

**SPEAKER**  
**BIOGRAPHIES**  
FOR  
PROFESSIONALISM AFTER THE  
STATEWIDE JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

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## **Chief Justice David E. Nahmias**

**CHAIR, CHIEF JUSTICE’S COMMISSION ON  
PROFESSIONALISM AND CLOSING SPEAKER**

Chief Justice David E. Nahmias was appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia in August 2009 by Governor Sonny Perdue. In November 2010, after a statewide campaign against two opponents, Chief Justice Nahmias was elected to a full six-year term on the Court. In 2016, he was re-elected to another six-year term without opposition. The son of immigrants from Egypt and Germany, Chief Justice Nahmias was born in Atlanta on September 11, 1964. He attended Briarcliff High School in DeKalb County and was the state’s STAR student in 1982.

He attended Duke University, where he graduated second in his class and summa cum laude, and Harvard Law School, where he graduated magna cum laude and was a classmate of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and an editor of the Harvard Law Review along with former President Barack Obama. Chief Justice Nahmias then served as a law clerk for Judge Laurence H. Silberman of the U.S. Circuit Court for the District of Columbia and for Justice Antonin Scalia of the U.S. Supreme Court. After practicing with a large law firm in Washington, D.C., in 1995 Chief Justice Nahmias joined the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Atlanta. As a federal prosecutor, he worked extensively on the investigation of the Centennial Olympic Park and subsequent bombings committed by Eric Robert Rudolph. He also worked on a number of major fraud and public corruption cases, including the successful prosecutions of a Georgia state senator and numerous City of Atlanta and Fulton County public officials and contractors.

Shortly after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Chief Justice Nahmias returned to Washington and became one of the Justice Department’s leading terrorism prosecutors, coordinating the investigation and prosecution of terrorist activity across the country and internationally and assisting in counter-terrorism policymaking. After being promoted to Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Chief Justice Nahmias supervised the Fraud Section, the Appellate Section, and the Capital Case Unit, in addition to the Counterterrorism Section. On December 1, 2004, after being nominated by President George W. Bush and unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Chief Justice Nahmias returned home as the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia – the chief federal law enforcement officer for the judicial district encompassing 46 counties in Northwest Georgia, including metro Atlanta. He served as U.S. Attorney for almost five years before his appointment to the bench, overseeing many major cases including the successful prosecutions of former Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, the three Atlanta Police narcotics officers who conspired to violate civil rights by falsifying search warrants, resulting in the police shooting death of 92-year old Kathryn Johnston, and the first Georgians convicted of providing material support to international terrorism. Chief Justice Nahmias has received numerous local, state, and national awards and honors for his public service. He has served on several committees and boards related to improving the legal system and the community. His wife, Catherine O’Neil, was a partner at King & Spalding and also a former federal prosecutor and senior Justice Department official. She passed away in 2017. Chief Justice Nahmias has two teenage sons.



**Elizabeth Fite**  
**PROGRAM CHAIR**

Elizabeth L. Fite of Rogers & Fite, LLC is a trial lawyer whose law practice is focused on civil litigation related to wrongful death and catastrophic injuries, tractor-trailer collisions, automobile collisions, negligent security claims, hazing claims and sexual assault. She previously served as a senior assistant county attorney for DeKalb County and, prior to that, practiced complex products liability litigation at a large law firm in Atlanta. Fite currently serves as the 59th President of the State Bar of Georgia. Fite graduated from Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, with a degree in mathematics and earned her law degree from Emory University School of Law.



**Judge T. Russell McClelland III**  
**PROGRAM CHAIR**

Judge McClelland is the Chief Judge of the State Court of Forsyth County. He has served as a Judge of the State Court since December 2003, and as Chief Judge since January 2013. Judge McClelland was born and raised in Savannah, Georgia. He graduated from Armstrong State College (now part of Georgia Southern University) in 1979 with a B.S. in Political Science and obtained his law degree from the University of Georgia in 1982. Judge McClelland began practicing law in Forsyth County in 1984 as Assistant District Attorney, and later served as Chief

Assistant District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit. In 1992, he opened his own law practice, then eventually co-founded the law firm of Dreger & McClelland. Judge McClelland is a Past President Council of State Court Judges and served on the Judicial Council for the past two years. He also is a member of the Judicial Council COVID-19 Task Force where he serves as the Chair of the Civil Subcommittee. Judge McClelland also was an inaugural member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Accountability Court Judges and has presided over the Forsyth County DUI County DUI since it began operation in 2006. He also currently serves as a member of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism as the representative for the Council of State Court Judges. He has been a long-time active member of many community organizations, including the Cumming-Forsyth County Optimist Club, Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Forsyth. The Judge and his family are actively involved at The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, where he currently serves on the Vestry. Judge McClelland is also an active adult leader with Sea Scout Ship 2222 and Venture Crew 39 in Cumming. Judge McClelland and his wife, Janice, have been married for 31 years. They have one son, Matthew, who in May of this year graduated from the United States Naval Academy and was commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy.



**Rebecca Holmes Liles Grist**  
**MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES**

Rebecca Holmes Liles Grist is the Solicitor-General for Macon-Bibb County. Ms. Grist, a lifelong resident of Macon, was first elected as Solicitor-General in 2013 after working 16 years as an Assistant Solicitor specializing in Domestic Violence Prosecution. She also helped the United States Attorney's Office shut down massage parlors and bring sex trafficking crimes by prosecuting the predicate acts of solicitation and prostitution. She started her career in the District Attorney's Office with Child Support Enforcement. In 2018, Ms. Grist was named Georgia's 2018 Solicitor-General of the Year by Georgia Association of Solicitors-General. She has led the Association's Legislative Committee and has previously served as its President. She serves on the Prosecuting Attorneys Counsel. She serves as CLE Committee Chair for the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism and is a member of the Board of Governors for the State Bar of Georgia. She served on the Probation Subcommittee of Governor Deal's Criminal Justice Reform Commission. Mrs. Grist is very involved in the community, having served as Chair of the Board of Crisis Line and Safe House, President of the Junior League of Macon, Senior Warden of her church, and on the Board of Directors for the Macon Rotary Club and Salvation Army of Central Georgia. Ms. Grist is a graduate of both Mercer University's Walter F. George School of Law and the College of Charleston.



### **Judge JaDawnya C. Baker**

Judge JaDawnya C. Baker was appointed to the Atlanta Municipal Court by Mayor Kasim Reed on March 20, 2015. Prior to her appointment, Judge Baker served in the Office of the Fulton County District Attorney as a Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney. Before joining the District Attorney's Office, Judge Baker was a solo practitioner in a boutique solo practice, The Butler Law Group, L.L.C. Judge Baker is a proud graduate of Spelman College where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and History in 2001 and graduated with honors. Judge Baker received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida, Levin College of Law in 2004. She earned the highest grades in several of her classes and spoke at her law school graduation. She is the recipient of The University of Florida's Black Law Students Association's 2006 "Outstanding Alumni" Award. She is also a 2008 graduate of the State Bar of Georgia's Young Lawyers Division's Leadership Academy.

Judge Baker served as President of the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys ("GABWA") in 2012. She is the founder of GABWA's national award-winning Judicial & Public Office Academy and Trial Masters Boot Camp. Judge Baker was recognized as one of "Atlanta's Top 100 Black Women of Influence" in 2012 and 2014 by the Atlanta Business League. She served as a guest legal analyst from 2012- 2015 on HLN for the following television shows: "On the Case," "Evening Express," and "HLN After Dark."

Judge Baker was featured as the cover story for the *Daily Report's* 2012 annual attorneys "On the Rise" edition, awarded the 2012 Special Commendation Award by the African Leadership Magazine and named one of Atlanta's "Top 100 Law Leaders" by the Atlanta Business Chronicle. In 2012, she was also awarded "Community Prosecutor of the Year" by the Fulton County District Attorney, Mr. Paul L. Howard, Jr.

Judge Baker was appointed to the State Bar of Georgia's Board of Governors in 2013 and has since been elected three times to continue her service. In 2013, she was honored by the National Bar Association as one of the "Nation's Best Advocates: 40 lawyers under 40." That same year, Judge Baker also became an inaugural honoree of the Lawyers of Color's "Hot List" which recognizes 100 lawyers under 40 who excel in the legal community.

She was most recently elected to serve as President-Elect (2021) for the Council of Municipal Court Judges of Georgia.



### **Judge Walter Davis**

Judge Walter Davis is the inaugural judge for the newly-created Georgia State-wide Business Court. Walt was appointed by Governor Brian P. Kemp in July 2019, and unanimously confirmed in a Joint Session of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees of the Georgia General Assembly in August 2019. Walt officially began his term on January 1, 2020. Prior to his appointment, Walt led the Securities and SEC Enforcement practice in the Atlanta office of Jones Day, where his practice focused on complex business litigation, corporate governance matters, and internal and governmental investigations. Prior to joining Jones Day, Walt served as law clerk to The Honorable Beverly B. Martin of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.



**Judge Lori B. Duff**

Lori B. Duff is the President of the Council of Municipal Court Judges of Georgia and the Vice President of the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. She is the Judge Pro Tempore for the City of Monroe and the managing partner of Jones & Duff, LLC.



### **Elissa Haynes**

Elissa Haynes is a Partner and Chair of the Appellate Practice Group at Drew Eckl & Farnham where she specializes in both trial and appellate practice. Elissa’s trial practice is focused primarily on defending claims involving negligent security, premises liability, personal/catastrophic injuries, wrongful death, and religious institution liability. She has served as both lead and solo counsel in jury trials throughout the state, many of which have ended in defense verdicts. Her background as a former plaintiff’s personal injury attorney provides her with a unique perspective and leverage to successfully resolve even the most complex cases.

As for her appellate practice, Elissa has argued before the Georgia Supreme Court and Georgia Court of Appeals and was part of the first group of attorneys to argue at the Georgia Supreme Court remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Elissa routinely consults on appellate matters and often begins her involvement at the trial court level to perfect the record and maximize chances of an advantageous result in any subsequent appeal. She also serves as Chair of the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association’s Amicus Curiae Committee where she is tasked with reviewing amicus requests from GDLA members as well as authoring and submitting briefs on issues that pose particular significance to the defense bar.

In addition to chairing the Appellate Practice Group, Elissa also serves as Chair of the firm’s Retail and Hospitality Team. Outside of the firm, Elissa serves as President of the State Bar of Georgia’s Young Lawyers Division (“YLD”). She is also a graduate of the 2016 YLD Leadership Academy and previously served as Chair of the YLD Appellate Admissions and Legislative Affairs Committees. Additionally, Elissa has been recognized as a Georgia Super Lawyer Rising Star for 2019, 2020, and 2021, an award given to only 2.5% of attorneys under the age of 40. Elissa received her J.D. from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law and her B.A. from the University of Georgia where she graduated cum laude. In law school, Elissa was an active member of the Moot Court Program, winning first place and the award for “Best Oral Argument” at the Tulane Sports Law Competition and later serving on the Executive Moot Court Board. Elissa was born and raised in Marietta, Georgia and currently resides in Chamblee.



### **Judge Render M. Heard**

Judge Render M. Heard, Jr. has served as the Judge of the Juvenile Courts of the Tifton Judicial Circuit since 2012. After receiving his J.D. from Mercer University's Walter F. George School of Law in 1997, Judge Heard moved to Tifton, Georgia and began a private practice where he had the opportunity to serve in a variety of capacities in child welfare law including representing parents and children, serving as a guardian ad litem, serving as a mediator, and ultimately serving as a Special Assistant Attorney

General representing the Department of Family and Children Services. Judge Heard currently serves as President-elect of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges and as a member of the Judicial Council of Georgia. He is also currently serving as a member of the State's Child Advocate Advisory Committee; the State Council for the Interstate Commission for Juveniles; and the Supreme Court's Committee on Justice for Children. Since 2010, Judge Heard has served as a member on the State Bar's Board of Governors, serving on a variety of committees during that time. Currently, he serves as Co-Chairman of the SOLACE committee, and as a member of the Member Benefits and Children and Courts Committees. He is a lifetime Fellow of the Lawyer's Foundation of Georgia, and previously served on the Board of Directors of the Young Lawyer's Division of the State Bar of Georgia from 2000-2004. He is also a member and past president of the Tifton Bar Association. Judge Heard is married to his wife of more than 20 years, Stacey, and they have three children, Grant, Alexandria, and Gabriella, each of whom is an alumnus or current student at the University of Georgia.



### **Hannibal F. Heredia**

Hannibal F. Heredia has practiced family law almost exclusively since 1994. He received his JD from Southwestern University, cum laude, in 1993, was the Editor in Chief of the Southwestern University Law Review, and received his undergraduate degree from Auburn University. In 2006, he founded the firm of Hedgepeth & Heredia, now Hedgepeth Heredia LLC, where he serves as managing partner. Since 2016, he has been named one of the Top 100 lawyers in Georgia by Atlanta Magazine. Hannibal is a member of the Executive Committee of the State Bar of Georgia Family Law Section. From 2018 through 2021 he served as the section's Legislative Liaison. He is also on the board of the

Atlanta Bar Foundation, which is the charitable arm of the Atlanta Bar Association. Hannibal also volunteers his time for the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation serving both as legal representative for victims of domestic violence, as well as a Guardian Ad Litem. He volunteers extensively in his community including with the national Volunteer Tax Assistance Program. He has been appointed by the Supreme Court of Georgia to serve as a Mentor in the Transition into Law Program of the State Bar of Georgia, assisting beginning lawyers as they start their legal careers.



## **Francys Johnson**

Francys Johnson is a Founding Partner of Davis Bozeman Johnson Law. Born and raised on his grandparent's farm in Sylvania, Georgia, Francys Johnson learned the value of hard work, responsibility, and service to others. Francys Johnson has a strong record of advocacy aimed at expanding opportunities for all people as a practicing lawyer, public theologian, and educator. Committed Servant-Leader Francys Johnson has served in ordained ministry for more than 20 years. He is Senior Minister at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Pembroke and the Magnolia Baptist Church in Statesboro. He has been making a positive difference for a long time through public service to several community-based organizations focused on helping people help themselves. Johnson succeeded Stacey Abrams and Raphael Warnock as head of the New Georgia Project, a transformational civic engagement organization responsible for defeating voter suppression and advancing progressive values in public policy. Previously, Johnson was President of the Georgia NAACP, this state's oldest and largest civil rights organization, following more than two decades of service in a variety of capacities including Southeast Regional Director. There he was the chief manager of the NAACP's public policy agenda and administrative activities in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Recently, Johnson was the 2018 Democratic Nominee for Georgia's 12th Congressional District. Seasoned Professional As a zealous trial lawyer; Francys Johnson practices criminal and civil law in the state and federal courts. He has secured justice on behalf of the wrongfully accused and seriously injured. He is a Member at Large of the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia and the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. A graduate of Georgia Southern University and The University of Georgia School of Law, Johnson previously served on the Political Science and Criminal Justice faculties at Georgia Southern University and Savannah State University teaching courses on Criminal Law; Constitutional Law; Race and the law; and the Civil Rights Movement. Today, he is a recognized thought-leader on voting rights having testified before Congress; lecturing across the country and writing other subjects including race, measuring equity, and understanding of power in public policy. Family Matters Francys Johnson is married to Dr. Meca Williams-Johnson, an educational psychologist, and professor at Georgia Southern University. They have three sons, Thurgood Marshall Joshua, Langston Hughes Elijah, and the late Frederick Douglass Caleb. Francys lives by the command of Micah 6:8 to love mercy, do justice and walk humbly.



### **Judge Quinn McGill Kasper**

Judge Quinn McGill Kasper earned her B.A. in Criminology in 2007 from Auburn University and her J.D in 2010 from Thomas Goode Jones School of Law at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama. Judge Kasper was appointed as a Magistrate Judge in Cobb County in March 2017. Judge Kasper is currently the President of the Council of Magistrate Court Judges and is serving her second term as a member of the Judicial Council Of Georgia. Judge Kasper started practicing law in 2010 and has practiced in the areas of civil litigation, creditors rights, probate and is a licensed mediator.



**Tracy Mason**

Tracy Mason serves as Senior Assistant Director at the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) of Georgia. In this role, Tracy directs a range of support for the Judicial Council of Georgia, including the Judicial Council’s legislative efforts, and serves as a primary point of contact with the executive and legislative branches, and the appellate and trial courts. Tracy holds a Master of Public Policy from Georgia State University’s Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and a Bachelor of Arts

from GSU. She also earned the Certified Public Manager credential from the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government in 2020. Tracy resides in Suwanee with her husband, Adam, and two German Shepherds.



## Matthew G. Moffett

Matt Moffett secures the best possible results for his corporate and insurance clients, and is recognized annually by his peers as one of the Top 100 lawyers in Georgia. Over the last few years Matt has secured defense verdicts in five wrongful death cases where each adverse attorney asked the jury to award a 7 or 8 figure verdict. In another spinal cord injury case where the adverse attorney demanded an 8-figure settlement, Matt brokered a 5-figure settlement during the first day of trial. He also secured a defense verdict in a sexual assault case involving a minor on the property of a religious institution, where the adverse attorney asked the jury for a 7-figure verdict. These cases represent just some of Matt's more than 100 successful trials. Matt is a past president of the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association, and he is an instructor at the annual GDLA Trial Academy. He regularly is invited to speak to defense lawyer organizations across the country on trial strategy, and also presents for the Defense Research Institute, State Bar of Georgia and Claims and Litigation Management Alliance.



**Judge J. Wade Padgett**

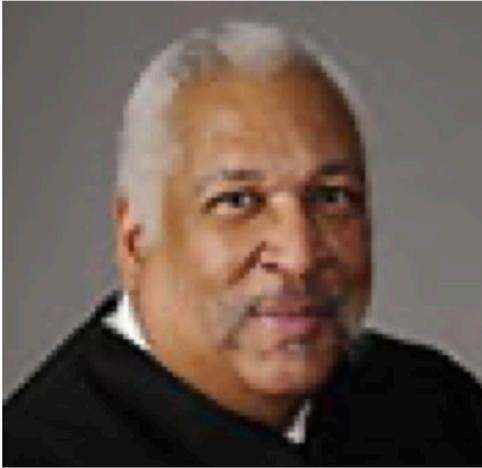
The Honorable J. Wade Padgett currently serves as Superior Court Judge of the Columbia Judicial Circuit. He holds a J.D. from the Georgia State University College of Law and a B.A. in History from the University of Georgia. Padgett is a member of the Georgia Bar Association, the Augusta Bar Association, and chair of new judge training for the Council of Superior Court Judges. He currently serves as President of the Council of Superior Court Judges and is a member of the Judicial Council of Georgia. Active within his community, he is

also the creator and presenter of Teenage Years 101, an educational program for teens and parents.



**Judge Andrew Pinson**  
**PROGRAM MODERATOR**

Judge Andrew A. Pinson was appointed to the Court of Appeals by Governor Brian Kemp and was sworn in on August 30, 2021. A native Georgian, Judge Pinson was born in DeKalb County, Georgia. He grew up in Lithonia and Lawrenceville until middle school, when he moved with his family to Lincolnton, Georgia. There, he attended Lincoln County High School and then Briarwood Academy in Warrenton, where he graduated as STAR Student and a National Merit Scholar. Judge Pinson attended the University of Georgia for both college and law school. As an undergraduate, he served as president of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity and received the national fraternity’s highest award for leadership. He was also inducted into Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, the Beta Gamma Sigma Business Honor Fraternity, and the Order of Omega, and he graduated *summa cum laude* as a First Honor Graduate (4.0 GPA) with a degree in Finance from the Terry School of Business. In law school, Judge Pinson served as the Executive Articles Editor of the Georgia Law Review and research assistant to Professors Dan T. Coenen and Peter “Bo” Rutledge. He also interned for the Executive Counsel in the Office of Governor Sonny Perdue, and he worked for Jones Day in Atlanta and Fortson, Bentley, & Griffin in Athens as a summer associate and law clerk, respectively. Judge Pinson graduated first in his class (*summa cum laude*, Order of the Coif) from law school. After law school, Judge Pinson served as a law clerk at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit for then-Chief Judge David B. Sentelle. He then joined Jones Day in Washington, D.C., for a short time before serving as law clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court for Justice Clarence Thomas. After clerking, Judge Pinson returned to Georgia, where he re-joined Jones Day in Atlanta as part of the firm’s Issues and Appeals Practice, which focused on appellate litigation and critical trial motions and strategy. In 2017, Judge Pinson joined the Office of Attorney General Chris Carr, and in 2018, he was appointed Solicitor General of Georgia. As Solicitor General, he led the State’s appellate and multistate litigation practice and served as the Attorney General’s chief constitutional advisor. He personally handled high-profile and complex appeals, including in the United States Supreme Court, where he argued an important case about Article III mootness, and he won two Best Brief Awards from the National Association of Attorneys’ General for his work on U.S. Supreme Court briefs. Judge Pinson also briefed and argued numerous cases in the Supreme Court of Georgia, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and several other courts in Georgia and across the country. In addition to appellate practice, Judge Pinson led the State’s multistate litigation, including Georgia’s years-long work leading litigation about the federal “waters of the United States” rule. And he oversaw matters of special importance to the State in all phases of litigation, including the State’s critical “water wars” litigation. Judge Pinson serves on the Chief Justice’s Commission on Professionalism. He also serves on the Supreme Court of Georgia’s Lawyer Competency Task Force, the University of Georgia School of Law’s Young Alumni Council, and the Executive Board of the Atlanta Chapter of the Federalist Society. Judge Pinson was also recently invited to join the Lumpkin Inn of Court as a Master.



**Judge Clyde L. Reese III**  
**PROGRAM MODERATOR**

Judge Clyde L. Reese III was appointed to the Court of Appeals of Georgia on November 1 of 2016 by Governor Nathan Deal to begin serving on the Court on December 1, 2016. Judge Reese was born in Florence, S.C. and moved to Atlanta with his parents in 1969 at the age of ten. Judge Reese, along with his cousin, Marsha Reese and her cousin, Alonzo Brown, integrated Pace Academy of Atlanta in 1969. He attended Pace from 1969- 1976 (6th through 12th grades) and graduated in 1976. He attended Georgia State University in Atlanta with a major in world history (emphasis on World War II and the Cold War) and a minor in economics. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1980. From 1980-1993, Judge Reese worked in residential real estate in the southwest Atlanta area. His family operated Brown and Reese Realty, one of the first African-American owned residential brokerage firms in Atlanta. In 1993, Judge Reese entered law school at the Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. He graduated in 1996 with a Juris Doctor degree. In the summer of 1996, Judge Reese began work as an Assistant Attorney General in the Georgia Department of Law under Attorney General Michael Bowers. He began in the Regulated Industries Section, which included the Department of Insurance, the Subsequent Injury Trust Fund, and the State Health Planning Agency (SHPA). In the fall, the SHPA, which administered the Georgia Certificate of Need law, hired him to be its in-house General Counsel. In 1999, SHPA was merged into the newly created Department of Community Health (DCH) along with the Georgia Medicaid program and the State Health Benefit Plan. From 1999 through the summer of 2003, Judge Reese was Deputy General Counsel of DCH, the largest health care agency in the Executive Branch. In 2003, Judge Reese left state government for the private practice of law. From 2003-2004, he practiced with Rod Meadows at Meadows & Lewis in Stockbridge, Georgia. From 2004-2007 he was owner and principal of Reese & Hopkins, LLC, a firm specializing in state and federal health care regulatory matters. The firm represented hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, physicians and physician group practices, imaging providers, and other health care entities. In the fall of 2007, Judge Reese returned to state government with DCH to oversee the Certificate of Need program and as General Counsel. In May of 2010, Governor Sonny Perdue appointed Judge Reese as Commissioner of DCH. In January of 2011, Governor Nathan Deal appointed Judge Reese as Commissioner of the Department of Human Services (DHS). In July of 2013, Judge Reese returned to DCH as Commissioner for a second time and served in that capacity until his appointment to the Court of Appeals. Judge Reese is a member of the Mercer Law School Board of Visitors. Judge Reese has established the Judge Clyde Reese Book Award at Mercer University Law School. The award, in honor of Judge Reese's parents, Clyde and Dorothy Reese, is \$1,000 to a deserving minority student selected by the school to help defray the cost of law books. He is also Co-Chair of the State Bar's SOLACE Committee. In May of 2018, Judge Reese won election to a new six-year term on the Court of Appeals, beginning January 1, 2019.



### **Judge B. Shawn Rhodes**

Judge B. Shawn Rhodes currently serves as the Probate and Magistrate Judge of Wilcox County in Abbeville, Georgia. Judge Rhodes has served the fine people of Wilcox County since July of 2014. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Rhodes was an attorney in private practice in Atlanta, Valdosta and Perry. Born and raised in rural, south Georgia, Judge Rhodes was blessed to have the opportunity to be a Double Dawg and receive his undergraduate and law degree from the University of Georgia. He is also pleased to be the serving President-Elect of the Council of Probate Court Judges.



### **Sheila Ross**

Sheila Ross, an Atlanta native, serves as the Director of Capital Litigation for the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia. A career prosecutor, Ross previously served as the supervising attorney of the Major Case Division for the Fulton County District Attorney's Office in Atlanta, a homicide prosecutor for the City and County of San Francisco, California, and a prosecutor for the Fourth Judicial Circuit in Jacksonville, Florida. She is licensed to practice law in Georgia, California, and Florida. In Ross's current assignment, she assists prosecutors statewide with complex murder and death penalty prosecutions. She also is a frequent instructor for law enforcement and prosecutors on the topics of murder, legal insanity, complex DNA, trial techniques and jury composition issues. Ross has been recognized by the Georgia General Assembly and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners for her outstanding commitment to justice. She was also named the 2014 "Assistant District Attorney of the Year" by the District Attorneys' Association of Georgia and received the 2007 "Home Run Hitters Club" award from the National District Attorneys' Association. Ross presently serves on the board of directors for the Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation. She also serves on the advisory board of the Capital Litigation Training Project for the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys. Throughout her career, Ross has tried dozens of complex murder cases. Ross's high profile prosecutions include the racially-motivated murder-for-hire of Sparkle Rai at the direction of her father-in-law, as well as a successful conviction against James Sullivan, the millionaire who ordered the execution of his own wife and then remained at large for nearly 20 years. Ross has previously served as an adjunct professor of Trial Advocacy at Georgia State University's School of Law and Atlanta's John Marshall School of Law.



### **Don Samuel**

Don Samuel is a partner at Garland, Samuel & Loeb where he has practice since 1982. He has written several books on criminal law, including the Eleventh Circuit Criminal Handbook, the Georgia Criminal Law Case Finder and The Fourth Amendment for Georgia Lawyers and Judges. He has previously written several articles that have been published in the Georgia Bar Journal, including most recently, “Parallel Proceedings,” in the February 2020 publication. He is the past-president of the Georgia

Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and currently serves on the Covid Task Force created by the Georgia Supreme Court in the spring of 2020.



**Judge Wesley B. Tailor**

Judge Wesley B. Tailor has served on the State Court of Fulton County since 2010. Wes serves as the Immediate Past President of the Executive Committee of the Council of State Court Judges. He was a member of the Judicial Council of Georgia until July 2021. Wes began his legal career in 1999 as a litigation attorney with Troutman Sanders LLP. Wes then served as a prosecutor in the Office of the Solicitor-General for DeKalb County. Wes then served as General Counsel to the Georgia Secretary of State, Director of Elections for the State of Georgia, and Assistant Secretary of State. Wes graduated summa cum laude and Order of the Coif from the University of Kentucky School of Law, where he was Associate Editor of the Kentucky Law Journal and served on the Honor Council.



### **Jill Travis**

In the fifth chapter of her legal career, Jill serves as the Executive Director of GACDL. Jill has been actively involved with GACDL since her law school days and served as the 2005 President. She served on the GACDL board of directors in various capacities and received the GACDL President's Award from five presidents. Jill has been the Director of the Bill Daniel Trial Advocacy Program since 2008 and served as an instructor with this program since its inception in 1999. Previously, Jill served as Deputy Legislative Counsel for the Georgia General Assembly for 18 years, writing many of the laws that trial attorneys regularly use, e.g., Criminal Justice Reform, Juvenile Code rewrite, Evidence Code rewrite, and GPDC revisions. During her career, she wrote more than 10,000 bills and amendments. Before joining the Office of Legislative Counsel, Jill practiced criminal defense for 14 years, serving as the Chief Public Defender for Douglas County for seven years. Her office received the 1996 Commitment to Excellence award from the Georgia Indigent Defense Council (now known as GPDC). Before becoming the Douglas County Public Defender, Jill did civil, business, and criminal litigation in a small firm in the suburbs of Atlanta for four years and began her career in downtown Atlanta as a general practitioner working with another GACDL member in Kane & Anderson. Jill currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Resource Center and the Atlanta Rainbow Trout. A Michigander by birth, Jill received her B.A. from the Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University but has lived in Georgia since attending law school at Mercer University. Jill completed the National Criminal Defense College in 1994. Jill and her husband live in Inman Park with their dog, Otis.



### **Lyle Griffin Warshauer**

Lyle Griffin Warshauer is a Partner with Warshauer Law Group, PC, a civil justice firm she co-founded in 1996 with her husband Michael Warshauer. The firm handles catastrophic injury claims involving product liability; medical negligence; Federal Employers' Liability Act claims as well as other railroad related claims; premises liability; motor vehicle claims; Federal and State Tort Claims Act claims; and Civil Rights violations. Lyle manages the firm's medical malpractice cases and appellate practice. She is the firm's primary brief writer for all cases involving complex issues raised in summary judgment motions,

Daubert motions and appeals. Lyle is the Immediate Past President of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association, and currently serves on the Executive Committee, as well as the Association's Legislative and Amicus Committees. She also serves on the Board of the organization's Civil Justice Pac. She is an active member of American Association for Justice, where she serves on the Council of Presidents, and is part of the Birth Trauma, Medical Negligence and Professional Liability Litigation Groups. Lyle is frequently asked to speak on issues concerning trial practice, particularly those related to the admission of expert testimony. Outside of the practice of law, Lyle is also focused on giving back to the community. Most notably, she is currently Vice President of Second Helpings Atlanta, a non-profit food rescue organization dedicated to the elimination of hunger and food waste in metro-Atlanta.



### **Kyle Williams**

Kyle is a founding partner with the law firm of WILLIAMS TEUSINK, LLC. The firm provides legal counsel and advocacy to clients navigating litigation and transactions concerning real estate, commercial, governmental, and corporate issues. Kyle is a dirt lawyer focusing on land use and development, zoning, permitting and licensing, construction, and general real estate matters representing individual property owners, nonprofits, neighborhoods, homeowner and condominium associations, real estate builders and developers, real estate agents and brokers, and other real estate professionals concerning residential and

commercial property and development issues. He has represented clients in numerous jury, bench, and arbitration trials throughout Georgia and regularly represents clients before state agencies and local governments on permitting, code enforcement, zoning, licensing, and ad valorem property tax appeals. Kyle serves as General Counsel to the Downtown Development Authority for the City of Decatur and serves by appointment of the Superior Court of DeKalb County, Georgia as a Special Master inland use, zoning, and other real estate matters, including quiet title actions. Kyle is also a Civil Mediator and Neutral registered with the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution. Kyle serves by appointment of the President of the State Bar of Georgia as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Legislation and as a member on the Lawyer Assistance Program Committee. He is a past member of Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. Kyle also serves on the Executive Committee on Real Property Law Section of the State Bar of Georgia. He has been recognized as a Georgia "Rising Star" and "Super Lawyer" in Litigation, Land Use, and Zoning by Georgia "Super Lawyer" and Atlanta Magazine for more than a decade. Kyle frequently publishes and teaches about land use, zoning, and real estate matters and has served as a zoning legal expert for Urban Land Institute Atlanta Technical Assistance Panel. Kyle is a Part-Time Instructor at Georgia State University College of Law teaching Real Estate Transactions and has been a guest lecturer at the School of City & Regional Planning at Georgia Tech. Kyle graduated with honors from The University of Tennessee, Martin with a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration and received his Doctor of Jurisprudence from The University of Tennessee, College of Law concentrating in advocacy and dispute resolution. Kyle is a past member of the Dean's Circle and Past-Chair of the Alumni Council of his law school. Kyle is the immediate Past-President of the Decatur Business Association and a Past Chair of the Decatur Education Foundation and Georgia Equality. Currently, Kyle is a member of the Board of Directors of the DeKalb Bar Association, DeKalb Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, and Council for Quality Growth. He is a member of the Class of 2021 of the Urban Land Institute Atlanta Center for Leadership and was a member of the Class of 2013 of Leadership DeKalb.