoln County and Jefferson County

**Hon. Chris Griffin**

1st District  
Composed of Benton County

**Hon. Wayne Gruber**

31st District  
Composed of Pulaski County

**Hon. Milas “Butch” Hale**

31st District  
Composed of Pulaski County

# State District Judges

**Hon. Jeff Harper**

2nd District

Composed of Washington County

**Hon. Reid Harrod**

26th District

Composed of Ashley County

**Hon. Randy Hill**

40th District

Composed of Clark County

**Hon. Ron Hunter**

20th District

Composed of Poinsett County

**Hon. Casey Jones**

2nd District

Composed of Washington County

**Hon. Paula Juels Jones**

31st District

Composed of Pulaski County

**Hon. John Kearney**

29th District

Composed of Lincoln County and Jefferson County

**Hon. Eric Kennedy**

23rd District

Composed of Prairie County and White County

**Hon. Durwood King**

22nd District

Composed of Lee County and Phillips County

**Hon. Fred Kirkpatrick**

4th District

Composed of Boone County, the City of Alpena in Carroll County, Newton County and Searcy County

**Hon. Shannon Langston**

18th District

Composed of Mississippi County, Chickasawba District

**Hon. Mark Leverett**

31st District

Composed of Pulaski County

**Hon. Melanie Martin**

31st District

Composed of Pulaski County

**Hon. Randy Morley**

31st District

Composed of Pulaski County

**Hon. Graham Nations**

2nd District

Composed of Washington County

**Hon. Josh Newton**

32nd District

Composed of Saline County and the City of Alexander in Pulaski County

**Hon. Jim O'Hern**

6th District

Sebastian County, Fort Smith District

**Hon. Ronnie Phillips**

34th District

Composed of Calhoun County, Cleveland County and Dallas County

**Hon. Dale Ramsey**

3rd District

Composed of Carroll County and Madison County

**Hon. David Reynolds**

9th District

Composed of Faulkner County and Van Buren County

**Hon. Mike Smith**

25th District

Composed of St. Francis County

**Hon. Dan Stidham**

17th District

Composed of Greene County



# State District Judges

**Hon. William Storey**

2nd District

Composed of Washington County

**Hon. Chaney Taylor**

14th District

Composed Independence County

**Hon. Sam Terry**

6th District

Composed of Sebastian County, Fort Smith District

**Hon. Stephen Thomas**

1st District

Composed of Benton County

**Hon. Fred Thorne**

21st District

Composed of Crittenden County

**Hon. Michael Wagoner**

6th District

Composed of Sebastian County, Greenwood District

**Hon. Emily White**

33rd District

Composed of Grant County and Hot Spring County

**Hon. Lance Wright**

14th District

Composed of Cleburne County

**Hon. Tony Yocum**

38th District

Composed of Hempstead County and Nevada County

# Local District Judges

**Hon. Alex Bigger**  
Randolph County

**Hon. Len Bradley**  
Johnson County

**Hon. Christopher Brockett**  
Franklin County, Ozark District

**Hon. Jeremy Bueker**  
Arkansas County, Northern District

**Hon. David Carruth**  
Monroe County

**Hon. Keith Caviness**  
Yell County, Northern District  
Yell County, Southern District

**Hon. David Copelin**  
Clay County

**Hon. Paul Efurd**  
Franklin County, Charleston District

**Hon. Park Eldridge**  
Arkansas County, Southern District

**Hon. John Finley, III**  
Little River County

**Hon. Phil Foster**  
Ouachita County

**Hon. Andy Gill**  
Perry County

**Hon. Donald Goodner**  
Scott County

**Hon. David Graham**  
Columbia County

**Hon. Joe Graham**  
Garland County

**Hon. Barbara Griffin**  
Jackson County  
Woodruff County

**Hon. Jessica Steele Gunter**  
Howard County  
Pike County

**Hon. Dan Ives**  
Ouachita County

**Hon. Mark Johnson**  
Sharp County

**Hon. Larry Kissee**  
Fulton County

**Hon. Dale Lipsmeyer**  
Conway County

**Hon. John Martin**  
Monroe County

**Hon. Clint McGue**  
Lonoke County, Northern District

**Hon. William McKimm**  
Montgomery County

**Hon. David Miller**  
Izard County

**Hon. Brian Mueller**  
Logan County, Southern District

**Hon. Jacob Newton**  
Stone County

**Hon. Ralph Ohm**  
Garland County

**Hon. David Rush**  
Logan County, Northern District

# Local District Judges

**Hon. Mike Smith**

Cross County

**Hon. Teresa Smith**

Lonoke County, Southern District

**Hon. Danny Thrailkill**

Polk County

**Hon. Adam Weeks**

Lawrence County

**Hon. Manya Wood**

Sevier County



# In Memoriam



## **Honorable Harvey Yates**

Judge Harvey Yates, 72, of Helena, Arkansas, passed away Sunday, April 5, 2020. He was born July 20, 1947, in Clarksville, Arkansas.

Judge Yates graduated law school in 1972 and started working for Schieffler & Yates Law Firm in West Helena. He was a Municipal Judge for one year and Circuit Judge for 28 years. He was a past member of the Lions Club and Masonic Lodge.

He was a past president of Desoto School Board, Oark Alumni Association, and Twin City Athletic Association. He was a practicing attorney at Yates Law Firm and had a mediation and arbitration business.



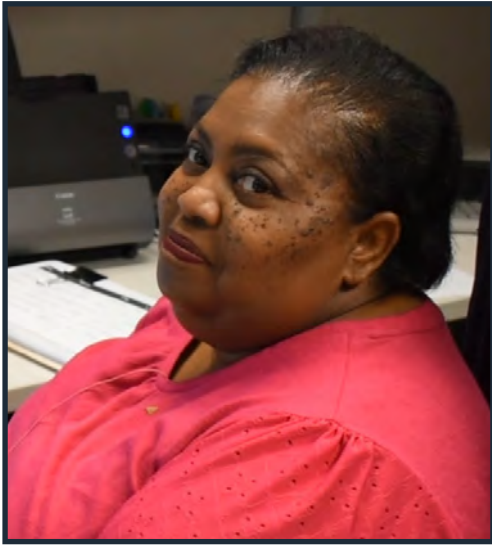
## **Honorable Tom Keith**

Former Benton County Circuit Judge Tom Keith, 81, of Bentonville passed away Tuesday, June 23, 2020. He retired from the bench in 2008.

He completed law school at the University of Arkansas in 1973 and began private practice before eventually becoming a full-time public defender in Benton County. While attending law school, he was a reporter for Fayetteville's Northwest Arkansas Times.

In 1981, he decided to seek the judgeship for Rogers Municipal Court. His bid was successful and four years later he switched courtrooms when he was elected a circuit judge.

# In Memoriam



## **Rose Allen**

Rose Allen died on Monday, September 21, 2020. She began working in the Arkansas Supreme Court Clerk's Office in September 2010. In 2015, she became manager of the state's database of licensed attorneys. She completed 10 years of service in the Clerk's Office.

Rose was a housing supervisor for World Services for the Blind and a beauty consultant for Mary Kay Cosmetics. She was a member of Beautiful Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in West Memphis, Arkansas.

She graduated from Arkansas Baptist College in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration.

# Annual Report 2020



## **Administrative Office of the Courts**

Arkansas Justice Building  
625 Marshall Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-682-9400

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