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Wilkes receives lifetime award

Authority Chairman F. Barry Wilkes, Superior Court Clerk of Liberty County, recently received the first lifetime achievement award ever presented by the Superior Court Clerks' Association of Georgia and the association's 2013 ÉCLAT award.

The lifetime achievement award was conceived by Tom Lawler, former Superior Court Clerk of Gwinnett County and former chairman of the Clerks' Authority. Lawler had planned to present the award to Wilkes in November 2011, but his health was failing and he lost his battle with cancer that month.

"Receiving the first lifetime achievement award ever presented by the Superior Court Clerks' Association during its 50-plus-year history is, in and of itself, one of the greatest honors ever bestowed upon me. It was bittersweet and what makes it even more special is that Tom – one of my best and closest friends, and a superior court clerk whom I respected greatly and held in utmost esteem – conceived the idea before his death and it is words that he penned describing why I am worthy of the award inscribed on the plaque that I received," Wilkes said.



The verbiage written by Lawler recognizes Wilkes for "more than 25 years of service, dedication, inspiration and extraordinary leadership given to the Superior Court Clerks of Georgia, for the guidance that allowed his peers to excel in the areas of legislation, education and technology and, most importantly, for providing to Superior Court Clerks of Georgia a special vision of the future that must only come from

God-given talents you possess."

Shown above presenting the award during the association's fall business meeting in Savannah, Connie Cheatham, Superior Court Clerk of McDuffie County, told the group that "there is very little in the 'clerk world' that Barry has not done or accomplished ... One of his best attributes is his ability to see into the future, plan for it and take action on those plans. One prime example is his participation in the creation and implementation of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority, which has proven to be one of our and the citizens of Georgia greatest assets. Without his and others' foresight, most clerks' offices would not have the resources and technology they have today. He is a born

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October Board Meeting Review

The Authority Board met on October 23 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions of the meeting.

General Business

The minutes of the July 10 scheduled board



Authority Board of Directors — Pictured left to right: Jim Weidner, Charles Baker, Barry Wilkes, Dana Chastain, Connie Cheatham, Jean Rogers, Cindy Mason, and Dan Massey. Not pictured: Randy Howard and Brenda Weaver.

meeting and the September 3 teleconference board meeting were approved. The Auditor's Report and current financials were presented and revealed that the Authority is on sound financial ground and is following accepted accounting industry standard procedures.

1992 Historical Deed Project

An update was given on the status of the 1992 Historical Deed Project. It was reported that 24 counties have not completed the 1992 historical indexing. The Authority has reached out to these counties and they have selected a vendor. It was reported that new contracts are being drafted, and data will begin to flow once the contracts are in place. Contracts have been reviewed by the Attorney General's office, and modifications will be made per the AG's suggestions. There will be two vendors involved in the project.

Voluntary County-Funded Historical Deed Program

It was reported that 15 counties are participating and 11 have completed the survey process. As of October 18, 321,638 instruments had been released to the public via the Authority's website. Some of the instruments date back to 1980. 67,680 instruments are in quarantine awaiting release to the public.

eFiling Project

During an update on the Authority's eFiling Project, the following was reported:

- **UCC eFile** – 75 counties are participating.
- **Child Support eFile** – 76 counties are participating.
- **Real Estate eFile** – 14 counties are participating. ACH payment process has been implemented for Real Estate eFiling.

Other Business

Court Technology Conference – It was reported that no new technological advancements were shown and IT funding seems to be down in most states. It was also noted that the states with the most uniform eFiling were the ones where the technology funding was done at the state level instead of the local or county level. All agreed the conference is a good environment for exchanging ideas and communicating with other states.

COAG (Constitutional Officers' Association of Georgia) Conference – A report was given on the recent COAG Conference. It was reported that the clerks are very organized, and it appears Greg Allen and Mike Holiman have heavy schedules for the upcoming legislative session. The Authority presented Gadgets & Gizmos training as well as Windows 7, and the sessions were well attended. Additionally, the Authority was able to conduct eleven clerk interviews for its website. Legislative initiatives will be coming in the 2014 legislative session. ■



September Board Meeting Review

The Authority Board met via conference call on September 3, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a policy on historical real estate records. A discussion was held on the possibility of an outside entity obtaining the Authority's historical real estate data for only the cost of labor and media, essentially eliminating the Authority's primary funding source. Current law allows for the Authority to establish a fee schedule to govern such data requests, and the Authority has adopted a schedule. In addition to this, the Authority Board had directed Gary Yates to explore whether the data created by the Authority can be copyrighted.

Mr. Yates' research revealed that state governments can copyright data and some do. An example is the Georgia Code Revision Commission holds copyright over the state of Georgia's laws. However, it is unclear as to whether this is enforceable, and the federal government will likely not recognize such copyright claims. The federal government itself cannot copyright data/information. After consideration, the Board of Directors passed a motion to explore the possibility of copyright by directing the Executive Director to seek counsel from a qualified copyright attorney.

Wilkes — Continued from Page 1

leader who exemplifies exceptionalism, leadership, teamwork, commitment and accomplishment.”

In addition to the lifetime achievement award, Cheatham also presented Wilkes with the 2013 ÉCLAT Award, which the association only confers in a year when the award's selection committee determines a superior court clerk merits recognition for his or her accomplishments and achievements.

Cheatham said that Wilkes earned the award this year for “recognizing the need to revise and modernize Title 15 of the Official Code of Georgia as it relates to the duties and responsibilities of superior court clerks. He took on the huge task of writing legislation to overhaul

and modernize many provisions, which became HB 665. The bill was mammoth in scope. Many doubted it would ever pass. There was a lot of opposition from others in the judiciary and state and local government to some provisions in the bill. However, Barry does not know the word ‘can’t.’ After a long and hard battle, the bill passed during the 2012 legislative session. His tenacity, ability to plan for the future and follow through on those plans has proven to be a true blessing for us all, time and time again, and against all odds.” ■

McDuffie County Staff Sports Authority Shirts

Clerk of Superior Court Connie Cheatham recently snapped a photo of her staff wearing their Authority shirts. Pictured are Vicki Jones, Amy Clark, Dena Daniels, Lindsay Rogilio, Lawanda Jones, and Sara Menendez.



Let Authority help train your staff

Our 2014 training program is set and offers three convenient training formats:

Classroom Training:

Classroom training is held at the Authority office or hosted by a Superior Court Clerk, and offered free-of-charge. This year, **Introductory Real Estate Indexing Standards**, a basic,

all-day training course which reviews the fundamentals of indexing standards, will be offered. See dates and locations below.

Webinars:

Webinars are remote training conducted via the internet and phone and allow a clerk to have many staff members participate. Topics include:

Advanced Indexing Standards — This webinar covers more advanced indexing topics such as indexing difficult instruments and parties. The class will also address recent changes to the Standards and common mistakes found in index data.

Notary Public — As the commissioning office, what are my responsibilities overseeing notaries commissioned in my county? May a notary notarize for a family member? What are the duties and limitations for notaries in Georgia? This class will answer these questions and more as well as discuss the apostille process.

Authority Websites — Where do I process an online notary public application? Where do I index a protective order? How do I check a participant ID? Join us for an overview of Authority website resources and get the answers to these questions and many more.

UCC Training — This webinar will provide an overview of Georgia's Uniform Commercial Code; a discussion on Revised Article 9 and how it relates to the processing and index-

ing of UCCs; information on UCC forms, administrative procedures and minimum filing requirements; and reasons for rejecting a filing.

Need more information?

Contact Rachel Rice at 800-304-5175 x1010 or rachel.rice@gsccca.org with training questions or to inquire about remote training. Register for training at www.gsccca.org/training.

Give webinars a try and efficiently train your staff in a couple hours. See the list of dates and topics below.

Online Training

The Authority also

offers a variety of online training opportunities. Courses include:

- ❖ Intro to GSCCCA Indexing Standards
- ❖ Extended Real Estate Indexing Standards
- ❖ Fines & Fees Training
- ❖ Notary Public Training

Courses are available 24/7 making training completely flexible. ■

2014 Training Schedule

Classroom Training: Introductory Real Estate Indexing Standards

April 10	Atlanta
June 18	Macon
September 10	Moultrie
October 17	Richmond Hill

Webinars

January 28	Authority Websites
January 30	UCC Training
February 25	Advanced Indexing
March 12	Authority Websites
April 16	UCC Training
May 6	Notary Public
May 15	Advanced Indexing
June 26	Notary Public
July 15	Advanced Indexing
July 24	Notary Public
August 5	Authority Websites
August 6	UCC Training
August 21	Advanced Indexing
September 9	Notary Public

