



The Docket

December 2020

Association of Clerks of the District Courts of Virginia

Clerks Association Updates

Clerks Association Leadership

Officers

President	Rick Kahl
President-Elect	Laura Griffin
Past President	Terri Rea
Vice President	Kimberly McKittrick
Secretary/Treas.	Amy Burnham

Regional Representatives

Region 1	Courtney Payne
Region 2	Vacancy
Region 3	Mariah Belcher
Region 4	Laura Hatch
Region 5	Melissa Gil
Region 6	Shanna Henry
Region 7	Stephanie Crisman
Region 8	Ginger Webb
Region 9	Nikki King
Region 10	Kathy Vance

Dear District Court Staff:

This edition of *The Docket* will be abridged to bring you some important news from around the state and other important updates. Due to the pandemic, this issue has been delayed *twice*, and for that we apologize. While this issue is abbreviated, we do have some important information to share:

2021 Clerks Association Conference

Due to the pandemic, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2021 Clerks Association Conference.

New Association Secretary/Treasurer

Due to the retirement of Debra Hill (see feature, next page), Amy Burnham has been elected as our next Secretary/Treasurer. Our bylaws allow the Secretary/Treasurer to be assisted by another member. Terri Rea has been voted in by the Executive Council as Amy's assistant.

Region 2 Vacancy

The Clerks Association has a Region 2 Representative vacancy. Region 2 is comprised of Districts 7, 8, and 9. If you are interested in serving as the Region 2 Representative, please contact Terri Rea, our Nominating Committee Chair.

New Positions

At the request of Karl Hade, the Clerks Association Executive Council submitted on a proposal to allocate the new positions reauthorized during the 2020 Special Session. Unfortunately, 120 FTE does not provide enough new positions to staff every understaffed court at least 80%; however, using criteria based on caseload and population trends, size of court, and number of judges, the Association made recommendations to the Office of the Executive Secretary regarding new position alignment that makes the best use of the new staff allotment.

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Debra Hill, Clerk of Norfolk J&DR District Court retires

"I believe that after 47 years, I will take time to relax, travel, and maybe learn something new. At this time, I am uncertain what that will be. There must be life after court administration, right?"

-Debra Hill



Effective February 1, 2021, Debra Hill will retire as the Norfolk J&DR District Court Clerk. Debra has served Norfolk J&DR for 24 illustrious years. Most recently, Debra oversaw a successful multi-million dollar courthouse renovation project. Prior to her tenure as Norfolk J&DR's Clerk, Debra worked in the Norfolk Circuit Court for 23 years, where she held the position of Deputy Clerk and Chief Deputy Clerk. Debra has faithfully served as the Clerks Association's Secretary/Treasurer for the past 16 years.

When asked about her illustrious

Campbell GDC – Clerk Chantel Jones would like to recognize the following service anniversaries: **Kim Neighbors** – 16 years on October 25, 2020; **Jenna Hill** – 6 years on November 25, 2020; and, **James Robinson** – 1 year on September 25, 2020. Congratulations!

Chesterfield JDR – Clerk Laura Griffin would like to welcome **Janine Sodano** to the Court. Janine joins us after a long career with the Virginia Department of Forensic Science. Welcome, Janine! Also, congratulations to deputy clerk, **Catie Craig Dickinson** (daughter of Petersburg Clerk **Laura Craig**), on her October 24th wedding to Andrew Dickinson. Congratulations, Catie! Finally, Laura would like to recognize the following 2020 service milestones for Chesterfield JDR: **Barbara Warren**, 20 years; **Laura Griffin**, 15 years; and, **Carrie Warr**, 10 years.

Falls Church CMB – Clerk Dean Sprague announces the return of the Falls Church CMB Court to Falls Church City Hall, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22046, after a multi-year renovation project. In the interim, Arlington GDC was home for the Falls Church staff. Dean acknowledged, “Falls Church appreciates the hospitality provided by all Arlington entities; however, it is good to be home.”

Fredericksburg GDC – Clerk Laura Hatch would like to recognize the following service milestones: **Stephanie Lussier** – 37 years; **Laura Hatch** – 18 years; **Heather Lellock** – 16 years; **Charlene Caple** – 5 years; **Pamela Lima** – 4 years; **Cori Hailey** – 2 years; **Laurie Heflin** – 2 years; **Jacquelyn Harris** – 1 year; **Claudia Landry** – 1 year; and, **Danielle Paradis** – 1 year. Congratulations! And, welcome to the team **Elizabeth Johnson**, who transferred from Prince William GDC! Next, congratulations to **Laurie Heflin** on the birth of her baby boy, Landon, born February 25, 2020 - 8 lbs. 9 oz.! Finally, Laura penned a special thank you to her staff:

During this historic year of 2020, we have been challenged with a pandemic, months of protests surrounding the courthouse, multiple staff out for short term disability, the devastating loss of one of our own staff members, 50% of staff with children in virtual school and simply surviving the day by day with frequent unknowns. With all of this, my staff has been absolutely phenomenal. The versatility, flexibility and can-do positive attitude has not only kept courthouse

operations going but also kept us successful and working more succinctly as a team.

In March our office separated into two teams (one working remotely in the field and one in the office). This two team approach was necessary to keep our courthouse operational should one group become sick, the next group could step in. This was certainly challenging and took creative thinking, communication, commitment and a huge amount of planning and teamwork.

Our talented management team tirelessly plans, problem solves and strives to keep on top of the new challenges this year keeps dishing out. Your knowledge, commitment to your team, community and steadfast work ethic are an inspiration and model to your colleagues.

I could not be more proud of all that we have accomplished together and for each and every one of you.

Remember this year especially, nothing lasts forever and far better times lay ahead!

Hampton GDC – Clerk Barbara Fagley would like to congratulate **Ann Spicer** on her retirement September 30, 2020, after 34 years of service! Also, welcome to their newest employees, **Shirley Shivers** and **Ashley Brown**! Finally, congratulations to **Jessica McCrea**, who welcomed her first child, a baby girl, on October 10, 2020! Congratulations, everyone!

Hanover GDC – Clerk Cheryl DeVaughn would like to welcome **Danielle Radle** and **Jessica Davenport** to the Office. Welcome, ladies!

Henrico JDR - Clerk Shannon Meadowcroft would like to welcome the following new employees: **Tiffany Harris**, **Monique Miller**, **Zaria Brooks**, and **LaShonda Howie**. Additionally, the Court celebrated the retirement of **Judge Denis F. Soden** on January 31, 2020, and welcomed newly appointed Judge **Linda Y. Lambert** on May 1, 2020. Welcome, and congratulations, Judges Soden and Lambert!

King William/King & Queen GDC – Clerk Jill Hall would like to recognize and congratulate **Deborah Fogg**, who retired June 1, 2002, with 28 years of service. Congratulations, Deborah! Additionally, Jill

welcomes **Brooke Reed** to the office. Welcome, Brooke!

Loudoun GDC – Clerk Tammy Dinterman would like to welcome the following new deputy clerks to Loudoun GDC: **Lyndon Gonzalez**, **Malika Coffey**, **Kimberly Lynch**, and **Brenna Longenecker**; additionally, welcome to **Xiochotl Alvarez**, new wage employee. Also, congratulations are in order for **Tammy**, who became “Mimi” for the second time to Presley Dinterman, born in June 2020. Congratulations, Tammy!

Louisa JDR – Clerk Toni Seay would like to congratulate and recognize **Christina Fincham**, who is celebrating her 5th year with their Court on September 10, 2020. Congratulations, Christina!

Lynchburg GDC – Clerk Amy Leftwich shared some sad news. Their office mourns the death of **Karyn Viar**, who passed away September 16, 2020, after a short battle with cancer. Karyn served 38 years in their office, most recently as a courtroom clerk in the traffic/criminal division. She will be greatly missed. The Clerks Association sends condolences to the Lynchburg GDC team.

Amy would also like to welcome two new employees who will start on November 25, 2020: **Bradley Click**, who joins GDC from Lynchburg JDR, and **Susan Eastman**, who joins their staff from a local attorney’s office. Welcome Bradley & Susan! Amy and staff are so glad to have you join their team!

Norfolk JDR – Supervising Deputy Clerk, Joan Butt, would like to extend best wishes to **Debra Hill**, Clerk of Court since 1996, who is retiring February 1, 2021. Prior to joining Norfolk JDR, Debra also had 23 years of service to the Norfolk Circuit Court (see special feature on Debra on pages 1 and 4). Joan also wishes to recognize and congratulate **Kathi Middleton**, Deputy Clerk in the post-court division, who retired September 1, 2020, after 17 years of service. Congratulations Debra and Kathi! Norfolk JDR would also like to welcome the following new employees: **Mariah Malgee** and **Gerald Stokes, II** (who joined their office on June 10, 2020); **Skye Seutter** (September 10, 2020); and, **Hayden Coppridge** (who transferred from Petersburg JDR on September 25, 2020). Welcome, folks!

Petersburg JDR – Clerk Laura Craig would like to congratulate Supervising Deputy Clerk, **Latisha**

Neal on her 5 years of dedicated service. Laura would also like to welcome **Frances Jimenez** to the JDR Court.

Southampton CMB – Clerk Belinda Jones extends hearty congratulations to her former employee, **Beth Cobb**, in becoming the Clerk of the City of Franklin Combined Court. Belinda would also like to congratulate **Shana Council** on her promotion to a grade 8 deputy clerk and **Kelsey Foreman** on her new daughter, Hattie Claire. Congratulations, ladies!

Spotsylvania JDR – Clerk Susan Klingensmith would like to recognize the following service anniversaries: **Susan Klingensmith**, Clerk, 18 years; **Amy Mitchell**, Supervising Deputy Clerk, 12 years; **Ann Dodson**, Deputy Clerk, 17 years; and, **Sherita Young**, Deputy Clerk, 7 years. Great work, ladies!

Tazewell JDR – New Clerk **J. Karen Allison** (appointed October 10, 2020, 22 years of service), would like to congratulate former Clerk, **Connie Roberts**, who retired October 1, 2020, with over 30 years of service to the Commonwealth. Additionally, congratulations are in order to **Connie Asbury**, Deputy Clerk, who retired with over 20 years of service to the Commonwealth. Both ladies are enjoying their retirement by traveling and doing leisurely activities that they love. Finally, congratulations to **Lisa Hess**, who has been hired as back-up bookkeeper, with 8 years of experience.

Waynesboro JDR – Clerk **Callie Bailey** celebrates 10 years with the judicial branch this November! Congratulations, Callie!



“Don’t worry about the virus. Of course, you may approach the bench.”

Debra Hill retires, continued

career, Debra stated, “I think when I was hired at Circuit Court, they did so because of my neat handwriting in all those huge books that were part of the court's records. When I first became Clerk of Norfolk J&DR District Court, we had only typewriters and dummy terminals in the office. One of my first challenges was to obtain computers for everyone, and as time went on, I volunteered for every pilot project that OES would throw at me. My team always met any hurdles and accepted my belief that we should drive the bus rather than be run over by it. My passion for the judicial system is as strong now as it was in 1973 when I began at the Norfolk Circuit Court.

Over the years I have forged so many wonderful relationships with other Clerks across the state and learned from all of them. That is one of the main reasons I joined the Executive Council of the Association of the District Court Clerks of Virginia. I have benefitted from everyone's experiences and knowledge. It has been such a collegial and collaborative journey as we addressed the needs for more staff and higher salaries. I am honored to be a small part in moving the profession forward and improving the working conditions for our employees. We are not where I hoped we would be as I plan my retirement, but with the leadership of the Council we *will be there one day*.

I believe that after 47 years, I will take time to relax, travel and maybe learn something new. At this time, I am uncertain what that will be. There must be life after court administration, right?

Folks have been coming into my office and thanking me for mentoring them and I always tell them, ‘I have received much more than I ever gave.’ From the members of our Bench, the many attorneys who served our court, our agencies who we depend on, to my original hires (many of whom are still here - including the very first three that I hired as Clerk), and my current court family, I have been truly blessed to share this crazy ride and extremely grateful for the opportunities that I have had.

This work is not for everyone, but if you give it time, you may find that it's your life's work. My passion has not diminished over time; instead, it has only grown.

To my fellow Council members: continue your initiative to make the District Courts a better place to work as we serve the children and families in our

communities. I will always fondly remember all of you.”

Debra will be extremely missed. All of us owe her a debt of gratitude for her trailblazing efforts over her long and successful career. Because of her willingness to pilot so many OES initiatives, we have the great systems and programs we have today.

There is not one of us who hasn't called Debra to ask advice over the years. She has been a wonderful mentor to many new Clerks around the Commonwealth. Debra will leave behind a legacy of leadership to all of Virginia's district courts.

The Clerks Association will especially miss Debra's leadership, experience, and the dignity she brought to the position of Secretary/Treasurer. She faithfully discharged her duties and made all of us proud to know her. In addition to Debra's court administration knowledge and experience, Debra also brought the most wicked sense of humor to every Association gathering. We will miss laughing with you, Debra! Congratulations, and best wishes for a wonderful, restful retirement! You have earned it!

According to Debra, the small sign above them reads, “you do not need to be crazy to work here, we'll train you.”



Pictured left to right: Sara Artis, Joan Butt, Norma Link, Debra Hill, and Sabrina Baucom (Norfolk J&DR District Court's current leadership team)



Serving Virginia's District Courts since 1962.

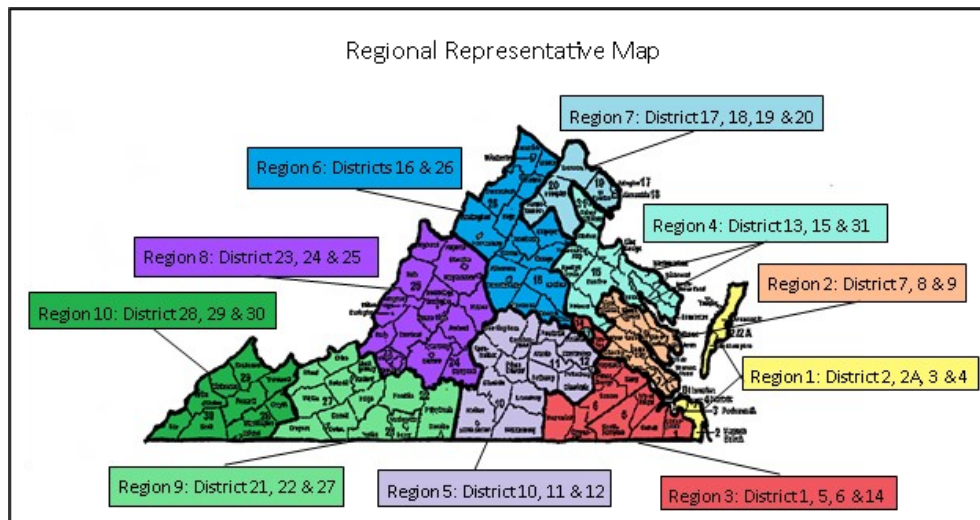
Committee Chairs

Budget & Finance	Amy Burnham & Terri Rea
CATS Manual	Barbara Shaw
Historian	Stephanie Swift
Legislative	Barbara Shaw & Ginger Webb
Membership	Laura Griffin
Mentorship	Terri Rea
Nominating	Terri Rea
Parliamentarian	Christina Davis
Programs	Lindsey Short & Lauren Jones
Publications	Laura Griffin
Resolutions	Dean Sprague
Special Issues	Amy Burnham & Terri Rea
Technology	Laura Griffin
Ways & Means	Lauren Jones

Clerks Association Mission

- ◆ *To foster a closer relationship among the district courts of Virginia*
- ◆ *To improve proficiency and professionalism of court personnel*
- ◆ *To promote uniformity of procedure*
- ◆ *To recommend improved techniques and procedures to more efficiently perform the duties of the Clerk's Office*
- ◆ *To provide educational and training opportunities for all district court employees*
- ◆ *To foster cooperation and understanding between court personnel, judges, the legal community, and others involved with or interested in courts*

Please visit our webpage at www.vadistrictclerks.com



For News and Current Events, please see our website. If you have interest in joining any of our committees, please contact your Regional Representative! Our organization is entirely volunteer-led and requires the participation of any district court employee! Please consider lending your time to your Association!

