

Bar Briefs

NEW HANOVER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

SAVE THE DATES

OCTOBER 30, 2009
NHC BAR
ANNUAL MEETING &
FALL SOCIAL
INDOCHINE
MARKET STREET &
WAYNE DRIVE

DECEMBER 12,
2009
NHC BAR
HOLIDAY PARY
BLOCKADE RUNNER
WRIGHTSVILLE
BEACH

MARCH 5, 2010
NC BAR ASSOC
4 ALL SERVICE DAY

JUNE 24-27, 2010
NC BAR ASSOC
ANNUAL MEETING
HILTON RIVERSIDE
WILMINGTON

STATE BUDGET IMPACTS COURTS

The North Carolina General Assembly adopted its two year budget on August 5, 2009 with cuts to the judicial branch of \$30.7 million, about 6% of the projected budget for the Administrative Office of the

Courts (AOC) for 2009 and \$43.7 million or about 8% for 2010. AOC Director John Smith, former



John Smith

Chief District Court Judge of the 5th Judicial District, told the General Assembly that the Judicial Department is an integral part of the State's infrastructure and justice system, and any reductions should be fairly distributed across all groups in the Judicial Department.

Some positions are being eliminated or not being filled, at least temporarily. A State tax increase saved many employee positions and services provided by the AOC across the State.

Local Clerk of Court Brenda Tucker stated that it was the tax increase passed by the General Assembly that made the cuts to the Clerks of Court statewide less than expected. "Without the tax increase, in New Hanover County we would have lost 12 to 13 deputy clerks," said Brenda Tucker. According to Tucker

the loss statewide would have been 269 deputy clerks, as well as 155 victim witness assistants and 10 special superior court judges. With the current budget, her staff will not receive a salary increase for 2 years. Tucker has 5 vacant deputy clerk positions at this time, 2 of which are being



Clerk of Court Brenda Tucker reviews AOC budget information

eliminated. "I am also down one magistrate", said Tucker, "and I am hoping to be able to advertise the position without promise of a date of employment." Even now the Of-

ice of the Clerk of Court remains busy. "The workload
Continued on page 2 Clerk.

Interested in serving on the Board of the NHC Bar Association

E-mail Murphy at fma@mwglaw.com

THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

When the Office of the Public Defender opened in March 2008, the daily New Hanover County Jail population was approaching 600. The Chief Public Defender Jennifer Harjo worked with Senior Superior Court Judge Allen Cobb and District Attorney Ben David to

ease inmate crowding in the County Jail by resolving cases quicker. Routinely inmates are seen by a Public Defender within 3 days of the appointment of the Public Defender to represent the indigent person charged with a crime.

Private attorneys remain on the indigent defendant appointment list to handle cases where the Public Defenders have conflicts of interest or to ease the workload in the Office.

Continued on page 2 Defender.



NEW HANOVER
COUNTY BAR
ASSOCIATION

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YLD-Samantha Stokes

Clerk continued.

continues even with the current downturn in the economy”, said Tucker. She explained, “There is an increase in business because more people are trying to collect money owed to them. More people are attending foreclosure hearings and are asking for more time. They are testifying as to the reasons they are unable to make their mortgage payments in-

creasing the length of hearings for the assistant clerks.”

According to Tucker, her staff continues to provide quality service to the public even with the workload and unfilled positions. “The deputy clerks are glad to have a job”, she said. The Office of the Clerk of Court can be reached by calling (910) 341-1111.

GETTING TO KNOW
CINDY LOCKLEAR

By Dolores Williams



Cynthia Cass Locklear, Secretary-Treasurer of the New Hanover County Bar Association, is a graduate of the University of Idaho Law School. She is a solo practitioner in Wilmington. Her legal areas of practice include family law and criminal defense.

Cindy was born in Miami, Florida and raised in Dallas, Texas. She is married to Kent Locklear. They have three children: Rachel age 11, Jacob age 9 and Caroline age 7.

Cindy tells us about herself with the

following:

Books on her nightstand: The Appeal and Eat, Pray, Love

Favorite song on iPod: “Out of Time” by the Rolling Stones

Hobbies: Running, tennis, boating, traveling

Top sports allegiance: Dallas Cowboys, UVA (per husband)

Favorite TV show: Dexter

Favorite local restaurant: Brasserie

Favorite in-state vacation spot: Boone

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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Defender continued.

In July 2009 the Office of the Public Defender received 637 appointments to represent indigent criminal defendants and kept 498 of these appointments. The remaining 139 appointments were assigned to private attorneys. In the same month the Chief and the other 8 Public Defenders resolved 558 cases. The difference in the number of appointments and the number of cases resolved is due to either appointments including more than one case and the weight assigned to multiple dispositions in a case for administrative purposes. For more information about the Public Defender, call (910) 251-7090.