



SUPERIOR COURTS
MOUNTAIN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF GEORGIA
JAMES E. CORNWELL, JR., Judge

STEPHENS COUNTY COURTHOUSE
P.O. BOX 758
TOCCOA, GEORGIA 30577

TELEPHONE
706-886-7525
FAX 706-886-1159

April 19, 2010

To My Friends and Colleagues:

After much deliberation, I have decided to conclude my thirty years of public service by not seeking re-election this year and retiring from my position effective May 15, 2010. I notified the Governor Friday by delivering a letter to him.

Being a judge is a wonderful and challenging job, but after almost twelve years I have found I am tiring of making life-changing decisions for other people. Whether a judge decides with whom a child lives or an appropriate sentence it is a monumental event. I think I need to take a life pause to make decisions where my own life should go. I retire from the bench for my own personal reasons.

As I write you I look back on my life and career. I have been blessed with two wonderful children and achieved my dream and professional goal of being a judge. When I campaigned in 1998, I promised I would know the law, listen and base my decisions on the law and the evidence. I kept that promise. During my time on the bench our circuit has been a statewide leader in case management efficiency and every case was given the attention it needed. I have held our first court efficiency meeting and from that several standing orders were created based on suggestions from you. I have worked to implement a drug court in Stephens and Rabun and remain in touch with the respective commissioners concerning funding. I believe in drug court and hope those courts come to fruition.

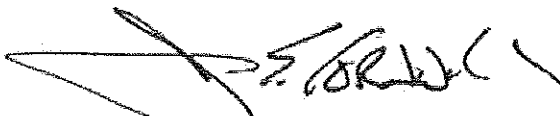
The Mountain Circuit is a wonderful place with terrific attorneys. We will welcome two new judges to join Judge Struble, who has pledged his judicial continuation until these judges are sworn into office. We are most fortunate to have a man of Judge Struble's abilities, competencies and character with us. While I intend to practice in this circuit, I, of course, will be available to help the Governor's appointees make the required transition from bar to bench.

Many of you know and appreciate my abiding faith - one that has been a pillar in my life in triumphs and tribulations. That is a faith which is a constant and shall remain so. Retrospectively, it is fitting to acknowledge that thirty years of public service has been a blessing.

Now, I resume another phase of my adult life and look forward to seeing you, trying cases with you and enjoying the practice of law.

Thank you for the privilege of having been one of your judges. Truly it has been my honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. E. Cornwell, Jr.", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

James E. Cornwell, Jr.
Chief Judge
Superior Courts
Mountain Judicial Circuit

JECjr/je