

### News and Views from the Cobb Probate Court



#### A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

- Chief Judge Kelli L. Wolk

We have had a lot of inquiries (and meetings) about Chief Judge Poole's Superior Court Judicial Emergency. The Emergency Declaration has virtually no impact on the Probate Court. However, we appreciate the concern from the community as well as the communication between the Chief Judges in all 5 classes of court over this time. The Cobb Judicial Circuit really does try to operate as a team.

Here in the Probate Court, we are very familiar with the struggle the case management system transition process can be. We lived through that during and following the COVID crisis. Jennifer Ritchey in our office worked tirelessly (well, very tiredly) with Cobb Information Services personnel to develop a system that could work for our court and our users. That process was challenging but went much smoother than we feared. So I would like to thank Jennifer Ritchey again for all of her work then and ongoing with Jamie Webster, our Information Services Liaison, who have worked very hard to keep the system functioning and improving.

Thank you to everyone who was patient when we were working through those implementation delays and the growing pains of a new system. We have offered to help the Superior Court where we can to lessen the pain caused by the current emergency. We hope for the best for our Superior Court colleagues.

#### **COBB COUNTY PROBATE CLINIC**

Volunteer Attorney Breakfast





Every year in September, we host all of the attorneys who volunteer at the Cobb County Probate Clinic here at the courthouse and treat them to breakfast as a way to thank them for their efforts. During this time, our Judges and Hearing Officers provide a free I hour CLE on current probate law and court processes. Thank you to all of our volunteer attorneys for making a difference.

#### **ATTN PROBATE ATTORNEYS!**

Volunteers needed for Cobb County Probate Clinic



Every month, Cobb Legal Aid hosts the Cobb Probate Clinic in person on the second Thursday of the month, and by phone on the fourth Friday of the month. The Probate Clinic is a vital tool designed to provide basic advice and direction (such as "which form should I use?" "who are the heirs in this case?" and "what does this deficiency order mean?") for families probating the estate of a loved one, petitioning for the legal right to care for a minor child or petitioning to take on responsibility for a disabled adult who is unable to manage their affairs. Many of these litigants cannot afford to hire an attorney to personally guide them through a probate matter. Volunteering for the clinic helps self-represented litigants bv ensuring thev can successfully navigate the probate process; helps the Court by providing much-needed legal advice the Court is prohibited from giving, and helps volunteers by providing training and mentorship to those who feel like they could use assistance. The Probate Clinic depends on pro bono volunteers willing to share their expertise in this area. If you are interested volunteering for the clinic, or have questions, contact Cathy Waddell (<u>cwaddell@atlantalegalaid.org</u>) discuss how you can get involved and make a difference in our Cobb community!



# Court-Appointed Attorney and Evaluator Rates Increasing

Current rates for court-appointed attorneys and evaluators will be raised to \$200.00 beginning October 15, 2024. Details will be provided to attorneys on our court-appointed list.

## Congratulations

Employee of the Quarter Award

GRACIELA VERA



Graciela Vera works in the Estates Division as an Intake Clerk. She has been with the Probate Court for almost 2 ½ years. She was

honored this quarter for taking initiative on some recent legislative changes as it related to her work. Graciela is doing a great job in intake and is an asset to the Court.







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