



## January 2021 Newsletter

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### President's Corner

By **Dodie Sachs**



I'm very excited to begin this new calendar year with all of you. While 2020 was full of new experiences, some we would like to avoid more than others, 2021 is a year of new possibilities. I'm very excited about the offerings the GCBA has in store for 2021.

First our luncheon on January 15th. I hope to see you all there - whether by Zoom or in person. If you come via Zoom, the meeting room will be open early about 11:45 am, so you can socialize with the Zoom people before we start the meeting. I know that one of the things I personally miss the most, is getting to hang out with colleagues in GJAC or before luncheons. Please try to come a little early, so we can say hello.

Our luncheon has a special introductory speaker this month. GCBA is going on a TRIP. I've invited Billy Planer of Etgar 36 to come and speak to the GCBA about our Social Distanced Civil Rights Journey to Montgomery, Alabama we are going on on February 27, 2021. Click [here](#) for more information about the trip. Right now, we are planning on the one day trip, but with interest, we can do the two day trip. The registration event page will be live soon.

Our speakers will be former GCBA President and State Representative Chuck Elstration and State Senator Zahra Karinshak. I know this will be a great luncheon. Please attend in person or via Zoom to show them our support.

Let's start the new year off on the right foot together. I'll see you all at the Luncheon!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Attend the GCBA January 2021 Luncheon

This month's luncheon will be held on January 15, 2021 at 12pm, at:

The 1818 Club  
6900 Sugarloaf Pkwy.  
Duluth, GA 30097

The January 2021 luncheon will feature speakers State Representative Chuck Elstration (R-Dacula) and State Senator Zahra Karinshak (D-Duluth) speaking about the passage and effects of the new Georgia Hate Crime legislation.

In addition, Billy Planer, director of Etgar 36, will speak to our membership about the upcoming GCBA Civil Rights Experience trip taking place in February. Click [here](#) for more information. The registration link is coming soon.

We will be observing COVID Safety protocols at the luncheon. We have capped our registration at 50 members, and once we meet that limit we will not allow additional people to attend in person. We normally have 10 - 20 people in person, so we are normally well below the CDC guidelines. The luncheon tables will be spaced out and there will be a limited number of people at each table so we can social distance.

We will also broadcast the luncheon via Zoom. To register, click [here](#).

### Attend the GCBA Civil Rights Experience Trip on February 27, 2021

GCBA will host our first Civil Rights Experience in conjunction with Billy Planer of Etgar 36 on February 27, 2021 in Montgomery, AL. The cost will be \$150.00 with options to add museum visits.

We will meet in Montgomery, AL for a guided tour of civil rights landmarks. The entire event is outside with social distancing and follows COVID protocols.

To see more about these types of trips hosted by Etgar 36, click [here](#). Be on the lookout for an event invitation from GCBA soon!

### Judge John Doran Retires

#### State Court Judge John Doran Retires



In a well attended gathering, the Gwinnett County State Court judges, staff, solicitors, and various private attorneys bid farewell to Judge Doran on Tuesday, December 22, 2020, at 1 p.m. in Courtroom 2D.

This was the press release from the Gwinnett County State Court Judges:

The State Court Judges extend our best wishes to our friend Judge John Doran, who is retiring after 14 years on the State Court Bench. During his tenure, he has managed thousands of civil and criminal cases and has tried over a hundred jury trials. For the last several years, he has served as an Accountability Courts Judge, presiding over a division of DUI Court with both compassion and discipline.

Judge Doran came to the Bench after a long career in civil and criminal law in Gwinnett County. He arrived in Gwinnett after graduating from Emory Law School in 1976 and practiced law for several years with Hughel Harrison, a distinguished trial lawyer located in Lawrenceville. Judge Doran handled both civil and criminal cases in Gwinnett County and then later developed his own practice dedicated to civil and domestic law. He served as a skilled and dedicated advocate for his clients for over thirty years.

He was appointed to the Bench by Governor Sonny Perdue in 2007. Judge Doran took the Bench and expected professionalism and preparation from every lawyer who appeared in his court. He believed in maintaining appropriate courtroom decorum and took the time to listen and carefully consider the arguments of all who appeared before him. Judge Doran took great pride in being a member of the Gwinnett County State Court and worked hard to ensure that cases were heard in a timely and efficient fashion.

Judge Doran has always been a voracious reader and lifelong learner. His deep readings in history and literature provide him with the ability to discuss almost any topic: from the history of the Roman Empire, to historical figures such as Winston Churchill, to the great writers of the 20th century. He has roots in Ireland and has immersed himself in Irish literature and history.

We will miss you, John. And may the road rise to meet you.

- Judge Pam South
- Judge Carla Brown
- Judge Emily Brantley
- Judge Shawn Bratton
- Judge Ronda Colvin Leary
- Judge Veronica Cope

### Guardian Ad Litem Directory Established

The Center for Navigating Family Change ("CNFC") has synthesized guardian ad litem information and contacts so that there is ONE central place for attorneys, judges, therapists, and clients to go to find good resources and referrals when a private guardian is needed in a court case.

Regarding the directory, CNFC Executive Director Diane Dierks released the following statement:

"This started as a private list we kept when inquiries came to us regarding GALs in our area. It then occurred to me that I would like to know who is out there that I might not be familiar with who can offer excellent services. I personally think there is a small group of GALs who probably have too many cases and can't provide the personalized service that they would like to for high-conflict families. So, this is your chance to let others know who you are.

Take time to visit the web site we have created for this purpose at [www.gagal.org](#). Any GAL in the state of Georgia can be listed. You can list for FREE, which provides users with your name, county and phone number. For an expanded listing, which includes your photo, bio, and link to your web site, the fee is \$15/month or \$150/year. Proceeds from these listings will go to help us continue to provide valuable co-parenting services and reunification therapy at the most economical fees possible.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me at [diane@cnfc.org](#). I look forward to making you part of this exciting new endeavor.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a better New Year!"

Diane C. Dierks, LMFT, CFLE  
Executive and Clinical Directo  
[www.cnfc.org](#)  
[www.dianedierks.com](#)

### Ruth Rocker McMullen Sworn In as New Deputy Chief Clerk of Gwinnett County



After six years as a Gwinnett County Magistrate Court Judge, Judge Ruth Rocker McMullen has become Chief Deputy at the Gwinnett County Clerk of Court. Here is a message from the Gwinnett County Clerk of Courts Office:

"Good morning all and Happy New Year!"

Our new Chief Deputy really needs no introduction. As many of you know Ruth Rocker McMullen joined the Clerk's office as Chief Deputy. For those of you that know Ruth, you know how fortunate we are to have her.

As the first week of 2021 comes to a close, I would be remiss if I did not take time out to formally welcome her. Please join me in welcoming Ruth to our team. We look forward to a great 2021!"

### Resuming Jury Trials in Gwinnett County



Gwinnett County has a committee established to develop procedures to safely resume jury trials in Gwinnett County. GCBA President Dodie Sachs and GCBA President-Elect Danielle Mays have been named members of this committee.

The committee is interested in input from the bar. If you have opinions on how to safely resume jury trials in Gwinnett County or you would like your comments and concerns to be shared with the greater committee, please contact President Sachs or President-Elect Mays.

Judge Tadia Whitner has graciously shared with us the PowerPoint presentation that was presented to the Jury Committee highlighting the current ideas and procedures that Gwinnett County is considering. Please click [HERE](#) to view the presentation.

### Gwinnett County Day Reporting Center Offers Alternative for Offenders with Mental Health, Cognitive, and Substance Abuse Needs

Gwinnett has one of the few Day Reporting Centers ("DRC") in the state. It is precisely designed for habitual drug users, (not sellers) and those with mental health impairments.

It is a drug rehab program and has a cognitive component as well. It provides assistance with seeking employment.

Evidentiary based outcomes show a substantial reduction in recidivism. Entry into the program requires approval for acceptance.

Attorneys who believe they have a client who may benefit from entrance into the DRC program can contact:

Elizabeth Puckett  
[elizabeth.puckett@dcs.ga.gov](#)  
404-617-5818

For More Information, see these links: [DRC Fact Sheet with Map & DRC Overview](#)

### Contact Information for new Superior & State Court Judges



#### Superior Court - Division 3 - Judge Deborah Fluker

Judge Fluker began hearing cases as the Judge for Division 3 on January 4, 2021. The following is the contact information for her staff:

Jenny De Pena - Judicial Assistant (criminal docket)  
Email: [Jenny.DePena@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8617

Angela McCarthur - Calendar Coordinator (civil domestic docket)  
Email: [Angela.McCarthur@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8618

Lisa Cavender Wofford - Senior Staff Attorney  
Email: [Lisa.Wofford@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8616



#### Superior Court - Division 4 - Judge Tamela Adkins

Judge Adkins began hearing cases as the Judge for Division 4 on January 4, 2021. The following is the contact information for her staff:

Ann Parham - Judicial Assistant  
Email: [Ann.Parham@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8509

Teddra Hall - Calendar Coordinator  
Email: [Teddra.Hall@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8564

Hilary Krepstein - Senior Staff Attorney  
Email: [Hilary.Krepstein@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8584



#### State Court - Division 6 - Judge Veronica Cope

Judge Cope began hearing cases as the Judge for State Court Division 6 on January 4, 2021. The following is the contact information for her staff:

Tammy White - Judicial Assistant  
Email: [Tammy.White@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8757

Amber Gomis - Calendar Coordinator  
Email: [Amber.Gomis@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8758

William Teich - Staff Attorney  
Email: [William.Teich@gwinnettcounty.com](#)  
Phone: 770-822-8756

### SECTION UPDATES

No section updates this month.

### JOBS

No job listings this month.

### Office Space

No office space listings this month.

### LEGAL UPDATES AND ARTICLES

No legal updates or articles this month.

### Lawyer Joke

The attorney tells the accused, "I have some good news and some bad news." "What's the bad news?" asks the accused. "The bad news is your blood is all over the crime scene and the DNA tests prove you did it," said the lawyer. "What's the good news?" asks the accused. "Your cholesterol is 130," said the lawyer.

### Articles and Updates Welcome!!

If you would like to contribute to the GCBA Monthly Newsletter, e-mail submissions by the 5th of each month to Editor [Sean Goldstein](#).

Visit our [Facebook Page](#) and [WEBSITE](#) to stay updated until our next newsletter.

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