

2015 MAR 13 AM 9:19

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY

ELAINE C. JOHNSON, CLERK  
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA.

STATE OF GEORGIA

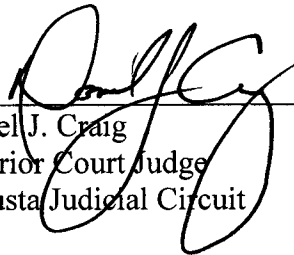
IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE JANUARY TERM 2015

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the January Term 2015, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on March 13, 2015, 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 13th day of March 2015.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel J. Craig  
Superior Court Judge  
Augusta Judicial Circuit

TO: The Honorable Daniel J. Craig  
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury  
January Term 2015

DATE: March 13, 2015

RE: Grand Jury Presentment

We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the January Term 2015, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Albert M. Pickett on the 20th day of January 2015, submit our presentment on the 13th day of March 2015, our last day as an official body of the Grand Jury.

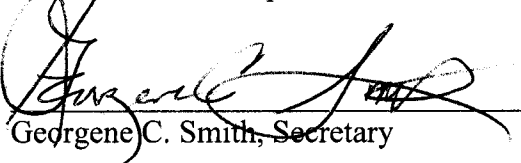
To discharge our sworn duties, as prescribed by the laws of the State of Georgia, we met on eight (8) dates during our term and acted upon Bills of Indictments presented to us by the District Attorney's Office.

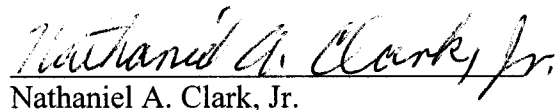
Sub-Committees were formed to inspect the Clerk of Superior Court, the Coroner's Office and the Charles B. Webster Detention Center; the reports are attached.

In addition to our assigned duties, this Grand Jury appointed two members to the Board of Equalization; the report is attached.

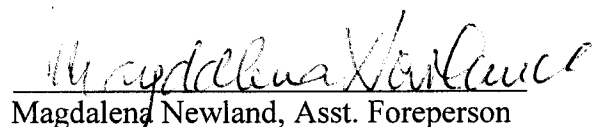
The Grand Jury respectfully submits this presentment on the 13th day of March 2015 and requests that it is published.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joanne Adcox, Foreperson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Georgene C. Smith, Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nathaniel A. Clark, Jr.

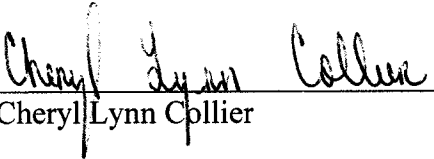
\_\_\_\_\_  
Shenise Michelle Johnson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Magdalena Newland, Asst. Foreperson

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Narelis Acevedo

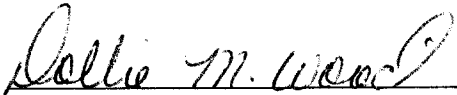
\_\_\_\_\_  
Katherine Daley Stewart

  
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Tracy Alexander Banks

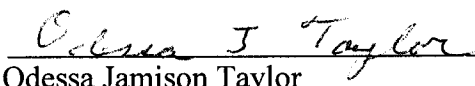
  
Cheryl Lynn Collier

Arjonetta M. Gaillard

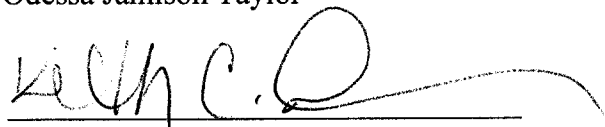
Emily Kay Forrest

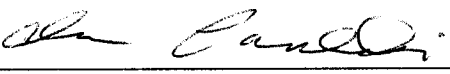
  
Dollie Mae Wood

  
Jamie Hunter Brown

  
Odessa Jamison Taylor

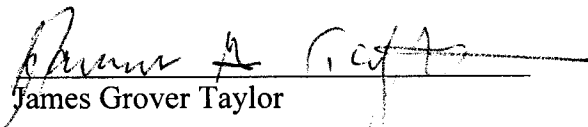
Carolyn Navarre Chiera

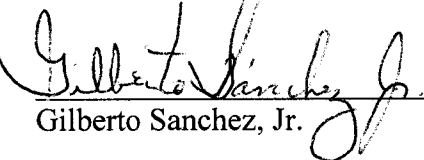
  
Keturah Christel Dunbar

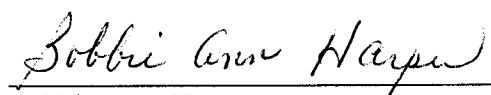
  
Clarence Pauldin

  
Lakeisha Shanta Elam

JoAnn S. Appleton

  
James Grover Taylor

  
Gilberto Sanchez, Jr.

  
Bobbie Ann Harper

Sandra Diana Masters

## **SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JANUARY TERM 2015 GRAND JURY REPORT ON THE CORONER'S OFFICE**

On February 17, 2015, a three-member Sub-Committee of the January Term 2015 Grand Jury inspected the Augusta-Richmond County Coroner's Office located on Eighth Street. Upon arrival, we were greeted at the front desk by Bonnie Whitehead who led Sub-Committee Members to the conference room where we met with Coroner Mark Bowen.

While in the conference room, Mr. Bowen provided a brief background of what takes place in the Coroner's Office and explained his staff's important roles. Mr. Bowen is assisted by three Deputy Coroners – Albert Boudy, William Leisey and Scott Wheatley – and one Chief Deputy – Kenneth Boose. Part of what is handled through the Coroner's Office is to investigate death cases except those involving hospice and nursing homes. We were informed that all criminal cases are automatically sent to Decatur for investigation. In addition to investigating deaths, the Coroner's Office also notify families of any death(s) that has taken place. This office is the largest in Georgia and is one of four locations with a full-time coroner.

After the overview, we began our tour of the office and were able to meet two of the Deputy Coroners and the Chief Deputy. We were also officially introduced to Bonnie Whitehead, Administrative Assistant, and apprised of her role in the office. She manages all e-files and paper filings of the cases handled; the latter is a back-up should the computer system ever fail. Next, we came to what is called the family room. This is where families can see their loved ones. While in this room, we learned of several options implemented within the last year to help families with their loved ones after death, i.e. a burial system and a cremation option for all families where it would generally be somewhat of a burden for the families to handle outside of the office.

Another office down the hall is occupied by a four-person team who runs the Tissue Donor Program. The Coroner's Office partnered with Georgia Regents University (GRU) five years ago to establish this program. It is here that Anita, Carl, Kay and Sharon transact calls to families and offer the opportunity for their loved one to be a tissue donor. Having been introduced to the team, Carl, the leader of the program, explained what the program is for and how it works. This program, for deaths that occur outside of the hospital, offers families of the loved ones an opportunity to donate tissue. The Tissue Donor Program is partnered with the DMV to verify if their loved one had implemented this option on his/her driver's license and helps those families who may not know what their loved one's preference would have been. One donor can help anywhere from 50 to 80 people after the tissue has been tested for all known diseases. The tissue collected from these donors is kept in GRU's tissue bank and is used locally. An average of 40 donors is taken in each year. These donations help an average of 130 to 150 transplant recipients at GRU every year. Additionally, they have the body donor and research programs should their loved one not qualify for tissue donations. They have a 90% consent rate and families are able to have funerals, at no cost to them, after the donation has taken place.

After the tour, it was obvious the Coroner's Office has implemented great systems and programs which allows the office to run smoothly. They should continue with these and perhaps add even more; for example, partnering with nursing homes to assist in handling their death cases. By doing so, it would allow family members to have their loved ones participate in the donor

program. It would also give the family further closure of their loved one's death by knowing that more than one person is looking into the cause of death of their loved one. Other programs, such as Scared Straight Programs, could be implemented as well.

One concern of Sub-Committee Members was signs of water leakage seen in the ceiling throughout the building. Besides this fact, Sub-Committee Members of the January Term 2015 Grand Jury commend the Coroner's Office for the great progress it has made.

Respectfully submitted by the  
Sub-Committee Members

## **SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JANUARY TERM 2015 GRAND JURY REPORT ON THE CHARLES B. WEBSTER DETENTION CENTER**

On January 27, 2015, a nine-member Sub-Committee of the January Term 2015 Grand Jury inspected the Charles B. Webster Detention Center. Upon arrival, we were met by Major Robert Leverett, Captain Bill Reeves and Captain Sheila White. We began our tour with lunch where the inmates served us salad, fried chicken, garlic herb baked chicken, sweet potato soufflé, broccoli cheese casserole and chocolate chip cookies.

Sub-Committee Members had the opportunity to a question-and-answer session. We were informed that the Detention Center has a plethora of perimeter room for expansion, if necessary, and provides full service to 925 current inmates with a capacity of 1,056. The inmates are treated fairly and humanely. Not only can the inmates receive two days off of their sentence for each day of good behavior, they can also be a part of the Trustees within the Detention Center. This allows those inmates who portray good behavior to have jobs during the time they are there. This, in turn, can promote a healthier environment within the Detention Center.

The inmates are identified by wearing distinct clothing, i.e. solids = non-violent, stripes = violent, pink = females and orange = males. Inmates are on surveillance and are transported with leg irons and handcuffs. Precautions are taken at all times. For example, when a door is to be opened, the jailer requesting access is checked via camera and doors are only opened when the previous door is closed. This same procedure is followed when an inmate is processed for release or when transporting an inmate to another wing within the Detention Center. Tasers have been issued to jailers to cut down on misconduct and to prevent dangers that were associated with guns. The Visitor's Center implemented monitors where the inmate and visitor converse via video to cut trafficking of contraband to the inmates. These security measures ensure the safety of both the inmate and the jailer.

The Detention Center releases all inmates by taking their fingerprints. This efficiently provides accurate identify, especially in case the inmate has a twin. This attention to detail ensures no false releases. The medical treatment facility is adequately staffed and has up-to-date medical equipment to service inmates. Seven nurses are available for inmate health care during the day and two are on duty during the night.

We were thoroughly convinced that Major Leverett, Captain Reeves and Captain White run a secure Detention Center that warrants the full support of Richmond County. Inmates are treated fairly and are provided adequate necessities to sustain healthy living conditions.

Recommendations by this Sub-Committee include supporting the accreditation process of the Detention Center so as to secure grant funding that would not affect the taxpayers and aggressively recruit qualified and vetted personnel to lower the inmate-to-jailer ratio. Also, we encourage the use of security standards for all persons who enter into the Detention Center.

Respectfully submitted by the  
Sub-Committee Members

## **SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JANUARY TERM 2015 GRAND JURY REPORT ON THE CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT**

On February 10, 2015, a five-member Sub-Committee of the January Term 2015 Grand Jury inspected the Clerk of Court's Office. Upon arrival, were greeted by Teresa Riddle, Senior Operations Manager and Assistant to the Clerk. We began our tour by being escorted to their conference room to meet the supervising staff and to get to know each of their roles within the office on a daily basis. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet with Elaine Johnson, Clerk of Superior Court. Nevertheless, Teresa Riddle and the supervising staff did an amazing job on assisting us with acquiring the knowledge needed to ensure that the Clerk of Court's Office is running not only smoothly, but efficiently as well. The supervising staff consisted of the following individuals: Kristy Key, Luann Staulcup, Amber Sterling, Angela Terry and Carla Williamson. These individuals and their roles are pertinent to the office.

With their help, we learned a lot of the general information as well as the significant advancements that have taken place over the years. Currently, the Clerk's Office has 53 permanent and five temporary employees that help manage the duties of the sub-divisions within Superior, State and Juvenile Courts. These duties consist of the following:

- File deeds, plats and liens for the real estate division.
- Appoint notary publics, record business trade names and military discharges.
- Manage all revenue collections and disbursements for the real estate division along with Superior, State and Juvenile Courts.
- Maintain record of civil and domestic cases filed in Richmond County.
- Handle minor traffic violations through the Traffic Violations Bureau.
- Swear in new attorneys.
- Obtain all Richmond County Child Support cases from Child Support Enforcement, open a new case and file all pleadings.

Not only have these duties been taken care of every single day, but major improvements have occurred within this office, too. In 1993, when Elaine Johnson took office, there were only nine computers assigned to this office as a whole. Now, this number has increased to 107 computers in the workstations, private offices and public work areas by participating in a statewide standardized indexing system for Georgia established by the Georgia Superior Court Clerks Cooperative Authority. This has allowed the office to obtain new computers every three years, since 1996, at absolutely no cost to the taxpayers. Matter-of-factly, one of the computers was in the conference room where our meeting was held. It is used to keep the staff up-to-date on training without having to travel elsewhere. They have also decided to take part in an archive project, which Teresa Riddle is handling, converting books and reels from 1965 to 1986 to their computer program for public web. E-Filing has also been implemented to make the office more user friendly.

Upon leaving the Clerk of Court's Office, Sub-Committee Members were thoroughly impressed on how so much could be taken care of in one place; yet, the office performs very smoothly and efficiently. Our recommendation would be to continue implementing more programs and personnel to help with the caseloads pressed upon all of these individuals.

Respectfully submitted by the  
Sub-Committee Members

**BOARD OF EQUALIZATION APPOINTMENTS**  
**BY THE JANUARY TERM 2015 GRAND JURY**

The January Term, 2015 of the Richmond County Grand Jury appoints the following persons to serve as members - three-year term from 1/1/15 to 12/31/17 – on the Board of Equalization:

Cornelius Doolittle

Erica Steed