

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

FILED  
CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT  
RICHMOND COUNTY, GEORGIA

2023 MAY 12 AM 9:37

CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT  
AND DEPUTY CLERK  
FILED FOR RECORD


IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE MARCH TERM 2023

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the March Term 2023, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on May 12, 2023, it is now,

ORDERED that the said presentment shall be filed in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court for Richmond County, and that it shall be published once in the *Augusta Chronicle*, the legal gazette for said County; and

FURTHER ORDERED that the said general presentment shall be posted by the Director of Information Technology on the Augusta-Richmond County website for public access through the Internet (World Wide Web).

It is so ORDERED this 12th day of May 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superior Court Judge  
Augusta Judicial Circuit

TO: The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury  
March Term 2023

DATE: May 12, 2023

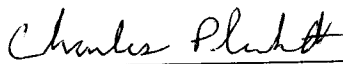
RE: Grand Jury Presentment

We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the March Term 2023, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Ashley Wright and Honorable Amanda Heath on the 20th day of March 2023, submit our presentment on the 12th day of May 2023, our last day as an official body of the Grand Jury.

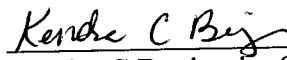
To discharge our sworn duties, as prescribed by the laws of the State of Georgia, we met on seven (7) dates during our term and acted upon Bills of Indictments presented to us by the District Attorney's Office.

A Sub-Committee was formed to inspect the Richmond County Superior Court Office of the Clerk of Court. The applicable report is attached.

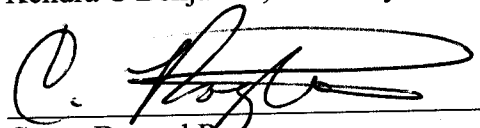
The Grand Jury respectfully submits this Presentment on the 12th day of May 2023 and requests that it is published.

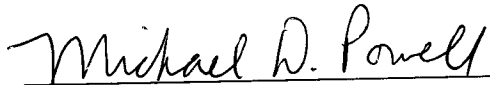
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles William Plunkett, Foreperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Natalie Haywood Scoggins, Asst. Foreperson

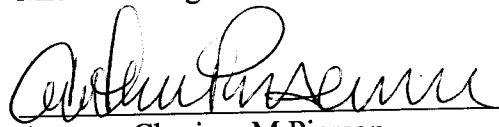
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kendra C Benjamin, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Blake Robert Rhodes

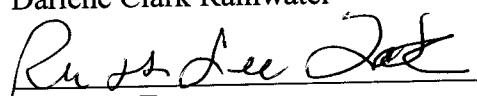
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Corey Durand Rogers

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Douglas Powell

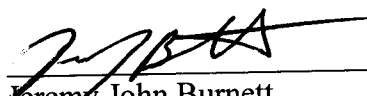
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gustavo Alfredo Tepedino

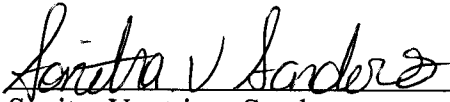
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Autumn Charisse M Pierson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Darlene Clark Rainwater

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ruth Lee Tate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anastasia Elizabeth Garcia

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeremy John Burnett



Sonitra Vontriece Sanders

Steven Lamont Green

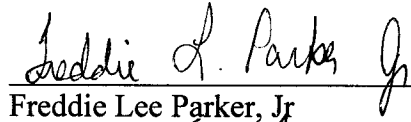
Cassie Itaska Mercer

Zenaida Lanzo Badger

Tracy Renee Johnson

James Dennis, Jr

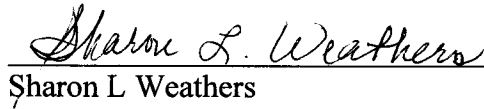
Jamilah Alexandria Gabriel, Alternate



Freddie Lee Parker, Jr

  
Kenneth Andrei Ratliff

Lawrence Versey



Sharon L Weathers

Cassandra Rae Parker

Earnest Turner, Sr, Alternate

## **Inspection of the Richmond County Superior Court Office of the Clerk of Court by a Grand Jury Sub-Committee Conducted April 11, 2023**

On April 11, 2023, a Grand Jury Sub-Committee toured the Office of the Clerk of Court for the Superior Court of Richmond County.

Our tour included the main records area as well as the real estate records room, and we had the opportunity to meet with and speak with several employees of the Clerk's Office, who were very helpful and candid about the improvements which would benefit both the Clerk's Office itself as well as the general public who come to their office to obtain records and handle court business.

We noted first and foremost that the Clerk's Office handles a prodigious number of records for the county, and that more storage is desperately needed for them – we observed, for example, that there are dozens of boxes of records stored on the floor because there is no room to store them anywhere else. There are also some general maintenance concerns with electrical panels and items in the electrical closet which could be cleared away.

We also learned there is a moisture problem which reoccurs during every heavy rain. We learned that while there is no obvious leak that has been detected, during significant amounts of rainfall, the carpet tiles become wet and smell like mildew. These carpet tiles have been replaced as this happens, but the issue continues to occur.

Finally, the Clerk's Office makes a number of computers available to the public for their convenience and ease of access to records that their office maintains. These have made a meaningful difference to both the public and to the Clerk's Office, and we commend them for providing the computers to the public and for keeping them in good working order. We learned from office staff that adding to the number of computers available for use by the public would be helpful, and they advised us that they would like it if the use of these computers could be done in a more private manner.

### **Grand Jury Recommendations:**

We strongly recommend that county devote resources to increasing the storage space for the Clerk's Office, particularly for the many records it keeps. More general storage would also be helpful so that the Clerk's Office can put away general office tables and chairs out of the main space, as currently they must place these in corners throughout the office space.

In addition, we believe that the source of the water leak needs to be located and repaired so that the moisture issue can be resolved once and for all. Given the nature of the materials kept by the Clerk, moisture is a real concern and court records should be protected from suffering potential water damage.

Finally, we do recommend that partitions between the public-access computers in the Clerk's lobby area be installed to allow users to conduct their business in a more private and secure manner. We also agree that providing computers for public use would improve the ability for the Clerk's Office to serve its customers.

Respectfully submitted by members of the Grand Jury,