SUPREME COURT
OF
MISSISSIPPI

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM L. WALLER, JR.

Austere finances in 2010 made this a year filled with struggle as we worked to continue all essential court operations while cutting costs.

The judiciary was underfunded $3 million for fiscal year 2010. This reduction was below minimum funding necessary for the Judicial Branch. The judiciary was forced to seek a $1.7 million deficit appropriation during the 2010 Legislative session to fund operations for FY 2010. Also, the Court cut expenses by reducing trial judges' support staff funds, postponing judicial education and freezing hiring, salaries and out-of-state travel.

The Court found itself facing a potential financial crisis when the Governor called for further budget cuts. The Court, faced with no other choice to maintain essential services, asserted its exemption as an independent branch of government and took the unusual step of ordering the State Fiscal Officer not to cut appropriations to the judiciary. The courts require minimally adequate funding. With a budget of $34.8 million, less than one percent of the state general fund, there was nothing left to cut without laying off people and curtailing services.

The judiciary also faced a continuing struggle to retain experienced judges on salaries that ranked lowest in the nation. One veteran trial judge took early retirement in 2010 and 10 did not seek re-election. Several among those returned to the private practice of law because they could not afford to continue in public service. After another unsuccessful attempt to secure judicial salary increases in the 2010 Legislative session, judicial leadership remains undeterred in the resolve to continue to seek legislative approval for adequate compensation. Judicial leadership proposes to increase fees and court costs to fund salary increases. While increasing filing fees is not a desirable move, it is the only option available, since the present economic climate precludes a general fund appropriation for salary increases.

Our trial courts handled a tremendous volume of cases. The state's 20 Chancery Court districts saw more than 88,000 cases filed during the 2010 fiscal year, from July 2009 through June 2010. The state's 48 chancellors disposed of nearly 65,000 cases during that same time.

In the Circuit Courts, more than 25,800 civil cases were filed, and the state's 51 circuit judges finalized more than 22,000 cases during the 2010 fiscal year. The Circuit Courts disposed of more than 25,000 criminal cases during that same time.

The 20 counties which have County Courts received more than 35,000 civil case filings, and 29 County Court judges disposed of more than 24,000 civil cases. That does not include Youth Court cases handled by County Court judges.

The high volume of litigation handled by our trial judges and the enormous amount of records filed with the clerks of court make it imperative that we develop and implement a statewide, uniform electronic filing and case management system. Planning began in 2004 for the Mississippi

Electronic Courts (MEC) system, and 2010 saw great progress. Development, testing and implementation of e-filing continued in Madison, Scott and Warren counties, the three pilot counties. Madison County Chancery Court, which began e-filing in 2009, became a paperless court in January 2010. Madison County Circuit Court began e-filing in civil cases in March. Madison County Court judges requested and were approved to participate in the pilot program in fall 2010. Scott County Chancery Court began voluntary e-filing in February 2010. Warren County Chancery Court began accepting voluntary e-filing in June 2010, and Warren County Circuit Court began voluntary e-filing in civil cases in November 2010. Trial judges, clerks and staff in the pilot counties, through their willingness to be a development lab, will enable MEC staff to refine an efficient e-filing system which can be offered to courts statewide.

Fair, timely and efficient disposition of cases is essential at the trial and appellate court levels. The state appellate courts, which track statistics by calendar year, received 904 new cases filed, and disposed of 938 cases in 2010. The Supreme Court decided 433 cases and issued 190 published opinions. The Court of Appeals decided 505 cases and issued 461published opinions. Both courts also handled a tremendous volume of motions. The Supreme Court addressed 3,537 motions, and the Court of Appeals decided 2,597 motions. Both courts adhere to a time frame of 270 days or less from final completion of briefing to issuance of decisions on the merits. Most cases are decided in less time.

The judiciary remains committed to the fair and efficient administration of justice.

William L. Waller, Jr.
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Mississippi

SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI
2010 ANNUAL REPORT

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MISSISSIPPI JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The Mississippi Judiciary is made up of Justice and Municipal Courts at the most basic level; County, Chancery, and Circuit Courts comprising the trial courts of record; and two appellate courts, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court, Mississippi's court of last resort.

There are 82 Justice Courts with 197 judges. Justice Courts have jurisdiction over civil actions involving sums of $3,500 or less and misdemeanors. They also hold preliminary hearings in felony cases. Appeals from the Justice Courts may be taken to circuit courts, or county courts if available, and the cases appealed are tried de novo.

There are 226 Municipal Courts with 227 judges. They have limited criminal jurisdiction and jurisdiction over violations of municipal ordinances. Appeals from the Municipal Courts may be taken to County or Circuit courts, and the cases appealed are tried de novo in the appellate court.

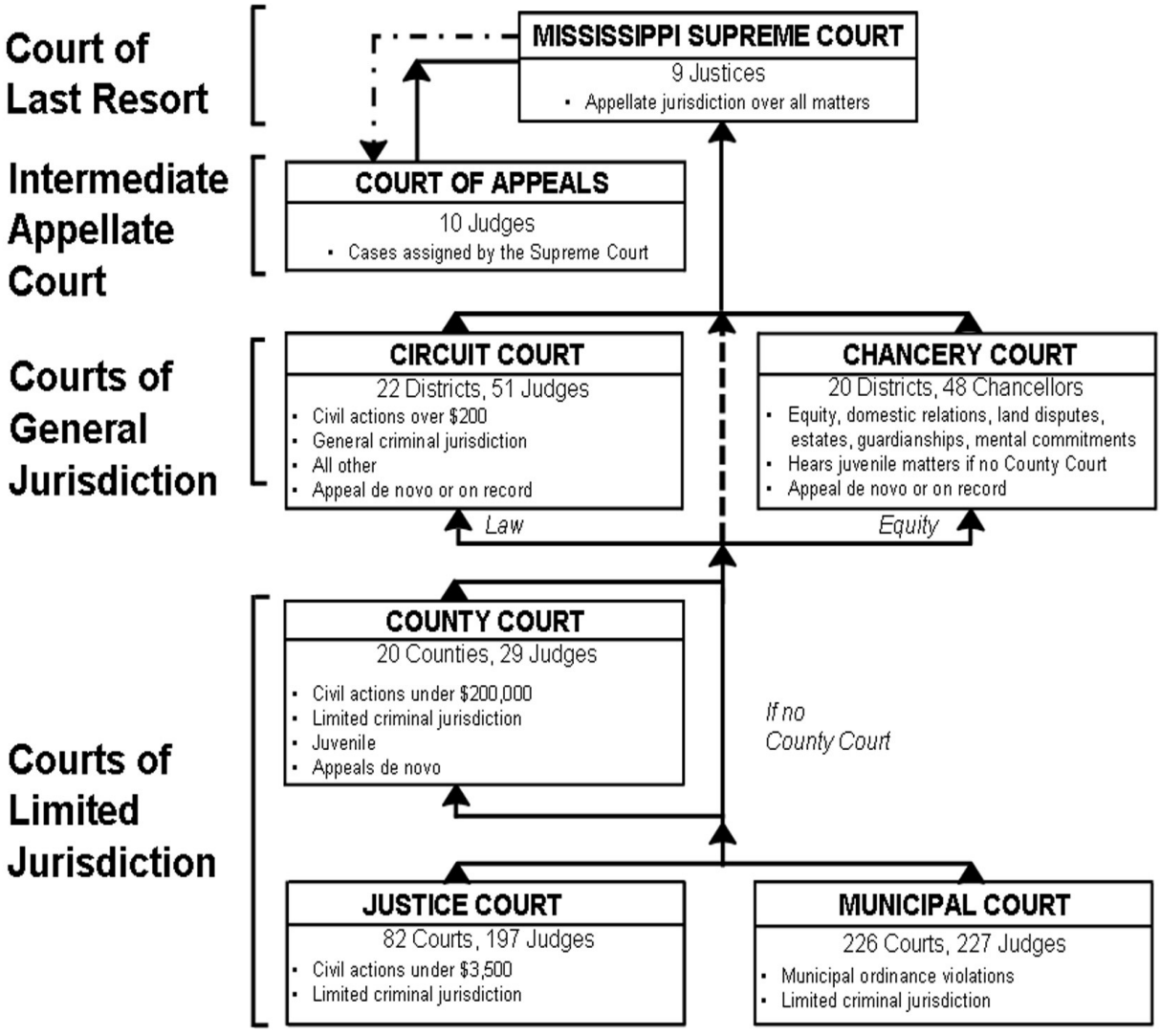
There are 20 County Courts with 29 judges. These courts have concurrent civil jurisdiction with the Chancery and Circuit Courts in suits involving $200,000 or less. They also have limited criminal jurisdiction and appellate jurisdiction from the Justice Courts and Municipal Courts. In counties with County Courts, the Youth Courts function as a division of the County Courts handling juvenile matters.

There are Chancery Courts in each county. Chancery Courts are organized into 20 districts with 48 chancellors. They have jurisdiction over matters of equity, domestic relations, land disputes, estates, guardianships, and mental commitments. In counties without County Courts, the Chancery Courts handle Youth Court functions. They also receive appeals on the record from County Courts in matters over which the two courts have concurrent subject matter jurisdiction.

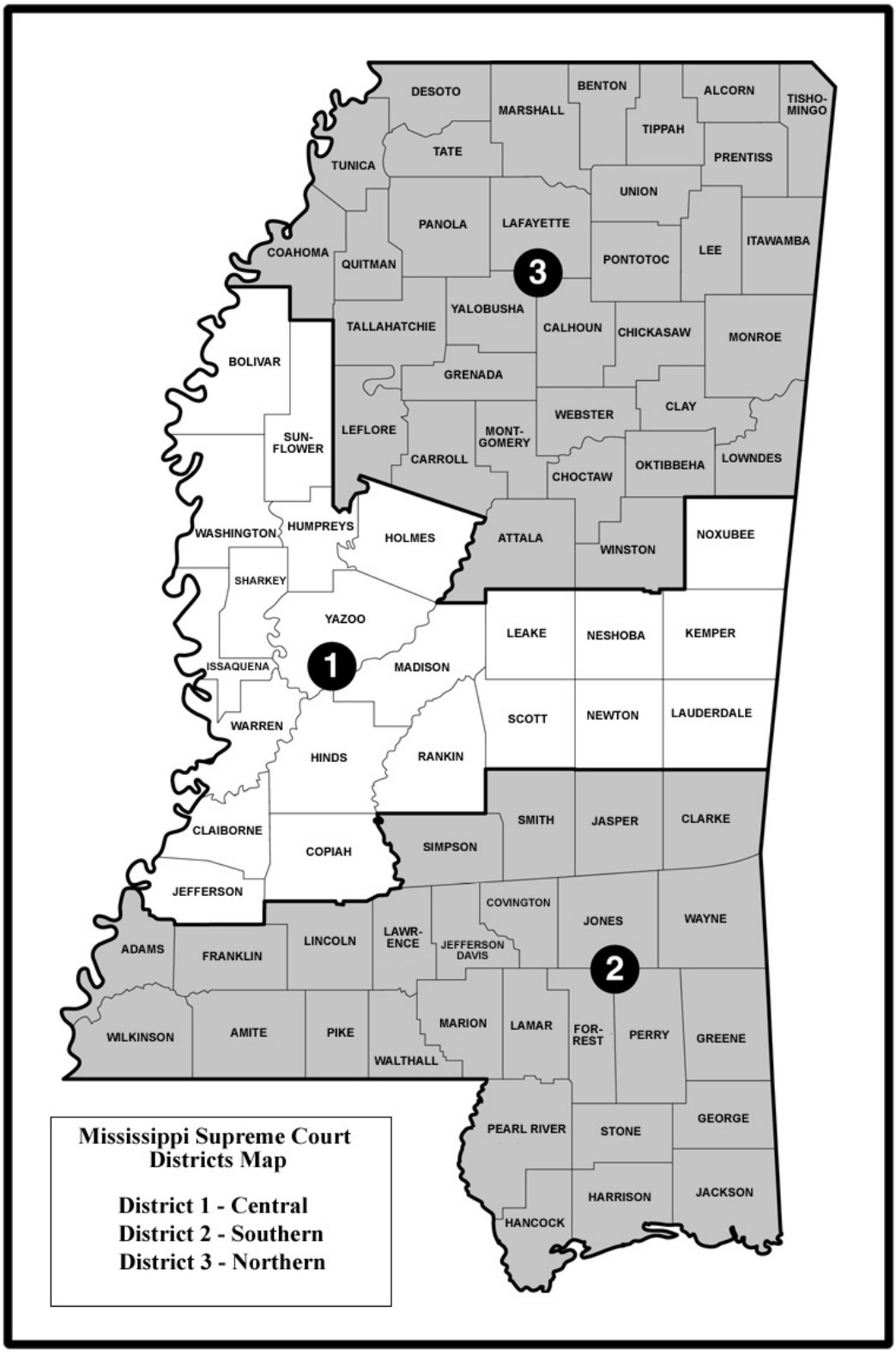
The Circuit Courts are the general jurisdiction trial courts in Mississippi. There are Circuit Courts in each county. Circuit Courts are organized into 22 districts with 51 judges. They have jurisdiction of all civil actions at law seeking recovery in excess of $200 and of all criminal cases under state law. They receive appeals de novo from the Justice Courts and on the record from County Courts.

Appeals from the Chancery, Circuit, and, in limited situations, the County Courts are taken to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court may either retain the appeal or assign it to the Court of Appeals. Generally, the Supreme Court retains cases involving issues of first impression and cases involving interpretation of the Constitution, statutes or regulations. There are also a few categories of cases which the Supreme Court retains, such as death penalties, utility rates and annexations. The Court or Appeals typically hears cases in which the issues are ones of error correction, such as whether the judgment is supported by the evidence, or whether the judge correctly ruled on evidentiary challenges. All decisions of the Court of Appeals are subject to discretionary review by the Supreme Court on petition for writ of certiorari. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court and ten judges on the Court of Appeals.

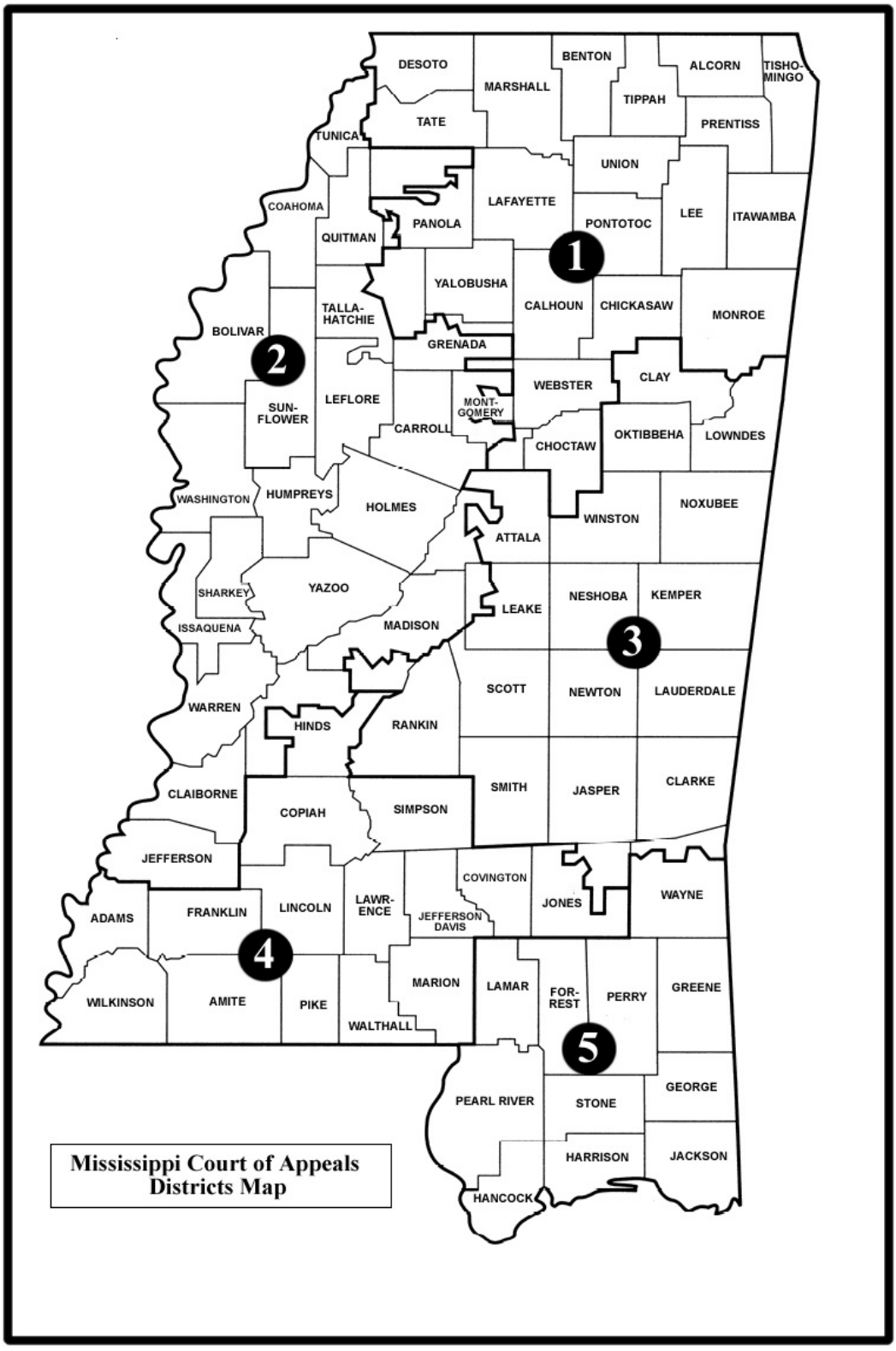
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



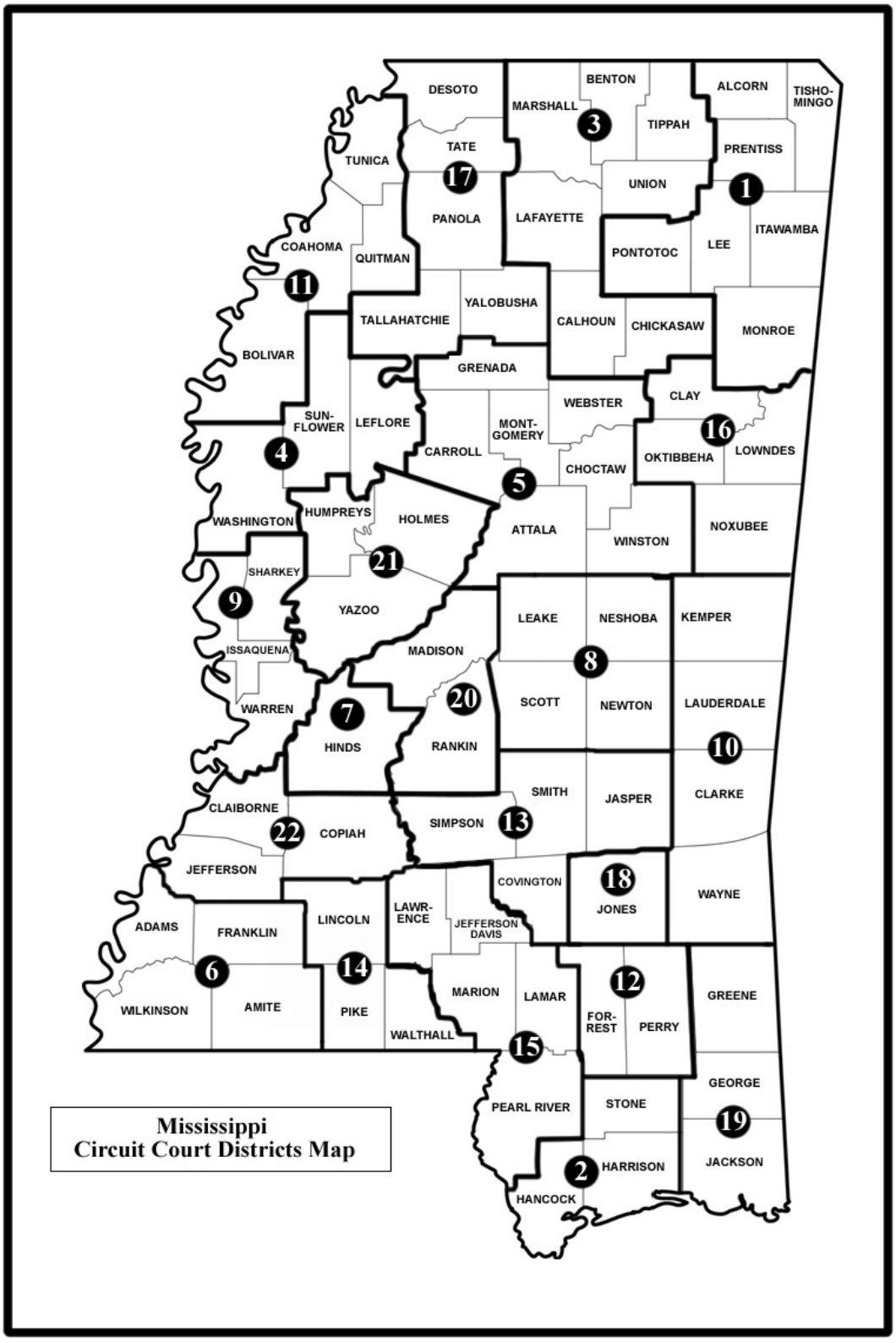
SUPREME COURT DISTRICTS



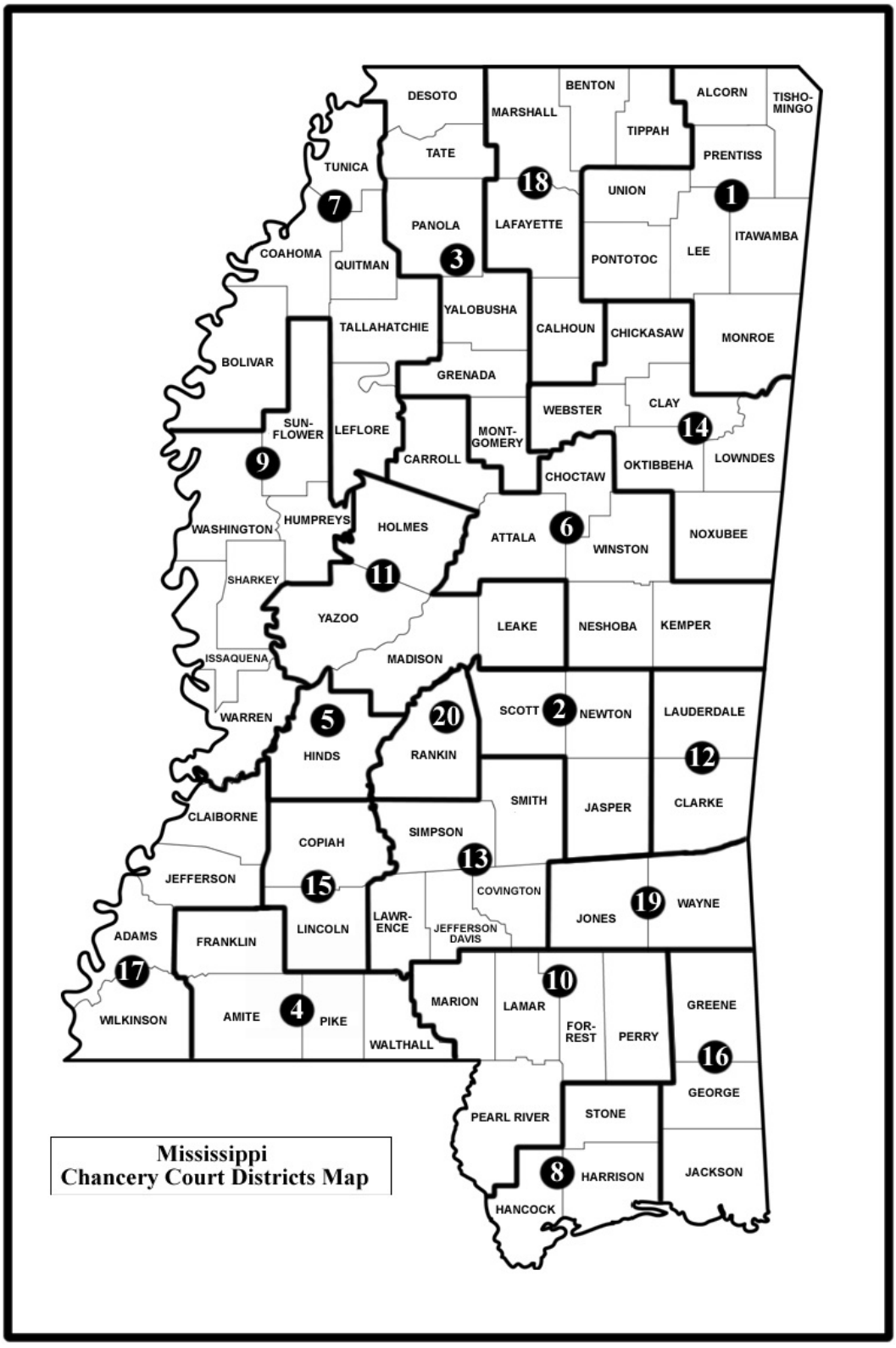
COURT OF APPEALS DISTRICTS



CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICTS

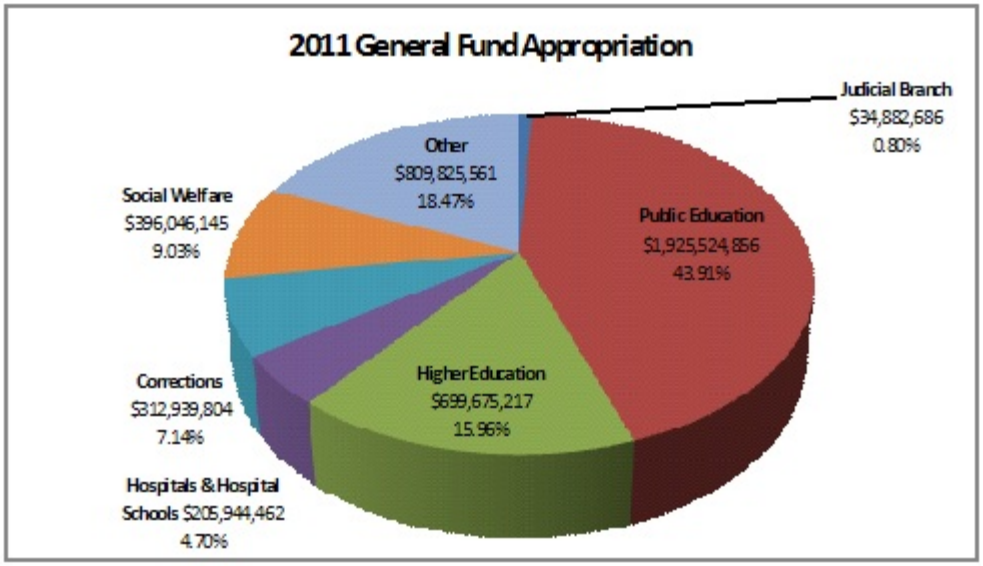


CHANCERY COURT DISTRICTS



FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURTS

The state judiciary is funded primarily by general fund appropriations with additional funding for specific mandates by way of grants and special funds.



For fiscal year 2011, the entire general fund appropriations for all three branches of state government was $4,384,838,731. The appropriation for the Administrative Office of Courts and all courts of record in the state (the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the 82 circuit courts, the 82 chancery courts, and the 20 county courts) was $34,882,686.This represents performance of all judicial functions by these courts for less than one per cent of the general fund expenditures.

State tax revenues shrank as the nation struggled through a recession. The Court responded to lean budget times by enacting its own budget limitations. The Court during 2011 remained under a hiring and salary freeze, and a ban on out-of-state travel. The Court during the previous year had accepted a voluntary cut of $950,000 in response to the Governor's call for across-the-board cuts. The judiciary was initially underfunded by $3 million for the 2010 fiscal year.

When the Governor again called for budget cuts in the 2011 fiscal year, the Court determined that it could not carry out all essential functions if such a cut was made to its already minimal funding. The Supreme Court on January 29, 2010, issued an order addressing additional budget cuts ordered by the Governor. In that order, the Court ruled that the statutory authority for the State Fiscal Officer to cut appropriations is not applicable to the Judicial Branch, and ordered the State Fiscal Officer not to impose the cuts on the judicial budgets.

Chief Justice William L. Waller Jr. in August 2010 declared that the failure to adequately compensate state judges had reached the crisis point. Mississippi trial and appellate judges continued to rank as the lowest paid in the nation. Members of the judiciary proposed judicial compensation legislation which would be funded by filing fee increases.

CHANGES ON THE BENCH

The year 2010 saw 16 trial judges leave the bench. Two died, one took early retirement, 10 did not seek re-election, and three were defeated at the polls. One was elected to a different court.

Circuit Judge Robert G. Evans died July 13, 2010. He had served for more than 19 years as a trial judge of the 13th Circuit District. Gov. Haley Barbour appointed Judge Eddie Bowen to fill the vacancy. Judge Bowen took the oath of office on Sept. 20, 2010.

Chancery Judge James H. C. Thomas Jr. died Oct. 1, 2010, the day he had planned to retire. He had been a judge of the 10th Chancery District for more than 15 years. He had been unopposed for re-election, and after his death, he won a majority of votes in the November 2010 general election. Gov. Barbour appointed Judge Deborah Gambrell to the judicial vacancy on Jan. 5, 2011.

Chancery Judge J. Max Kilpatrick retired from the 6th Chancery District on June 30, 2010, after five years of service on the bench. Gov. Barbour appointed Joseph Kilgore to the vacancy, effective June 30.

Judges who retired at the end of December 2010 were:

- Circuit Judge Andrew C. Baker, who served for 32 years as Circuit Judge of the 17th Judicial District;
- Circuit Judge Henry L. Lackey, who served for 17 years as Circuit Judge of the 3rd Judicial District;
- Circuit Judge Samac Richardson, who served for 13 years as Circuit Judge of the 20th Judicial District and five years as Rankin County Court Judge;
- Circuit Judge Kenneth L. Thomas, who served for16 years as Circuit Judge of the 11th Judicial District;
- Judge Swan Yerger, who served for 14 years as Circuit Judge of the 7th Judicial District of Hinds County;
- Chancery Judge Sebe Dale Jr., who served 32 years as judge of the 10th Chancery District and 10 years as Youth Court Referee. The Marion County Chancery Court Annex was renamed the Sebe Dale, Jr. Chancery Court Building in his honor.
- Judge William G. Willard Jr., who served 12 years as judge of the 7th Chancery District and nine and one-half years as Clarksdale Municipal Judge;
- Madison County Court Judge William Agin, who served 28 years as Madison County Court and Youth Court Judge;
- Hinds County Court Judge William Barnett, who served 16 years as Hinds County Court Judge and 16 years as Jackson Municipal Judge;
- Harrison County Court Judge Michael H. Ward, who served 12 years as County Court and Youth Court Judge and 20 years as Harrison County Family Court Judge.

OUTREACH AND INNOVATION

Access to Justice

The Access to Justice Commission was created by the Mississippi Supreme Court in 2006, to develop a unified strategy to improve access to the civil courts for the poor. The Commission, which meets quarterly, develops and recommends policies, programs, and initiatives to assist the judiciary in meeting needs for civil legal services to the poor. Co-Chairs are Chancery Judge Denise Owens and former Mississippi Bar President H. Rodger Wilder. The Commission includes judges, a representative of the Governor, legislators, business and community leaders, and clergy. Representatives of entities which provide legal services to the poor are ex-officio members.

Between April 2008 and February 2010, the Commission, acting on an order from the Supreme Court, convened public hearings in Gulfport, Greenwood, Oxford, Meridian and Jackson. The Commission summarized findings from those hearings in "The Report of Public Hearings on the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Mississippians." Commission leaders presented the report to the Supreme Court on Sept. 14, 2010. Commission leaders said that improving poor people's access to civil courts requires increasing pro bono legal services, increasing funding for civil legal services, and making it easier for people to represent themselves. The report discussed increasing funding for Legal Services, encouraging more lawyers to do pro bono work, assisting people who represent themselves, and increasing public awareness of availability of legal assistance for poor people. The report suggested, among other things, providing court-approved legal forms in libraries, enlisting pro bono attorneys to hold legal clinics to help unrepresented litigants, and assisting pro bono attorneys by providing practice area manuals and standard forms.

Code of Judicial Conduct Study Committee

The Mississippi Code of Judicial Conduct Study Committee was created by order of the Mississippi Supreme Court in June 2009. The committee, chaired by Jackson attorney Luther Munford, conducted a comprehensive study of the code. The committee on April 7, 2010, recommended revisions in light of changes to the Model Code of Judicial Conduct adopted by the American Bar Association in 2007.

Civil Legal Assistance Fund

The Supreme Court during 2010 distributed $873,000 for civil legal assistance to low income people. This Civil Legal Assistance Fund distribution was from special assessments on court filings and from fees charged to out-of-state attorneys appearing *pro hac vice*. No general fund appropriations were used.

Domestic Abuse Court

The Washington County Chancery Court on Sept. 22, 2010, received a $172,609 federal grant to develop a Domestic Abuse Court. The grant, to be spread over two years, was provided by the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women. Chancery Judge Marie Wilson, who sought the grant, said that the aim is to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and recidivism. Domestic Abuse Court is a problem-solving court, similar to a drug court. The Domestic Abuse Court, operated within the Chancery Court, will assess the needs of the victim and the accused offender, help both sides get legal representation, refer them to counseling and a behavior modification program, and monitor their progress.

Drug Courts

Thirty-six drug court programs were operating throughout the state at the end of 2010. Programs included 16 Circuit Court programs, 10 County Court youth programs, three referee court youth programs, five misdemeanor programs in municipal and justice courts, and two family court pilot programs.

Youth Courts in Adams and Rankin counties created family drug court pilot programs in 2010. The two-year program is funded by a federal stimulus grant. The programs, supervised by Judges John Hudson and Thomas Broome, address drug and alcohol problems that are the underlying causes of abuse and neglect, delinquency, domestic strife, crime and other problems. The family drug courts deal with juveniles, parents and their extended families in efforts to address substance abuse without separating children from their families. The pilot programs are a collaborative effort of the courts, Department of Human Services, Department of Mental Health, Boards of Supervisors, local law enforcement and schools.

The 8th Circuit Court of Leake, Neshoba, Newton and Scott counties started a veteran's component within that Drug Court in August 2010 in an effort to address the unique needs of veterans.

At the end of 2010, 2,787 people were enrolled in drug court programs statewide. A total of 3,491 people were served by drug courts during that year, and 409 people graduated from the programs. Drug court participants paid $889,175.13 in fees and $717,899.19 in fines. Sixty-six drug-free babies were born to drug court participants. A total of 265 drug-free babies have been born since 2005, when those statistics began to be kept.

Commission on Children's Justice

The Supreme Court reestablished the Mississippi Commission on Children's Justice in 2010 as an advisory group to examine the juvenile justice system and recommend improvements. The Commission is working to address the structure and operation of the Youth Court system and interactions of the juvenile justice, child welfare and education systems. The Supreme Court directed the commission to develop a statewide comprehensive approach to improving the child welfare system; coordinate the three branches of government in assessing the impact of government actions on children who are abused or neglected; and recommend changes to improve children's safety, strengthen and support families and promote public trust and confidence in the child welfare system. Rankin County Court Judge Thomas Broome and Supreme Court Justice Randy G. Pierce are co-chairs. Judge Broome leads a subcommittee which focuses on the Youth Court system. Court of Appeals Judge Virginia Carlton leads a subcommittee which deals with education issues.

Court Administration – Electronic Filing and Case Management

Development of the Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC) continued in Madison, Scott and Warren counties, the three pilot counties. Madison County Chancery Court began operating as a paperless court in January 2010. Scott County Chancery Court began voluntary e-filing in February 2010, and e-filing became mandatory in April in certain cases. Madison Circuit Court began voluntary e-filing in specified civil cases in March 2010, and e-filing became mandatory in April. Madison County Court judges requested and were approved to participate in the pilot program in fall 2010. Warren County Chancery Court began accepting voluntary e-filing in June 2010, and e-filing became mandatory in certain cases in July. Warren County Circuit Court began voluntary e-filing in civil cases in November 2010, and e-filing became mandatory in December 2010.

The Supreme Court, working with the Administrative Office of Courts, the State Department of Information Technology Services and state trial courts, is implementing a major long-range initiative to provide a uniform electronic case filing and court management system for distribution to the chancery and circuit courts and their respective clerks' offices. The Mississippi Electronic Courts program is adapted from the electronic filing system used in federal district courts.

Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS)

At the end of 2010, the Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS) was operating in 73 Youth Courts and Referee Courts. The system was implemented in 20 counties in 2010. MYCIDS is designed to help Youth Courts organize their work and records efficiently and save staff time and other resources. The MYCIDS system includes electronic docketing and record keeping. Case tracking features assist court staff in scheduling all hearings and other events required by law to occur within a specific time frame. Judges and court staff are able to track juveniles' encounters with multiple jurisdictions. Computer hardware, staff training and a help desk are provided by the Supreme Court at no charge to local Youth Courts.

Information Technology

The Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of Courts function with a technology staff that distributes and maintains all computer hardware and software in the trial courts and appellate courts, distributes and installs MYCIDS, and trains, develops and maintains the appellate court case management system (CITS) and the AOC Statistical System (SCATS), maintains the Judicial Branch web site, and advises the Court on future technology initiatives.

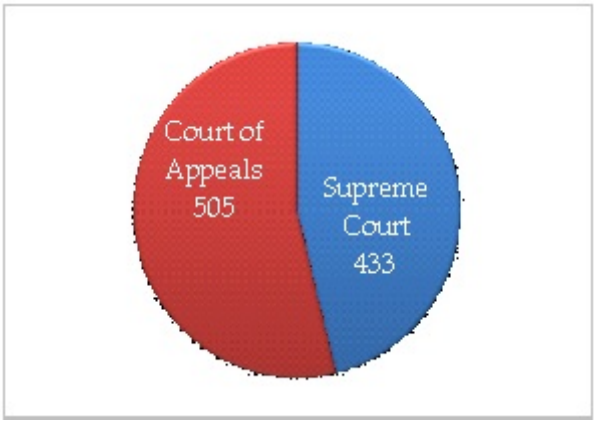
THE APPELLATE COURTS OF MISSISSIPPI

All appeals from the Circuit, Chancery and Youth Courts of the state come to the Supreme Court. Appeals from the Justice Courts go to the Circuit Courts or to the County Courts where available. County Court appeals are to either the Circuit Courts, the Chancery Courts, or the Supreme Court, depending on the subject matter and type of case.

Certain appeals are, as a class, retained and decided by the Supreme Court. Others may be assigned by the Supreme Court to the Court of Appeals. In deciding whether to retain a case, the Supreme Court considers the uniqueness of the case, the likelihood that its decision will be of important precedential value, whether it raises issues of first impression or interpretation, and the relative workloads of the two appellate courts.

Cases which must be retained by the Supreme Court are those which involve:

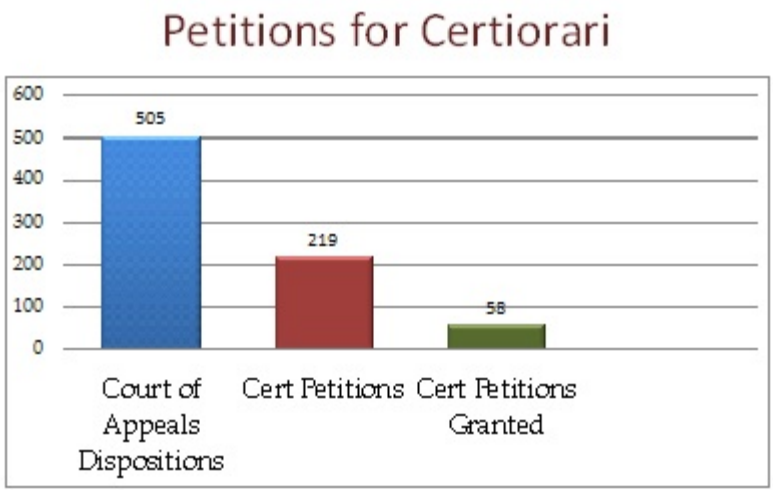
(a) the imposition of the death penalty;
(b) utility rates;
(c) annexations;
(d) bond issues;
(e) election contests;
(f) a trial court's holding a statute unconstitutional;
(g) bar discipline matters;
(h) judicial performance matters;
(i) certified questions from federal court.

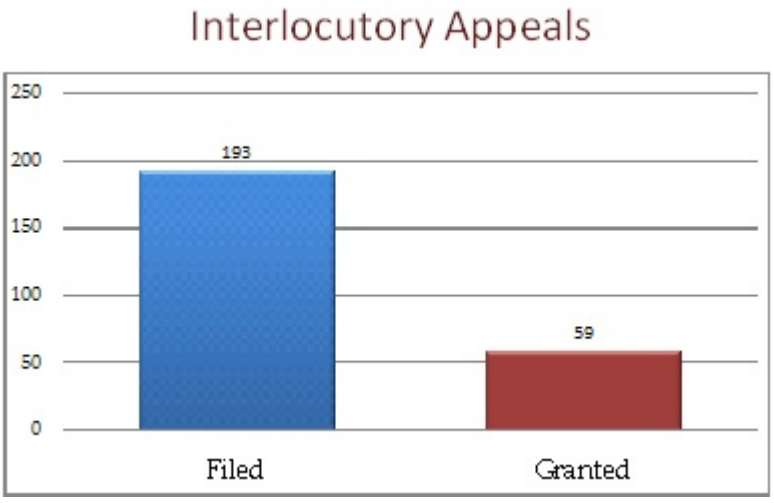


In addition to its workload of retained cases, the Supreme Court also decides most interlocutory appeals and all petitions for writ of certiorari from the Court of Appeals, and has significant administrative responsibilities such as rule making obligations ranging from rules of procedure to Bar admissions.

The Court of Appeals does an outstanding job of deciding a high level of direct appeals. Typical cases assigned to the Court of Appeals are referred to as error correction cases. These cases deal with evidentiary issues which arose during the course of the trial, and with the weight and sufficiency of the evidence supporting the judgment. Additionally, by rule, all Workers Compensation cases are referred to the Court of Appeals.

Since July 2004, both appellate courts have decided cases within 270 days following completion of briefing, and, in most cases, decisions are made even more expeditiously. All petitions for writ of certiorari from the Court of Appeals are either granted, denied or dismissed by the Supreme Court within 90 days following the filing of the responses to the petitions, and all cases on review by certiorari are decided within 180 days after the petitions are granted. Petitions for interlocutory appeal are generally granted, denied, or dismissed within 45 days after the responses are filed.





STATISTICAL SUMMARY FOR APPELLATE COURTS

Case Filings

Notices of Appeal, General	738
Death Penalty Direct Appeal	4
Death Penalty PCR Applications	6
Bar Discipline Cases	7
Bar Discipline Appeals	0
Bar Reinstatement Cases	4
Judicial Performance Cases	8
Annexation Cases	4
Election Contests	3
Interlocutory Appeals Granted	59
Certiorari Petitions Granted	58
Workers' Comp Appeals	12
Utility Rate Cases	0
Federally Certified Questions	1
Total New Cases Filed	904

Case Dispositions		Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Courts Combined
Dismissed by Clerk's Rule 2 Notice		74	35	109
Dismissed by Order of Court		149	9	158
Certiorari Petitions Dismissed as Improvidently Grated		9	0	9
Decided by Published Opinion		190	461	651
Per Curiam Affirmed		9	0	9
Decided by Order		2	0	2
Total Case Dispositions		433	505	938

In 2010, the Supreme Court heard oral argument in 32 cases, while the Court of Appeals heard oral argument in 43 cases.

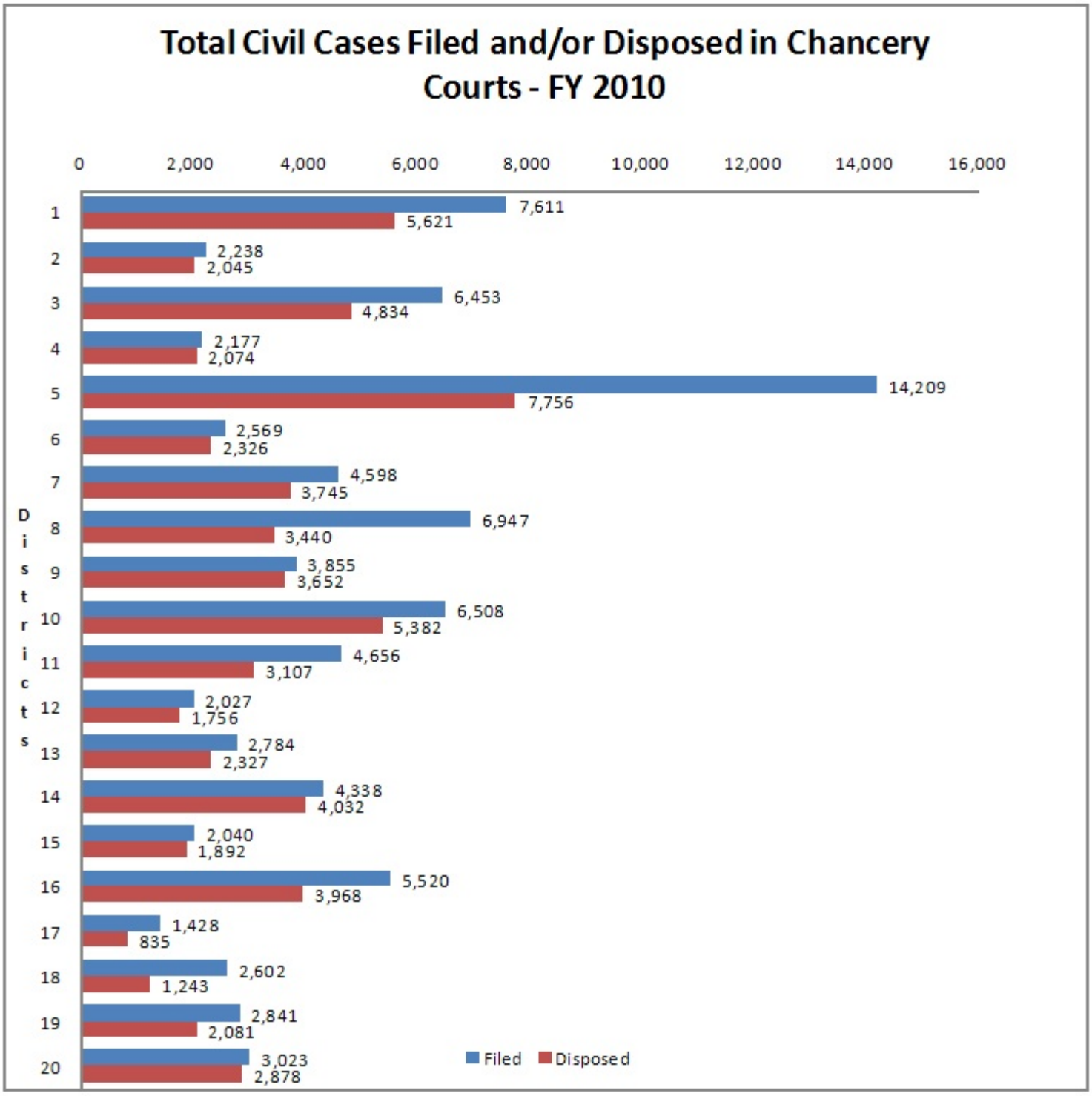
In addition, the appellate courts addressed 6,134 motions: 3,537 by the Supreme Court and 2,597 by the Court of Appeals. These included:

		Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Courts Combined
Motions for Rehearing		80	211	291
Petitions for Interlocutory Appeal		193	0	193
Petitions for Certiorari		219	0	219

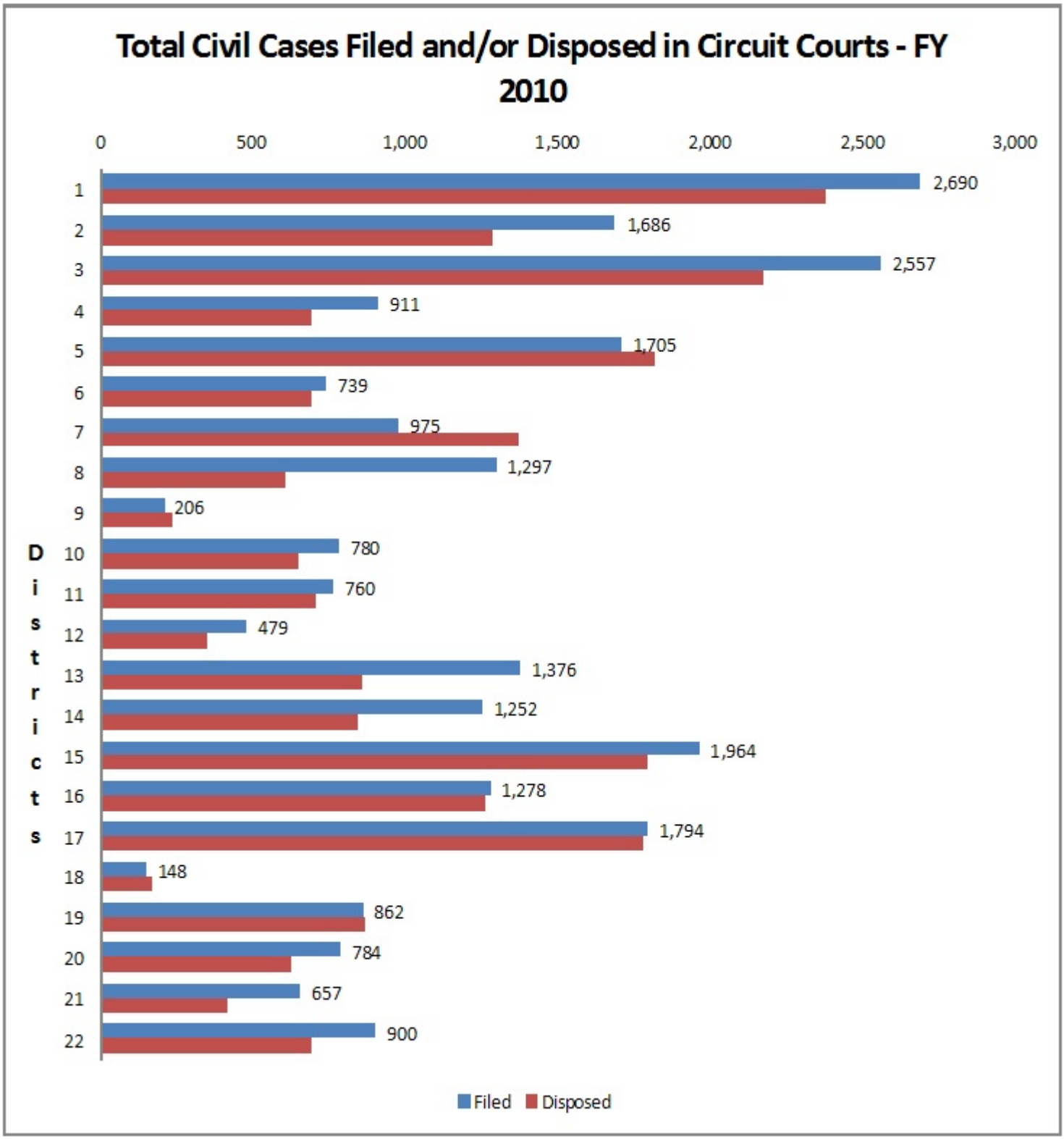
MISSISSIPPI TRIAL COURTS OF RECORD

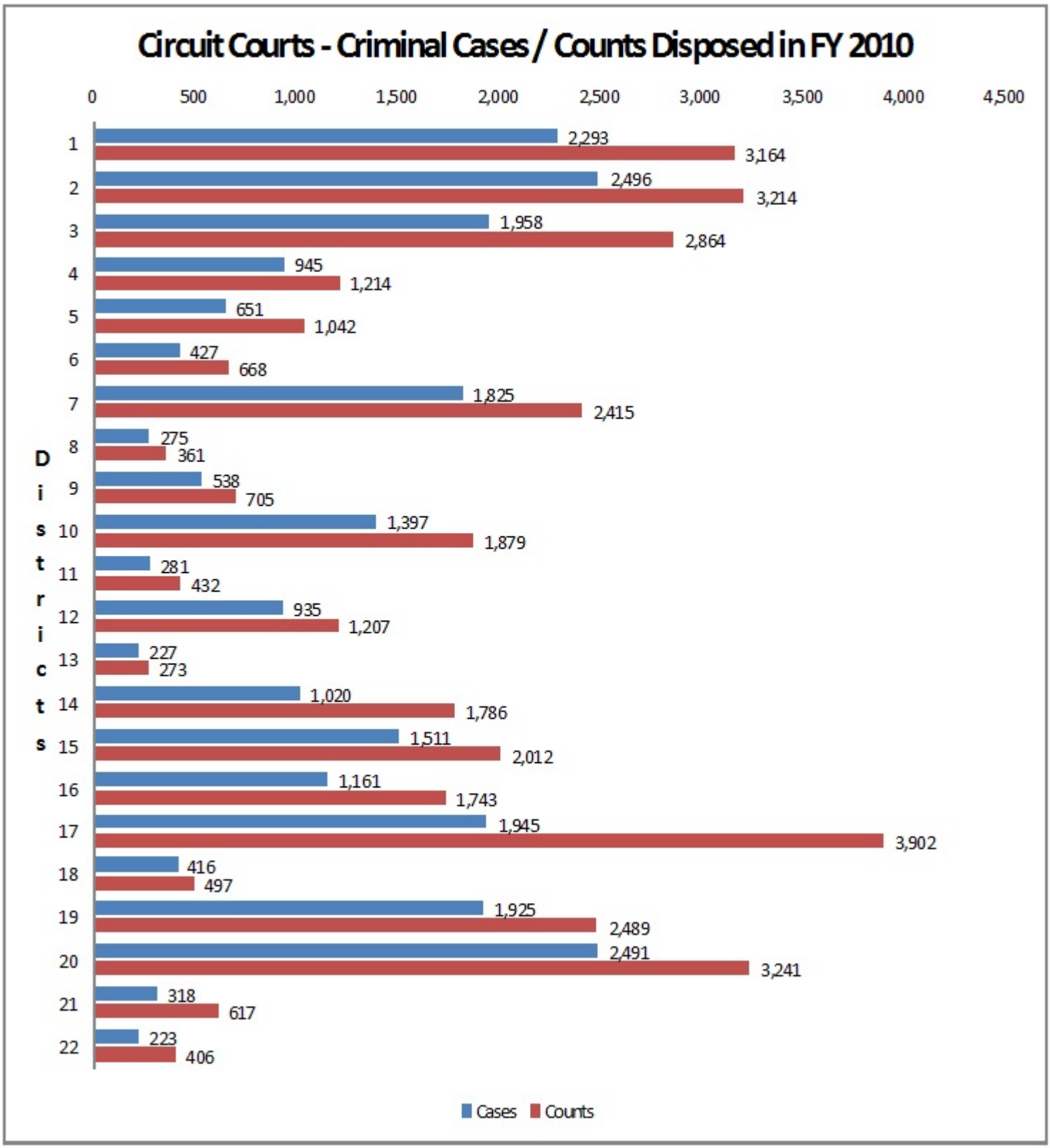
The trial courts in Mississippi without jurisdictional limits on the amounts in controversy are the Chancery and Circuit Courts. The state is divided into 20 Chancery Court Districts and 22 Circuit Court Districts. Each district has from one to four judges, depending on the size of the district and its case load. The courts are served by independently elected chancery and circuit clerks in each county. The chancery and circuit clerks for each district are required by law to report the activities of the courts to the Administrative Office of Courts. The data, as reported, reflect the following:

CHANCERY COURTS

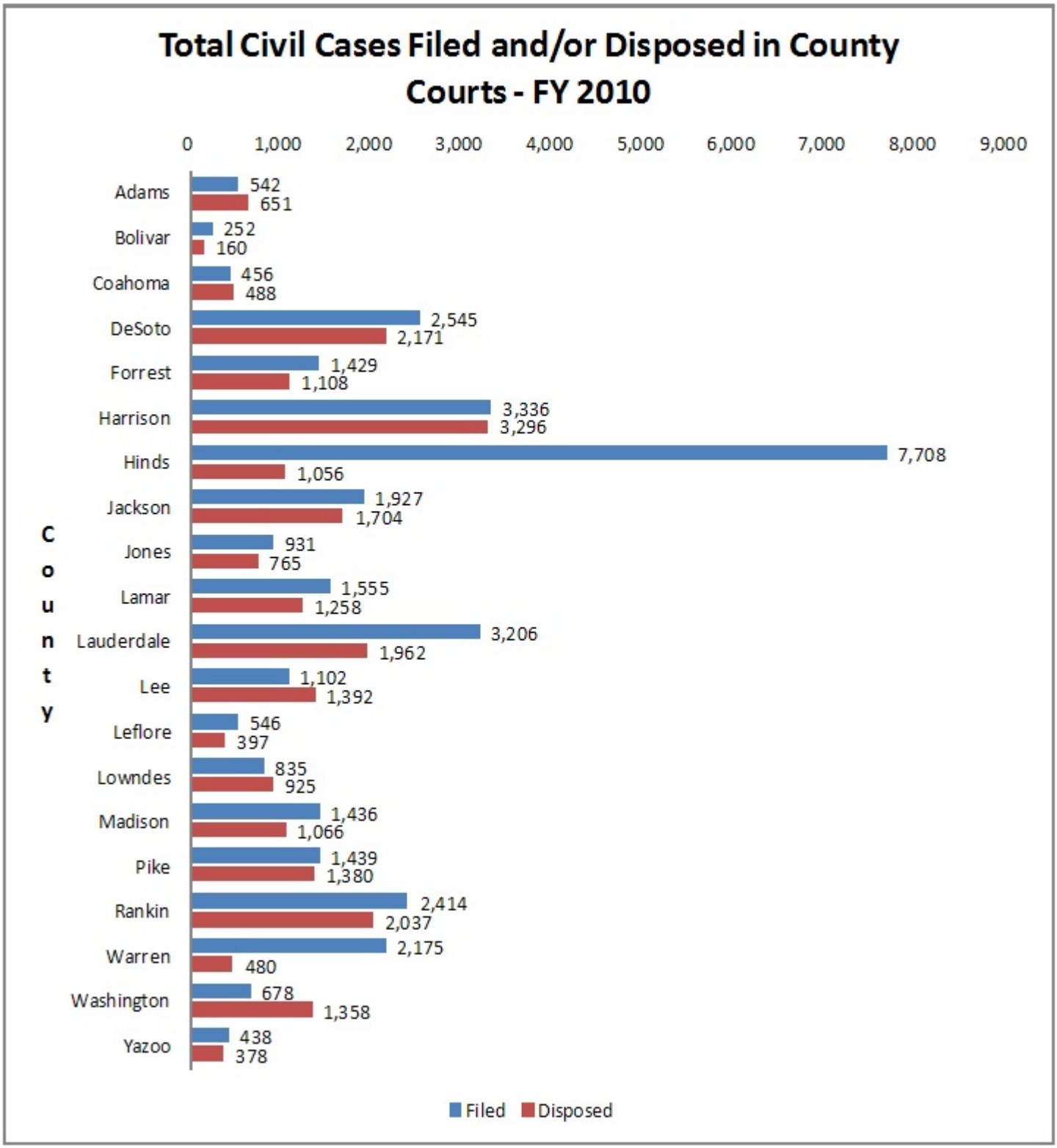


CIRCUIT COURTS




Circuit Courts - Criminal Cases / Counts Disposed in FY 2010
0
500
1,000
1,500
2,000
2,500
3,000
3,500
4,000
4,500
Districts
1
2,293
3,164
2
2,496
3,214
3
1,958
2,864
4
945
1,214
5
651
1,042
6
427
668
7
1,825
2,415
8
275
361
9
538
705
10
1,397
1,879
11
281
432
12
935
1,207
13
227
273
14
1,020
1,786
15
1,511
2,012
16
1,161
1,743
17
1,945
3,902
18
416
497
19
1,925
2,489
20
2,491
3,241
21
318
617
22
223
406
Cases
Counts

COUNTY COURTS



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS

The Administrative Office of Courts was created on July 1, 1993, to support the judicial system by providing efficient administration of the non-judicial business of the state's courts. The AOC offices are located in Jackson in the Carroll Gartin Justice Building at 450 High Street. The duties of the AOC, specified in Miss. Code Ann. §§ 9-21-1, -3, -9, -14, -29, -43, -73, (Rev. 2007), are:

- To assist the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with his duties as the chief administrative officer of all of the courts in the state;
- To assist in the prevention of unnecessary delay in the conduct of trials of the state courts;
- To promulgate standards, rules and regulations for computer and/or electronic filing and storage of all court records and court-related records maintained throughout the state in courts and in offices of circuit and chancery clerks;
- To collect case statistics from all civil, criminal and youth courts in the state;
- To coordinate and conduct studies and projects to improve the administration of justice;
- To support the Judicial Advisory Study Committee, including research and clerical assistance;
- To require the filing of reports and the collection and compilation of statistical data and financial information;
- To make recommendations regarding the state of the dockets and the effective number of judges and other court personnel;
- To prescribe uniform administrative and business records, forms, and systems;
- To devise and promulgate youth court tracking forms;
- To prepare and submit budget recommendations necessary for the maintenance and operation of the judicial system;
- To administer the Civil Legal Assistance Fund under the direction of the Supreme Court;
- To serve as an agency to apply for and receive grants or other assistance;
- To develop and implement personnel policies for non-judicial court employees;
- To investigate, make recommendations concerning and assist in the securing of adequate physical accommodations for the judicial system;
- To procure, distribute, exchange, transfer and assign equipment, books, forms, and supplies as are acquired for the court system;
- To make recommendations for the improvement of the operations of the judicial system;
- To prepare and submit an annual report on the work of the judicial system;
- To take necessary steps in the collection of unpaid fines and court costs;
- To oversee the Mississippi Electronic Courts system under the direction of the Supreme Court;
- To establish a program to facilitate the use of language interpreters in all courts of the State of Mississippi; and
- To perform any additional administrative duties assigned by the Supreme Court.

The AOC processes payroll for the support staff of the Chancery and Circuit judges, as well as the official court reporters; administers the office and rent allowances for the trial judges; maintains inventory records for equipment purchased with state funds; approves the trial judges' travel reimbursements for in-state and out-of-state travel; collects statistical data from the Chancery, Circuit, County, and Youth Courts; collects data on cases handled by family masters; administers special funds

for civil legal assistance, comprehensive electronic court systems, drug courts, and the Board of Certified Court Reporters; and oversees several federal grants awarded to the AOC for the benefit of the judiciary.

The AOC works closely with study groups created to improve the administration of justice. Groups and their work are as follows:

• The Mississippi Judicial Advisory Study Committee, created in 1993, is a statutory body which meets quarterly. The Study Committee makes policy recommendations to the Supreme Court and the Mississippi Legislature to promote improvements to the administration of justice and the operation of the courts. The Study Committee focused most of its 2010 discussions on implementation of a statewide electronic case filing and management system, rational allocation of judicial resources, and ongoing revision of the criminal law section of the *Mississippi Code*.

• The State Drug Courts Advisory Committee oversees the development and operation of Mississippi's drug courts. The Advisory Committee was established by the Mississippi Legislature in 2003 to recommend improvements to drug court policies and procedures. The Advisory Committee sets funding formulas for drug courts, and is responsible for developing statewide evaluation plans and models for monitoring critical aspects of drug court operations. The Advisory Committee in 2010 continued to push for expansion of drug courts.

• The Court Improvement Program (CIP) Workgroup was established in 2007 as a collaborative effort with the Department of Human Services-Division of Family and Children's Services. The Workgroup produced a training video and a manual for DHS social workers. The Workgroup collaborated in planning a training curriculum for DHS staff, judges and Youth Court referees. Between September and December 2010, 13 regional training sessions were held across the state. The 2010 curriculum included training focused on need for awareness of biases which can lead to disproportionate treatment along racial, gender or cultural lines. The training provided an overview of research showing the disproportionate number of minority children in the child welfare system compared to the number in the total population, and identified some reasons for the disproportionality.

• The Uniform Criminal Rules Study Committee in 2010 was in its fifth year of extensive work drafting a uniform set of rules which would address every aspect of criminal proceedings from initiation of criminal charges through post-trial motions. The proposal was expected to be completed the following year. Court of Appeals Judge Larry E. Roberts and Circuit Judge R. I. Prichard III served as co-chairs of the Committee, which met monthly.

COMMISSION ON CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The Mississippi Commission on Continuing Legal Education (CLE) has the primary responsibility to exercise general supervisory authority over the administration of the Rules for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education and to adopt, repeal, and amend regulations consistent with these rules. The objective of the Mississippi Commission on CLE is to ensure that each member of the Bar complies with the rules and regulations established by the Commission and meets the mandatory CLE requirements in a timely and efficient manner. Twelve (12) hours of approved instruction are required annually of every attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Mississippi.

The Commission strives to meet the needs of the members of the Mississippi Bar regarding continuing legal education by keeping abreast of national changes in programming formats and topics. Members of the Commission and its administrator are active in the national organization of regulatory CLE boards, CLEreg.

In 2010 the Mississippi Commission on CLE approved for credit 534 live programs that were held in the state of Mississippi, 3,089 live programs held outside the state, and 5,171 programs that were given by satellite, teleconference or online through live webcasts and on-demand programs.

MISSISSIPPI JUDICIAL ADVISORY STUDY COMMITTEE

Legislation which created the Administrative Office of Courts also created the 21-member Judicial Advisory Study Committee. Its members are appointed by various entities as directed by statute. Chairs of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees are non-voting members. The Committee is required by statute to meet not less than quarterly and has appointed consulting groups in areas of particular concern to develop recommendations to be made to the Legislature, the Supreme Court, and the Administrative Office of Courts. The Study Committee focused most of its 2010 discussions on implementation of a statewide electronic case filing and management system, allocation of judicial resources, and ongoing revision of the criminal law section of the *Mississippi Code*. The Study Committee made no recommendations to the 2011 Legislature because of the state financial crisis. The Study Committee submitted its detailed, mandated report to the Legislature by a separate document.

BOARD OF BAR ADMISSIONS

The Board of Bar Admissions has the primary obligation to administer the laws and rules governing admission to practice law in the State of Mississippi. The Board's efforts are primarily directed at the preparation, administration and evaluation of Bar Admission examinations in February and July of each year and the investigation and evaluation of the character and fitness of each person seeking admission to practice law in the State of Mississippi.

In 2010, the Board received and processed the following number of applications:

Applications for Registration as a Law Student - 104;
Applications for Examination - 413.
Total applications processed in 2010 was 517.

In 2010, the Board tested the following number of applicants:

February 2010 bar exam - 87;
July 2010 bar exam - 253.
Total number of applicants tested in 2010 was 340.

The overall passing percentage for the two 2010 bar examinations was 76.2%.