

GSCCCA Update

Vol. 16, No. 1
March 2012

An update on the activities of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority

Board of Directors

Chairman:

F. Barry Wilkes
Clerk of Superior Court
Liberty County

Vice Chairman:

Jean H. Rogers
Clerk of Superior Court
Crisp County

Secretary/Treasurer:

Cindy Mason
Clerk of Superior Court
Columbia County

Charles Baker

Clerk of Superior &
State Courts, Hall County

David J. Burge

Partner – Smith,
Gambrell & Russell, LLP

Connie H. Cheatham

Clerk of Superior Court
McDuffie County

W. Randolph Howard, Sr.

Chairman, Sumter
County Commission

C. Michael Johnson

Attorney at Law
Eastman

Arch W. McGarity

Chief Judge
Superior Courts
Flint Judicial Circuit

Rhett Walker

Clerk of Superior Court
Dodge County

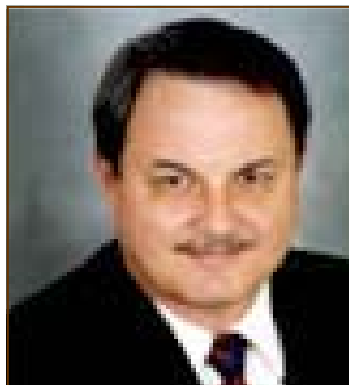


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Board elects new officers

At its January meeting, the Authority Board of Directors elected new officers: F. Barry Wilkes as chairman, Jean H. Rogers as vice chairman, and Cindy Mason as secretary/treasurer. In accordance with Article IV of the Authority bylaws, these three members will

serve the remaining terms of office for the positions until the next annual meeting of the Authority to be held on the second Wednesday of October 2012. The election was necessary due to the passing of former Authority Chairman Tom Lawler in November of 2011.



Chairman
F. Barry Wilkes



Vice Chairman
Jean H. Rogers



Secretary/Treasurer
Cindy Mason

Georgia Southern University, serves on various local and state boards, and is very active in community-based civic and charitable organizations. He has been the recipient of the "County Officer of the Year" and the "Superior Court Clerk of the Year" awards. He is an avid outdoorsman and naturalist; writes poetry and short stories; and enjoys local, state and national politics. He and his wife, Janelle, have two sons and four grandchildren.

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January Board Meeting Review

The Authority Board met on January 11 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions of the meeting.

Swearing in of New Board Members:

Mike Smith, a notary public and communications director for the Authority, administered the oath of office to new board members Connie H. Cheatham, clerk of Superior Court of McDuffie County, and William Randolph Howard, Sr., chairman of the Sumter County Commission.

Election of Board Officers:

A motion was made that Barry Wilkes be elected chairman for the remaining term of Tom Lawler, that Jean Rogers be elected vice chairman for the remaining term of Barry Wilkes, and that Cindy Mason be elected secretary/treasurer for the remaining term of Jean Rogers in accordance with Article IV of the bylaws of the Authority with these three members to serve the remaining terms of office for the positions until the next annual meeting of the Authority to be held on the second Wednesday of October 2012. The motion was approved by the Board.

General Business:

The minutes of the October 12, 2011 board meeting were approved by the Board

Greg Morgan presented the current financial reports. He reported that restricted cash is approximately \$700K less compared to the same month of the previous year and fixed assets are down by \$83K. Assets are depreciated in a straight line method over a three-year period. Most equipment has long been depreciated. The financial reports reflect a positive stabilization of the Authority's financial status. A motion to accept the current financial reports as presented was approved by the Board.

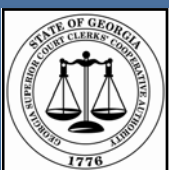
UCC Project:

An update on the UCC Project was given and it was reported that the number of UCC filings in the current fiscal year is down slightly from the previous year but that the UCC Project is "holding its own" and meeting its budget.

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Authority Board of Directors (pictured from left to right): Randy Howard, Charles Baker, Chairman Barry Wilkes, Connie Cheatham, Vice Chairman Jean Rogers, Secretary/Treasurer Cindy Mason, Rhett Walker, David Burge and Arch McGarity.



Board Meeting Review — Cont. from Page 2

Fines & Fees Division:

An update was given on the Fines & Fees Division and it was reported that there has been a significant drop in collections for the Judicial Operations Fund Fee. More civil filings are being filed in Magistrate Court where the \$125 civil filing surcharge does not apply as it does in State and Superior Court. Additionally, the number of civil filings is generally down across all courts.

Training Update:

A training update was given and it was reported that Authority training for 2012 will be a combination of webinars and in-person classes. Classes will include instruction on Fines and Fees, UCC, Real Estate Indexing Standards and Protective Orders. It was also reported that the Authority will participate in specific training for municipal court clerks through the University of Georgia.

Historical Deed Project:

It was reported that the Historical Deed Project remains suspended due to a lack of funds, and staff recommended that the project remain suspended at this time. Staff estimated that approximately 1.3 million instruments would need to be collected to complete the project back to 1990-91. A motion to continue the suspension of the Historical Deed Project due to budgetary constraints was approved by the Board.

eFiling Project:

An update on the eFiling Project was given and it was reported that the eFiling Standards officially went into effect as of January 3, 2012. Standards are being enforced with exceptions as submitters become more familiar with the process. The Standards also established an eFile Registry. McDuffie, Clarke, Henry, Forsyth and Fayette County are participating in the Real Estate eFile project. 1195 filings have been accepted to date. ICON, Cott and ACS have demonstrated proficiency as Real Estate eFile vendors. Staff is currently working with the Georgia Department of Revenue on developing a Lien eFiling process.

Premium Subscriber Account:

An update on the Premium Subscriber Account was given and it was reported that additional search options, such as an address search, are now available. These options were developed over a period of time taking into consideration user feedback. The charge is \$24.95 per month. The Premium Account went live on January 3, 2012. As

of January 10, there were 243 new premium users resulting in approx. \$43K in new revenue.

Other Business:

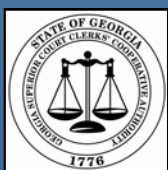
2012 Regularly-scheduled Board Meetings – Proposed 2012 board meeting dates were announced: April 11, July 11, and October 10. A motion to accept the meeting dates as proposed was approved by the Board.

Authority Legislative Issues – The Board discussed the following legislative issues:

- ❖ **Trade Names** – Individuals would register trade names at www.gsccca.org thereby creating a Georgia Trade Name Registry. The bill would require a notice of ten days to be given by the person registering the name. A motion to pursue further development and seek passage of legislation creating a trade name registry was approved by the Board.
- ❖ **HB 665 (Surveyors' Bill)** – This bill would require surveyors to submit plats to clerks' offices via electronic file.
- ❖ **HB 198 (Sunset Bill)** – This bill would extend the sunset to June 30, 2016. However, board members were unanimous in seeking that the sunset be repealed as opposed to being extended every couple of years. Discussions with the Georgia Association of Realtors and the Georgia Bar Association will take place seeking an agreement for the abolishment of the sunset provision.
- ❖ **HB 648 (Fines and Fees Bill)** – This bill only affects interest on funds from courts.

Gail Robinson Resolution – A motion to accept a resolution honoring Gail Robinson's service on the Authority Board was approved.

Thomas C. Lawler Memorial Tribute – An update was given on the Board's effort to pay tribute to former Authority Chairman Tom Lawler by creating a memorial plaque to be displayed in the Authority office. Connie Cheatham, Jean Rogers and Rhett Walker were appointed by Chairman Wilkes to a subcommittee to develop language for the plaque. A motion to pursue development, purchase and display of a Thomas C. Lawler Memorial plaque was approved by the Board. ■

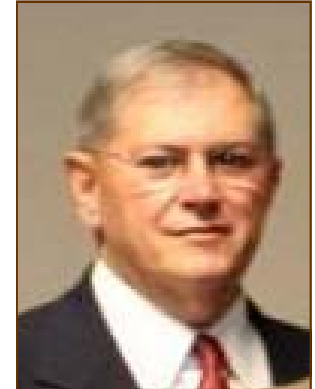


New Board Members Sworn In

At the January Board meeting, the oath of office was administered to new members of the Authority Board: Connie H. Cheatham and William Randolph (Randy) Howard, Sr.

Connie Cheatham, who has been clerk of Superior Court of McDuffie County since 1989, will serve her second term on the Authority Board. She has served on various committees of the Superior Court Clerks' Association of Georgia including the Conference Committee, Clerks Reference Manual Committee, and Legislative and Strategic Planning Committee. She is a Past President of the Thomson Kiwanis Club and a member of the Thomson First United Methodist Church. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a BA degree in English. Connie and her husband, Jack, have two children.

Randy Howard, who currently serves as chairman of the Sumter County Commission, was appointed by Governor Deal to serve on the Authority Board. For the past eleven years, he has



worked for the Georgia Emergency Management Agency as the waste isolation pilot plant coordi-

nator. He is a former Sumter County Emergency Management Agency director and sheriff. Randy also worked in the Sumter County Sheriff's Department for more than 31 years. He is a graduate of the Georgia Peace Officer and Standards Law Enforcement Academy and the Georgia Sheriff Elect Academy. He and his wife, Donna, have three sons and four grandchildren. ■

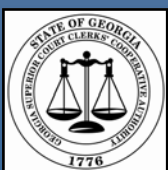
Board Elections — Cont. from Page 1

it is doing for those of us in the trenches who are trying to provide excellent services to the citizens of our counties without putting more tax burden on their backs. The Authority is a paradigm of how government ought to work and how simple solutions to complex problems can be solved.”

Jean Rogers was elected to the Authority Board in 2002 and elected secretary/treasurer at that time. She has served as clerk of Superior Court of Crisp County since 1993 and also serves as clerk of Juvenile Court. Active in both community and industry activities, Jean is a past president of the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia, and is the 2007 recipient of the Superior Court Clerks' Association's ECLAT award. She was active in the American Heart Association serving on the state board of directors and as president of her local chapter. Jean is a life-long resident of Crisp County and holds a BS in economics from Georgia Southern University. She and her husband, Mickey, have three daughters. Most of her free-time is now spent with her 2-year-old granddaugh-

ter, Mickensey, and eagerly awaiting the birth of Mickensey's little sister, Madison, due in August. She also enjoys traveling, working in her yard, reading, and playing the piano. A fellow clerk said of Jean: “She has the ability to see the big picture and is able to look beyond the day-to-day operations of the clerk's office.”

Cindy Mason was elected to the Authority Board in 2004. She has worked in the Augusta Judicial Circuit since 1976. Beginning in the Clerk of Superior Court's office, Cindy also worked as a freelance reporter, owned and operated a court reporting firm, working in all levels of the court, and worked as an official court reporter for several judges. She became Clerk of Superior Court in 2001. Cindy has a true love for research of all kinds and dreams of one day writing a book from past courtroom experiences. With three children, she spends her hours away from the office with family and enjoying her “number-one, stress-release hobby,” fishing. ■



2012 Training Opportunities

The 2012 Authority training schedule is underway. Along with providing the most accurate and current information, the Authority also prioritizes the convenience and accessibility of its training. To that end, we continue to offer three types of training: classroom, webinars and online.

Classroom Training:

Classroom training is hosted by a Superior Court Clerk and offered free-of-charge.

Fines & Fees classroom training will be held on June 19 in Milledgeville and September 20 in Valdosta. Each session will cover many facets of the court fee system including the proper assessment, collection and distribution of state and local surcharges and deductions relative to fines, court costs and bond forfeitures; an overview of the Georgia statutes and the GSCCCA Rules and Regulations; and GSCCCA web-based tools available to aid in the calculation of all applicable surcharges and deductions, as well as base fine amounts. These classes will fill up quickly, so register today.

Webinars:

Webinars are remote training conducted via the internet and phone and allow a clerk to have as many staff members as they wish participate in the training. This year the Authority will be hosting webinars on the following topics:

R.E. Indexing Standards — Suitable for both new and experienced indexers, this course will include a review of the GSCCCA Standards for indexing real estate, lien and plat records with an emphasis on the reasoning behind the Standards; a review of the latest changes to the Standards; a review of various deed and lien instrument types and their purpose; indexing difficult instruments such as those from securitization trusts; and a review of the Authority's online Standards training course.

Protective Order Registry — Designed for both new employees and those who need a refresher, this course will provide training on how to scan and index Protective Orders and verify reports.

UCC Training — This webinar will provide an overview of Georgia's Uniform Commercial Code process; a discussion on Revised Article 9 and how it relates to the processing and indexing of UCC financing statements; information on UCC forms, administrative procedures and minimum filing requirements; and reasons for rejecting a filing.

Need to train multiple staff members at one time? Give webinars a

try and efficiently train your staff in one morning. See the listing of dates and topics below.

Online Training

The Authority continues to offer a wide variety of online training opportunities. Courses include:

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

Courses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, making training completely flexible. ■

Need more information?

Contact Rachel Rice at 404-327-7322 (800-304-5175 x1010) or rachel.rice@gsccca.org with training questions or to inquire about remote training. Go to www.gsccca.org/training to access and register for all training courses.

2012 Schedule

Classroom Training:

June 19	Milledgeville	Fines & Fees
Sept. 20	Valdosta	Fines & Fees

Webinars:

May 17	Protective Order Registry
June 13	R.E. Indexing Standards
June 27	UCC
July 26	R.E. Indexing Standards
August 7	Protective Order Registry
August 16	UCC
Sept. 12	R.E. Indexing Standards
October 24	Protective Order Registry

