

Hon. Gary Hicks, Hon. Mary B. Malveaux and Hon. Rondelle D. Herman
Courts of the County of Henrico

In its continued effort to promote the administration of justice in the Richmond area and to facilitate cooperation between the bench and the bar, the Bar's Administration of Justice Committee recently concluded its annual interviews with the Honorable Judges of the Courts of the County of Henrico. As in years past, the Judges were gracious with their time and spoke with candor to Committee members regarding the Court's work and the performance of the bar in their courtrooms.

The Honorable Gary Hicks, Chief Judge of the Henrico County Circuit Court

The Honorable Gary Hicks, the Chief Judge of the Henrico County Circuit Court provided the Richmond Bar with some insight and recommendations for attorneys' practicing in Henrico County Circuit Court. Judge Hicks is generally pleased with the caliber of the attorneys that appear before him in Henrico County Circuit Court. He states that for the most part they are well prepared and familiar with their practices. Judge Hicks encourages all attorneys to communicate in advance of hearings and to notify the Court of any agreements that may be reached. This will enable to Court to focus on the contested issues.

Judge Hicks reminds us that the Honorable Heidi S. Barshinger is the new Clerk of the Henrico County Circuit Court replacing the Honorable Yvonne G. Smith. Judge Hicks thanked Ms. Smith for her service and leadership and welcomes Ms. Barshinger to the position. Judge Hicks also welcomes the Honorable John Marshall to the Circuit Court bench. Judge Marshall is truly dedicated to Henrico County, having attending high school, college and law school within Henrico County.

Judge Hicks reminds counsel that with the Court's electronic files, it is often helpful to provide a courtesy copy of motions and briefs to judge's chambers in advance of a hearing on more complex matters. In addition, attorneys who are unfamiliar with the Court can get helpful information from the Court's website and the staff and judicial law clerks in the Judge's Chambers.

Attorneys who try cases in the Circuit Court are also reminded of the new technologies the Court has and are encouraged to use them when necessary. Counsel should plan to come in advance of trial to ensure compatibility of their computers with the court room equipment and should have a backup plan in the event an issue arises. Counsel may call Judge's Chambers for additional information on the available court room technology.

The Honorable Mary B. Malveaux, Chief Judge of the Henrico County General District Court

Judge Malveaux is generally pleased with the caliber of the attorneys that appear before her in Henrico County General District Court. She states that for the most part they are well prepared and familiar with the procedures and the rules of Court. Judge Malveaux believes the best way for young lawyers to learn their way around any courtroom is to ask questions of clerks,

bailiffs and other attorneys. She reminds all counsel to introduce themselves to the Court whenever they appear for the benefit of the judge, the clerk and the parties.

Judge Malveaux recommends that attorneys come to her courtroom prepared and encourages them to provide authority if they are appearing on an atypical case. Judge Malveaux stated that occasionally attorneys will be late to court and encouraged all counsel to be sure to notify the Court in the event they are running late so their case may be placed at the end of the docket.

The Honorable Rondelle D. Herman, Chief Judge of the Henrico County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

The Henrico Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court is pleased to welcome Shanda Renee Ellis as the new Clerk of Court. Mrs. Ellis brings over 6 combined experience with both precourt and post court services. She worked for several years as Post Court Deputy Clerk before moving to probation where she served the families of Henrico County for seven years. She is already making an impact since starting October 26, 2015 by having weekly meetings with staff and implementing a team approach to covering the service windows. The hope is to provide prompt and efficient service to those citizens filing cases and paying fines as well as provide effective and accurate service to the attorneys and court professionals who are working on behalf of their clients.

Judge Herman observes that Henrico is very fortunate to have such excellent attorneys. The subject matter of the cases in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court can be very difficult and the judges are appreciative of all of those who appear before the court. Judge Herman would like to remind attorneys to be mindful of their calendars and try not to set too many cases at one time or too close together in separate courts such that the judges are forced to wait on a regular basis. If you are going to be late for court, please remember to call the phone designated for attorneys (804) 513-4384. The attorneys may also utilize the attorney cards located in the lobby which should be handed to the courtroom deputy. The cards will notify the court that the attorney is present in an effort to have the case called.

Judge Herman would also like to encourage attorneys to use the Miscellaneous Motion form for any questions or concerns regarding pending cases in lieu of approaching judges directly in Court on days that the attorney's case is not scheduled. It is difficult for judges to answer questions during their regular docket and the Miscellaneous Motion provides documentation for the file.

Judge Herman indicates that the procedure for emailing new court appointments on adult criminal cases seems to be working well. However, she would like to remind attorneys to respond to the new appointment emails from clerks within 48 hours so that the clerk will know whether or not it is necessary to appoint another attorney. The response to the email should simply state whether or not the attorney is available to take the case. If the attorney does not respond within 48 hours, it is highly likely that another attorney will be appointed.

Finally, Judge Herman states that it is important to all of the judges to continue the strong working relationship between the bench, bar, clerks and court services. In order to continue to foster those relationships the Court will continue the bench bar luncheons. Judge Herman

encourages attorneys to use the suggestion box located in the attorney workroom and to use the “Service Problem/Commendation Sheet” which may be obtained from the Clerk’s window. Should any attorney wish to meet with Judge Herman to discuss any issues and suggestions, please call the judge’s secretary to schedule an appointment.