

GSCCCA Update

Vol. 19, No. 2
May 2015

An update on the activities of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority

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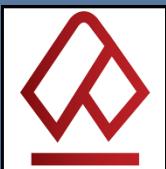
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Authority publishes book on its history

After many challenging years and numerous hard-fought battles, the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority officially opened its doors on January 1, 1995. Today we celebrate 20 years of innovation, collaboration, and partnership with and service to Georgia's clerks of Superior Court and the citizens of Georgia.

To honor and celebrate our 20th anniversary, we have published a book on our history entitled, *For the Record: The Unique Success Story of the GSCCCA*. The goal of the book is to permanently record the early battles, the ongoing development and implementation of myriad projects, and the ultimate success story of the Authority, and to memorialize the vision, inspiration and actions of individuals who worked tirelessly and collectively to achieve what many believed was not possible.

The summary found on the book jacket flap says it best:



"The Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority is arguably one of the most unique organizations in the country. While other states provide some of the same services, few agencies offer as many, as efficiently, and at no cost to taxpayers.

"In the beginning, it was the vision and will of a handful of Superior Court clerks that convinced their colleagues across the state to sign on to a new way of doing things ... convincing them that they would not only become more efficient and better serve the citizens of Georgia, but they would retain control of their vital documents and maintain their revenue in the process. Later, it was a different vision that guided the Authority's operations: the vision and commitment to contin-

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April Board Meeting Review

The Authority board met on April 15 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions of the meeting.

General Business

The minutes of the January 14, 2015 scheduled board meeting were approved.

Financial Review

Greg Morgan, with Mauldin & Jenkins, reviewed the Authority's financial statements and reported that the Authority's financial health is good and there is cause for guarded optimism regarding the revenues for FY 2016. Jamie McCarron, GSCCCA financial director, presented the FY 2016 budget, and it was approved unanimously by the board as presented.



Fines & Fees Division

In an update on the Fines & Fees Division, it was reported that collections are down compared to FY 2014. There is an ongoing project to update contact information for all courts.

Training Update

It was reported that 42,500 registered users have registered for online training courses as of April 1, 2015. A UCC Online course has been added to the menu of courses for clerks of Superior Court and employees. Notary Public training for the public through clerks of Superior Court continues to be a success. Classes are scheduled throughout the state for sum-

mer and fall 2015. Fines & Fees training continues through ICJE.

eFile Project

An update was given on the Authority's eFile Project, and it was reported that 86 clerks' offices participate in UCC eFiling, 104 in Child Support, 18 in Real Estate eFiling, and 2 in Lien eFiling. A staff recommendation was made to modify the Real Estate Electronic Recording Standards for the State of Georgia, version 01/06/2015. The modification clarifies the process when multiple business entities, all issued Participant IDs, merge into one entity or one entity acquires the other. As recommended, a motion to adopt changes to the Real Estate Electronic Recording Standards for the State of Georgia, version 01/06/2015, was approved by the board.

UCC Project

As of March 2015, UCC filings across the state are down from the same time last year. If filings continue to be filed at the same pace for the last three months of FY 2015, the yearly total will be 9.5% less than FY 2014. Special recognition was given to the UCC Indexing Department for their dedication and good work.

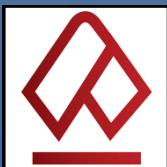
Notary Division

It was reported that notary commissions for FY 2015 are down 7.1% compared to the same period for FY 2014. Apostilles are down 3.5%. A chart was presented showing apostilles issued for particular countries. Requests for Mexico lead all other countries.

Historical Deed Re-Indexing Projects

To date, 896,082 deed documents have been submitted in the Voluntary Historical Deed Project with 5,031 quarantined for review. For the Historical Deed Project, 17,843 documents have been submitted. Additionally, 63 docket surveys have been submitted.

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Board Meeting — Cont. from Page 2

Premium Search Account

It was reported that the total number of Premium Search accounts has increased from 2,468 to 2,571 (a 9.5% increase) since January 2015. This equates to revenues of \$64,567.50 per month.

Microfilm Project

It was reported that 19,630,000 images have been processed and shipped to the Georgia State Archives since the inception of the current microfilm process in January 2012. Care is taken to ensure that what is billed has actually been received by State Archives. Quality control checks are also conducted periodically to ensure that the quality of the microfilm meets required standards.

The citizens of Georgia have been saved thousands of dollars over the past three years due to the Authority's adoption of the current process.



Book Presentation

Chairman Wilkes proudly presented the Authority's recently published history, entitled *For the Record: The Unique Success Story of the GSCCCA*. The book details the creation of the Authority and subsequent years of existence. Board members, staff and vendors in attendance were presented a copy of the book. ■

Authority's Fort honored by legislative group

Authority Ombudsman **Sharon Fort** was recently awarded the Georgia Women's Legislative Caucus Service Leadership Award. The GWLC is a bipartisan group founded in 1990 to support women in the Georgia General Assembly and to cultivate young aspiring professional women.

The award was given to 26 women across the state for their service to their respective communities, professional leadership, and service through policy, public service, and civic engagement to the citizens of Georgia.

To the right, Sharon poses with State Representative Dar'shun Kendrick. Congratulations, Sharon!



Authority Publishes History *Cont. from Page 1*

ually improve current services and develop and offer new ones for the benefit of Superior Court clerks and the citizens of Georgia.

“From the game-changing ‘first fax’ in 1995 to the Authority of 2014, the organization has



Many special guests were on hand for the book ceremony including four inaugural board members: former Chairman Woodson Daniel, Joanne Caldwell, Sandra Glass, and Dan Jordan. Following the presentation, the Authority's current Board of Directors and members of the Authority staff posed with former members of the board.

come a long way, indeed, today managing a variety of innovative projects and hosting a website that is accessed thousands of times daily as end users seek invaluable information. Granted, the road from then to now has not always been easily traveled. There were political battles to be won, old-school clerks to be convinced, and technology challenges to be overcome. Key to traversing the roadblocks and guiding the evolution were the Authority's three progressive chairmen and their respective boards.

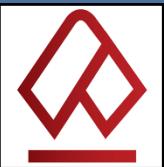
“And all would agree that the board’s best asset was its unflappable director, the late David Williams, who joined the Authority early on and earned the respect of everyone who came into his circle.

“For the Record: The Unique Success Story of the GSCCCA tells all these stories and more. It’s not just the history of a state agency. It’s the story of a collective vision being realized through the selfless commitment of many. It’s the story of innovation, collaboration and leadership. And in the end, it’s the story of how government can and should work.”

In a heartfelt and moving ceremony held on April 28 at the Clerks’ Spring Conference on St. Simons Island, Chairman Barry Wilkes proudly presented the book to Georgia’s clerks of Superior Court. In his presentation, he told the clerks about a conversation he had in the spring of 2013 with former executive director David Williams and their shared concern about clerks not knowing their history. As David said at the time: “Isn’t it a shame that all clerks of Superior Court don’t know the history of the Authority and all that we have faced to protect it from others since its creation.” They agreed to remedy that problem and soon after commissioned this history to be written.

A Book Committee, which included Chairman Barry Wilkes, Vice Chairman Jean Rogers, board member Connie Cheatham and Authority consultant Gary Yates, was established to ensure the story was told accurately, and this group’s guidance and contributions were critical to the success of the project.

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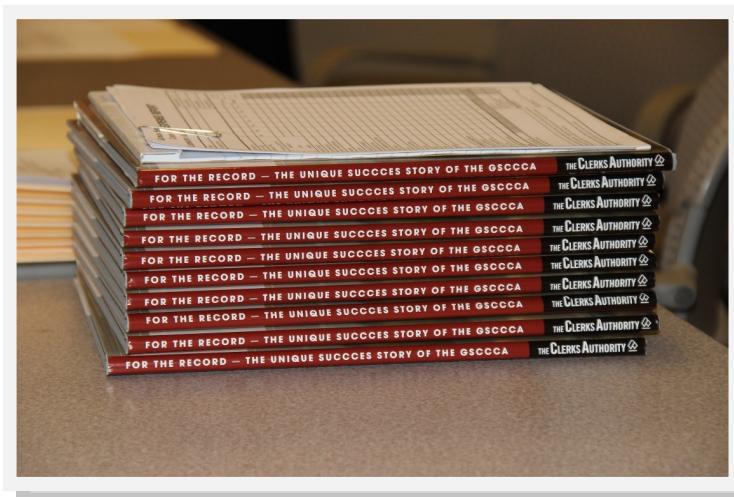
Authority Publishes History
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Input from Authority staff, including David Williams, John Earle, John Myers, Andy Wightwick, Mike Smith and Carole Fischbein, was also integral to the process. In addition to these two groups, though, numerous clerks of Superior Court—including many who are now retired—were interviewed as well as bankers, lawyers, legislators, and others who contributed and have continued to support the Authority. After almost two years of research, in-depth interviews, writing, editing, collecting old mementos and taking new photography, the book was published.

At the presentation ceremony, Chairman Wilkes read a poem he had penned, entitled “We are Risen,” to commemorate the event. (The poem is included on Page

“ Friends, this book is not just words and photographs printed on paper. It is our history, which each of us should cherish and forever endeavor to protect and build upon for our and our posterity’s sake.”

6 of this newsletter.) Upon presenting the book to the clerks, Wilkes said, “Friends, this book is not just words and photographs printed on paper. It is our history, which each of us should cherish and forever endeavor to protect and build upon for our and our posterity’s sake.” And he continued, “David, I know you and Tom are with us in spirit today. Thank you, my friends, for giving so much of yourselves to us and for making this memorable event possible.” ■



We are Risen

By E. Barry Wilkes

From ash heaps time forgot;
From the depths of a stormy sea;
From the graves of our lot
And recesses of our mem'ry;
We are risen today
By and through God's good grace
And a history which I pray
You will forevermore embrace.

For most, we're a mys'try,
A conundrum they can't understand—
Because they've never lived and breathed
A cause or took a stand,
Much less valued what they're bequeathed.
Nor will they e'er until
They're in the trenches of a war,
Surviving off sheer will,
And, yet, marching on to the fore.

Today, we are restored
Through voices hereupon transcribed—
Voices once ignored,
But now eternally imbibed.
Voices crying out,
Often in desperation,
Though never in doubt
That, for us, there is salvation.

Yes, praise God, we're redeemed,
Resurrected, and forgiven,
Simply because they dreamed—
And only because they've striven.

To them, we're indebted.
And, so, for them let's take a vow
That all they regretted
We'll remember and ne'er allow
To enslave us again;
That, for now and for our progeny,
We'll sing loud' the refrain
Proclaiming our autonomy;
That generations hence
Will sleep with their eyes opened wide,
Guided by vigilance,
Their weapons loaded by their side;
That we'll e'er heed the call
In defense of all we hold dear;
That we'll always stand tall
And fast despite who or what we fear;
And that, to these pages,
More chapters will be appended
By clerks through the ages.
That our hist'r'y has not ended.

Yes, today's a new day.
And on the words written herein,
We can rest or choose to begin;
We can retreat or hold sway;
The choice is ours to make—
But more than history's at stake.

So, 'Forward, Onward' be our watchword.
May we always be of one accord.

This poem was written to commemorate the publication of the Authority's history, For The Record: The Unique Success Story of the GSCCCA, and was read at the book presentation ceremony on April 28, 2015 during the Clerks' Spring Conference on St. Simons Island.



Blast from the past ...

The Authority's first chairman, Woodson Daniel, former Pulaski County clerk of Superior Court, recently paid a visit to our current chairman, Barry Wilkes. The two reminisced about the early battles fought to protect clerks and create the Authority.



Enjoying their first Spring Conference in April 2001, Superior Court clerks Cindy Mason, Rhett Walker, and Sheila Studdard pose for the camera as new clerks.

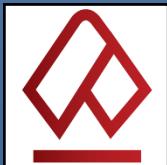
Let Authority help train your staff

The Authority continues to provide a full training schedule for 2015 and is pleased to offer a series of informative webinars in addition to its successful online training classes. Webinars are remote training conducted via the internet and phone and allow a clerk to have multiple staff members participate without the time and cost of travel. See the schedule below.

The Authority continues to offer a variety of online training opportunities including:

- ❖ Introduction to GSCCCA Indexing Standards
- ❖ Extended R.E.Indexing Standards
- ❖ Fines & Fees Training
- ❖ Notary Public Training
- ❖ UCC Training

Contact Rachel Rice at 800-304-5175 x1010 or rachel.rice@gsccca.org with questions. Register for training at www.gsccca.org/training.



2015 Webinar Schedule

June 24	Authority eFile Projects
June 25	R.E. Indexing Standards
July 22	Protective Orders
August 11	Fines & Fees
August 20	R.E. Indexing Standards
Sept. 17	Authority eFile Projects
Sept. 29	Protective Orders
October 28	Fines & Fees