



# WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY CLERK OF COURT

## NEWSLETTER

*Message from  
Honorable Sharon W. Stagers, Clerk of Court*

*Dear Citizens of Williamsburg County,*

*As 2014 comes to a close, I proudly reflect on the many accomplishments of your Clerk's Office. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I present our 2nd Annual Clerk of Court newsletter. My staff and I are continuing to work diligently to improve our services and our commitment to serving you with excellence. We are continuously exploring ways to improve our services through new and improved technology.*

*This year we have opened a new office; implemented scanning in Family Court; held an informative summit; disbursed thousands of dollars in unclaimed funds, along with many other accomplishments.*

*Throughout the year, I have continued to attend conferences and classes designed to give valuable information and great networking to improve my office. I currently serve on the SC Department of Social Services Integrated Child Support Services Division Committee, and as a board member for Vital Aging.*

*I encourage you to continue to read our newsletters, as they are intended to keep you abreast of the changes that have and will occur. I look forward to continuing to serve you in 2015 and to making more improvements and meeting challenges.*

*Sharon*



**January 2015**

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# REGISTER OF DEEDS DIVISION



I am looking forward to offering online records in the Register of Deeds office. Online records will offer you the ease of accessing information from your home, library or anywhere that has internet access.

This summer many of our records were moved back into the courthouse from storage. The moving of the records has made it more convenient for our abstractors and researchers to locate information. Summer interns were utilized to help with the transition of the records.



# GENERAL SESSIONS DIVISION

Letters were issued in July 2014 to prospective persons with unclaimed bond funds. As a result, thousands of dollars in unclaimed funds were issued to its rightful owners.

General Sessions court has been changed from a two week term to a one week term beginning January 2015.

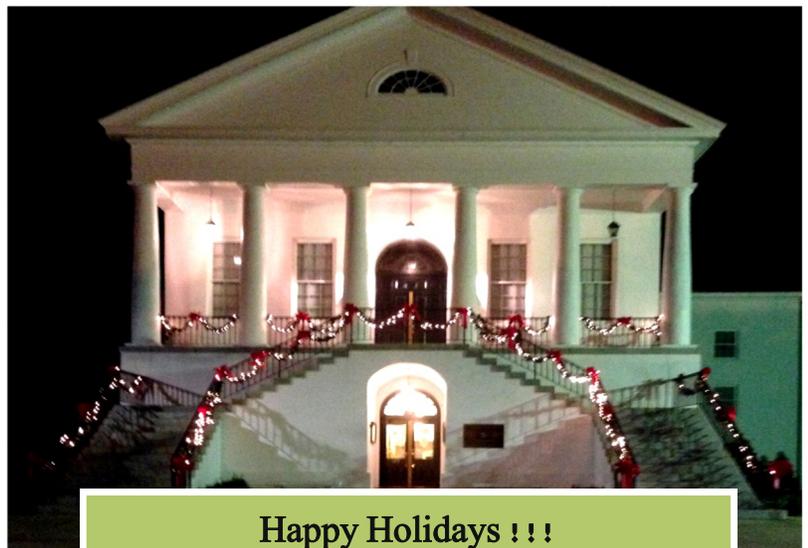
Judge R. Ferrell Cothran, Jr. will be the Chief Administrative Judge for General Sessions for 2015.

# COMMON PLEAS DIVISION

This year the number of Common Pleas cases continued to rise. The most common of these cases being foreclosures. Know that you have rights when you have been sued. It is important that you answer the lawsuit, and do not ignore it. Seek help from a lawyer. If you cannot afford an attorney, contact South Carolina Legal Services.

South Carolina Legal Services is a statewide law firm that provides civil legal services to protect the rights and represent the interests of low-income South Carolinians.

Judge R. Ferrell Cothran, Jr. will be the Chief Administrative Judge for Common Pleas for 2015.



Happy Holidays !!!

Williamsburg County Clerk of Court  
Office

# FAMILY COURT DIVISION

In 2014 the Family Court division has disbursed thousands of dollars in unclaimed funds. It is important that you continue to help us to help you by keeping your information current. Please continue to check our website to see if you may have unclaimed funds.



**Sign up for Direct Deposit!**

We are still encouraging custodial parents to have your child support or alimony payments deposited directly into your bank accounts. It's as simple as filling out the direct deposit form, submitting a photo I.D. and a voided check. Help cut down on lost or stolen checks.

Family Court is now scanning its documents in order to provide more services electronically. Scanning has made it easier to retrieve, print or email documents. All documents, with the exception of confidently marked documents, are being scanned.

**Pro Se Litigants (individuals who are representing themselves).** Please know that the Clerk of Courts office does not act as an attorney. When filing documents on your own, you must complete all steps. We cannot and do not give legal advice.

The Honorable George M. McFaddin, Jr. will be the Chief Administrative Judge for Family Court beginning January 4, 2015 and ending July 4, 2015.



## New Employee: Brandon Boyd

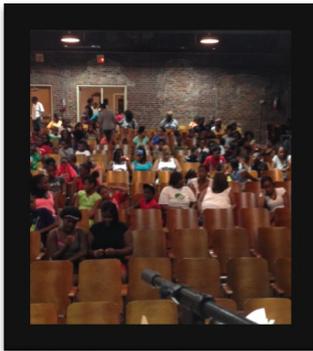
Brandon Boyd is a resident of Kingstree, SC. He is a 2013 graduate of Francis Marion University with a B.A. degree in Management Information Systems (MIS).

**Welcome aboard Brandon!**

# GIVING BACK

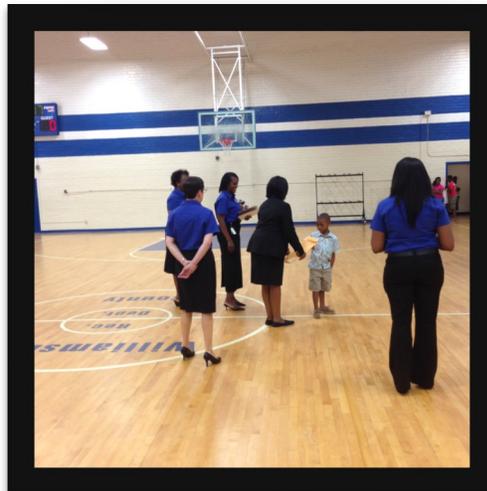


The Clerk of Court and staff hosted dinner for the Kingstree Jaguars Football team. My staff and I enjoyed giving back to our community. The team was grateful and appreciated a wonderful meal.



The 2nd Annual Back-To-School supply giveaway was held on August 14th and 15th, in Hemingway and Kingstree respectively. Students from 4k through college were served. More than 500 hundred bags of supplies were handed out, along with drawings for backpacks and scientific calculators.

A special thank you is extended to Hope Health for its donation of 200 pencil bags with school items inside. Once again, thank you to all who supported this cause.



# Court Trivia

How are federal judges chosen?

- ◇ by special elections
- ◇ by presidential appointments
- ◇ by congressional hearings

A principle ruling or law established during a court case is called what?

- ◇ Precedent
- ◇ primary ruling
- ◇ habeas corpus

Which court cannot be abolished?

- ◇ appeals court
- ◇ special court
- ◇ Supreme Court

About how many cases does the Supreme Court hear each year?

- ◇ 100 to 150
- ◇ 300 to 350
- ◇ 500 to 1,000

How many judges are on the Supreme Court?

- ◇ Six
- ◇ Eight
- ◇ nine

What action gave the Supreme Court considerably more power by enabling it to declare acts unconstitutional?

- ◇ Constitutionality
- ◇ judicial review
- ◇ due process

When the Supreme Court grants a request to hear a case, they issue what?

- ◇ voir dire
- ◇ habeas corpus
- ◇ writ of certiorari

What are the trial courts of the federal system called?

- ◇ District Courts
- ◇ Regional Courts
- ◇ Federal Trial Courts

Where do grand juries indict the accused?

- ◇ in criminal cases
- ◇ in District Courts
- ◇ in Judge Judy's court

What court would you attend to argue a traffic ticket?

- ◇ tennis court
- ◇ special jurisdiction court
- ◇ general jurisdiction court

Answer Key on back...

# WHAT DOES THE CLERK'S OFFICE DO?

From recording and maintaining court records with utmost care and security to issuing jury summons, the clerk is the invisible hand responsible for keeping the wheels turning smoothly for the public interfacing with the court system's judges, lawyers and other personnel who administer state and county law.

So what does the Williamsburg County Clerk of Court Office do? It manages the flow of information in and out of local government, maintains vital information, and invests and pays county obligations. The Williamsburg County Clerk of Court Office works with people to fulfill their needs at the county and state levels.

The Clerk's Office does not act as an attorney. The Clerk's Office does not give legal advice.

## IN THE KNOW



The Clerk's office opened a new office in Hemingway, SC at the Chavis One-Stop Complex. The ribbon cutting ceremony was held on May 29, 2014. The hours of operation are Tuesdays from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm and Thursdays from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm. Recording services are offered for the ROD, Common Pleas, General Sessions and Family Court. Payments for all offices can be made, and copies of documents can be received at this location.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Effective January 1, 2015, County Office Business Hours will be 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, Monday thru Friday for County Offices.

**CHAVIS ONE-STOP COMPLEX**  
**2811 SOUTH STATE HWY 41 / 51**  
**HEMINGWAY, SC 29554**  
**843-558-4145 EXT. 7110**



On November 15, 2014, the Clerk of Court and staff hosted Expungement Summit 2014. The summit was designed to give valuable information on how to clear your criminal record. Information was also given on housing and employment. The panel of presenters included: Solicitor Ernest Finney, III, Solicitor of the Third Judicial Circuit; Judge Clifton Newman, Circuit Judge At-Large; Jacob Wilson, Director of Probation & Parole; Barry Langrehr, WIA (Workforce Investment Act) Program; Michelle Gamble, NACA (Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America; Attorneys Doward Harvin, Amanda Shuler and Cezar McKnight; and Councilman Franklin Fulmore. The expungement summit was truly a success. Interested parties who could not attend are still contacting our office for packets and information. **Knowledge is power.**

# Answer Key

1. How are federal judges chosen?

- by presidential appointments

Federal judges are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. These judges generally hold the office for life -- until they die, retire or resign.

2. A principle ruling or law established during a court case is called what?

- precedent

Many federal court rulings become precedent and are generally accepted by other courts dealing with similar cases. When subsequent courts uphold the previous ruling, it is known as stare decisis or "let the decision stand."

3. Which court cannot be abolished?

- Supreme Court

Congress has the power to create and abolish any federal court except the Supreme Court -- the most powerful court in the United States

4. About how many cases does the Supreme Court hear each year?

- 100 to 150

Although the Supreme Court receives thousands of requests for cases each year, it only hears 100 to 150 of them. Most of the cases that reach the Supreme Court are on appeal from lower courts.

5. How many judges are on the Supreme Court?

- nine

The Judiciary Act of 1789 first established the Supreme Court with six judges. The number of justices on the Court has changed a few times since then, but has remained at nine judges since 1869.

WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY  
CLERK OF COURT  
125 WEST MAIN STREET  
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6. What action gave the Supreme Court considerably more power by enabling it to declare acts unconstitutional?

- judicial review

Chief Justice John Marshall established the concept of judicial review in the 1803 case of Marbury v. Madison. This decision declared that "a legislative act contrary to the Constitution is not law" and that it is "the duty of the judicial department to say what the law is."

7. When the Supreme Court grants a request to hear a case, they issue what?

- writ of certiorari

If an appellant loses his or her case in Appeals Court, he or she can petition for a writ of certiorari. The Supreme Court isn't required to hear the case, but usually will if multiple courts have interpreted the law differently or if the case presents an issue relating to an important legal principle or the interpretation of the Constitution.

8. What are the trial courts of the federal system called?

- District Courts

One step below the Court of Appeals is the District Court. These courts hear criminal cases concerning federal offenses and civil cases dealing with matters of federal law or disputes between citizens of different states.

9. Where do grand juries indict the accused?

- in District Courts

District Courts are the only federal courts where grand juries indict the accused and juries decide the cases.

10. What court would you attend to argue a traffic ticket?

- special jurisdiction court

Along with traffic-related cases, special jurisdiction courts also hear juvenile cases and lesser civil and criminal cases

The Clerk of Court's Office is excited to offer you a direct email, [clerkofcourt@wc.sc.gov](mailto:clerkofcourt@wc.sc.gov) to send your questions, ideas and suggestions for future articles.

**\*NOT PRODUCED AT TAX PAYER'S EXPENSE\***