

## **Supreme Court appoints special judge for Hinds County Circuit Court**

February 4, 2008

The Mississippi Supreme Court has appointed a fourth special judge to assist the Seventh Circuit Court of Hinds County with its criminal docket.

Jackson attorney Trent L. Walker, 39, was appointed Feb. 4 for an 11-month term. He is expected to serve as a special judge through Dec. 31.

The Supreme Court's order appointing Walker as special judge says, "Having fully considered the matter, the Court finds that the appointment of an additional special judge is proper and warranted by the overcrowded docket of the Seventh Circuit Court District....This appointment may be extended if required by the condition of the docket of the District."

Special Judge Walker will hear criminal cases assigned by Senior Circuit Judge Swan Yerger.

Chief Justice Smith said, "I have known Trent and his family most of my adult life, going back to my years as a teacher and principal at Pearl Junior High, where I taught many of his family members. Trent's dedication, commitment, educational experience and integrity make him an ideal person to serve as a temporary judge.

"Trent will do an outstanding job to further reduce the backlog in the Hinds County Circuit Court criminal system," Chief Justice Smith said.

Special Judge Walker said, "Justice Smith has entrusted me to do a job, to take criminal cases and reduce the backlog in Hinds County criminal court. I plan to do that, working in conjunction with the permanent judges as well as the other special judges. I look forward to stepping in and doing my part."

Special Judge Walker will step down from his position as an assistant Hinds County prosecuting attorney. He has worked in the office of the Hinds County Attorney for the past two years, where he served as Youth Court prosecutor and Youth Drug Court prosecutor. He also handled felony preliminary hearings for the city of Jackson and Hinds County and conducted misdemeanor trials including prosecutions for driving under the influence and DUI appeals from Justice Court.

He will maintain his private law practice. He said he expects to also continue his work as a part-time public defender in Yazoo County.

He previously served as a staff attorney on the Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal. He has worked in private law practice as a solo practitioner since 2005. Before that, he worked in the law firm of Currie, Johnson, Griffin, Gaines and Myers in Jackson; the firm of Davis, Goss and Williams in Jackson; the firm of Blackmon and Blackmon in Canton; and the firm of Ungarino and Eckert in Flowood.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a Master of Public Policy and Administration from Jackson State University. He earned his law degree from Tulane Law School in 1996. He served for a year as a law clerk for Justice Smith at the Mississippi Supreme Court.

Special Judge Walker is the fourth special judge appointed by the Supreme Court to assist the Hinds County Circuit Court. Retired Hinds County Circuit Judges L. Breland Hilburn and William F. Coleman Jr., both of Jackson, and retired Court of Appeals Judge Billy G. Bridges of Brandon, work as part-time judges hearing criminal cases.

Judge Hilburn was appointed by the Supreme Court as a special judge for Hinds County Circuit Court on July 26, 2004. Judge Bridges was appointed by an order filed Aug. 29, 2007. Judge Coleman was appointed effective Feb. 1.

Funding for the part-time positions comes from a \$160,000 federal grant secured by the Governor in 2006.

####