The Western Judicial Circuit Today and in Bygone Times: A Short History of Local Superior Court Judges - Part One

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Repository Citation
https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/fac_pm/90
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A Short History of Local Superior Court Judges—Part One

H. Patrick Haggard, appointed by Gov. Deal to fill the unexpired term of Judge Steve C. Jones, is the latest in a long line of superior court judges in the Western Judicial Circuit, which includes Athens. In this two-part article, adapted from a speech he gave at the UGA law school, Prof. Donald E. Wilkes, Jr. takes a look at the history of the circuit and the judges who have served it.

There are 28 superior court judges of the Western Judicial Circuit since its creation in 1797. (A list of these judges, with their terms of office, is set forth below in the box appended to this article.) Some of these judges are among the most illustrious jurists in the history of this state. The legendary James Barrow, for example, who died in 2000, was a judge, everyone knew, who strove for justice in every single case he tried. His decisions were hardly ever set aside by appellate courts, who well knew Judge Barrow's astonishing, proven reputation for wisdom and fairness.

Next week, colorful details from the lives of some of these superior court judges.

Superior Court Judges of the Western Judicial Circuit and Their Terms of Office