

## Board of Directors

### Chairman:

#### Vice Chairman F. Barry Wilkes

Clerk of Superior Court  
Liberty County

#### Secretary/Treasurer Jean H. Rogers

Clerk of Superior Court  
Crisp County

#### Charles Baker

Clerk of Superior &  
State Courts  
Hall County

#### David J. Burge

Partner – Smith,  
Gambrell & Russell, LLP

#### C. Michael Johnson

Attorney at Law  
Eastman

#### Cindy Mason

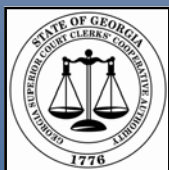
Clerk of Superior Court  
Columbia County

#### Arch W. McGarity

Chief Judge  
Superior Courts  
Flint Judicial Circuit

#### Rhett Walker

Clerk of Superior Court  
Dodge County



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## Authority mourns passing of Tom Lawler

The Authority mourns the passing of Board Chairman Thomas C. Lawler, III, Clerk of Superior Court of Gwinnett County, after a courageous battle with cancer. Tom served as the Authority chairman from 2005 until his death on November 23, 2011.

After serving four years on the Authority Board, Tom was elected as only the second person to serve as chairman. He led the Authority through a period of expansion spearheading multiple initiatives including the establishment of the Fines and Fees Division and development of the eFiling Project.

Tom was first elected as Gwinnett's Clerk of Superior Court in 1996, having previously served eight years as Gwinnett County district attorney. His public service career began in 1970 as a Gwinnett County police officer. After leaving for service in the Army, Tom returned to serve as solicitor of the Juvenile Court of Gwinnett County. Tom has served as legislative chair for the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Association and was a driving force behind the development of the "Clerks' Reference Manual." Additionally, he was the 2004 recipient of the "County Officer of the

Year" award. Tom is an active member of the State Bar of Georgia and has years of experience in the private practice of law. He lived in Norcross with his family and loved to play golf for relaxation.



When asked about the Authority after becoming chairman, Tom responded, "The Authority is the best run government entity I have seen in all my years of public service. It is obvious that the dedication of the Authority staff and the cooperation of all the Superior Court clerks throughout the state have created an environment of success. I am proud to be a part of the

Authority and, with the help of all the clerks and my fellow board members, I hope to be a positive influence on its future."

When reminded of Tom's comments about the Authority when he was first elected chairman in 2005, Executive Director David Williams replied, "It's impossible to describe how much respect I had for Tom Lawler and how much I learned from him. The leadership he provided and the impact he had on the Clerks' Authority is immeasurable. Tom personified the Authority's goal of service to the citizens of Georgia. He has left a void in our hearts, and will be deeply missed by all who worked with him." ■

# October Board Meeting Review

The Authority Board met on October 19 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions of the meeting.

## General Business:

The minutes of the July 17 and August 10, 2011 board meetings were approved by the Board.

Mike Smith, a notary public and communications director for the Authority, administered the oath of office to new board member Charles Baker, Clerk of Superior & State Courts of Hall County.

Greg Morgan presented the "Accountant's Review of the Financials" and discussed the results of the 2010-2011 FY Audit report. Expenses were controlled to remain in line with revenues which allowed the Authority to operate without a deficit. In summary, Morgan reported that the Authority's financial situation has stabilized due to solid financial management by the Board allowing the Authority to meet obligations. A motion to accept the 2010-2011 FY Audit as presented was approved by the Board.

Next, Morgan presented the Financial Reports as of September 30, 2011. He reported that restricted cash is down \$790K related to accounts payables being reduced and that net assets has increased \$395K. In summary, Morgan reported that the Authority is ahead of budget and that the control of expenditures has allowed the Authority to "weather" the current downturn in the economy. A motion to accept the current financial reports as presented was approved by the Board.

## eFiling Project:

A report on the eFiling Project was given and the following was reported.

**GSCCCA Portal** – Authority staff reported that, to date, approximately 17K UCCs have been eFiled and that the numbers are increas-

ing due to increased awareness. Approximately 5K Child Support docs have been eFiled with 17 activated courts. Twenty more courts are in the process of becoming authorized to accept Child Support eFilings.

**E-Filing Standards** – The approval of the standards is quickly needed to assist vendors and allow for the activation of the eFile Registry. A motion to create a subcommittee consisting of David Burge, Connie Cheatham, Sheila Studdard, David Dubberly, Phil Kobierowski and Andy Wightwick in order to make a recommendation at the next board meeting or at a scheduled called meeting for the re-drafting of eRecording standards was approved by the Board.

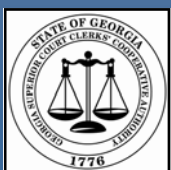
**GSCCCA eFile Registry** – It was reported that the registry is created and must be activated by November 1, 2011. It is set to go from a technical standpoint, but is designed based on the draft standards.

## Historical Deed Project:

It was reported that the Historical Deed Project remains suspended due to a lack of funds. Staff reaffirmed the estimated cost of approximately \$4.1 million to re-start the project and complete the current historical year, and thus recommended that the project remain suspended. A motion to continue the suspension of the Historical Deed Project due to budgetary constraints was approved by the Board.

## Fines & Fees Division:

An update was given on the Fines & Fees Division and it was reported that collections, through the first three months of the fiscal year, are on track with the exception of the Judicial Operations Fund Fee. This fund is down potentially due to the movement of civil filings to Magistrate Court and notary public exemptions.



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**Training Update:**

A training update was given and it was reported that because of the positive response to the webinars this past year, the 2012 training schedule will include Real Estate Indexing Standards webinars, in addition to Fines & Fees classroom training.

**Premium Subscriber Account:**

A report on the Premium Subscriber Account was given along with a presentation of the new features including report generation, the ability to save reports for future printing, and the addition of an instrument type search and a map search. Most of the new features were developed as a result of user feedback. It was also reported that a mobile application will be available January 1, 2012.

Board members expressed excitement about the site and its impressive features. There was also discussion on holding a premium search user group meeting to illicit feedback. A motion to delay the start date to January 1, 2012 for charging the \$24.95 for

the Premium Subscriber Account was approved by the Board.

**Microfilm Project Update:**

An update on the Microfilm Project was given and it was reported that more than 600,000 images have been transmitted to Archives. It was also reported that Authority members would be meeting with the Director of Archives that afternoon.

**UCC Project:**

An update on the UCC Project was given and it was reported that the number of UCC filings through September 2011 for FY 2012 is above the number of filings for the comparable period in the previous three years. It was also reported that Certified Searches have increased.

**Other Business:**

A motion to set the 2012 Board meeting dates for January 10-11, April 10-11, July 10-11, and October 9-10 was approved by the Board.



## Baker Joins Board

Charles Baker, Hall County Clerk of Superior and State Courts, has been appointed by Governor Nathan Deal to the Clerks' Authority Board of Directors. He will serve a three-year term. Baker is also with the Traffic Violation Bureau and serves as jury manager. Before his election to Clerk of Courts, Baker served the public for 30 years as a deputy clerk and the last seven years as chief deputy clerk for the Hall County Superior and State Courts. During his career, he has worked in, managed and supervised the operations of the Criminal, Civil, Real Estate, Courts and Traffic Violations Bureau Division of the clerk's office. He and his wife, Glenda, have one daughter and two grandsons and are members of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church. They reside in Hall County.

Pictured here at the Authority's recent Board meeting, Baker is administered the oath of office by Notary Public Mike Smith, the Authority's communications director.

