

101st Judicial District Court
Hon. Staci Williams
(modified November 6, 2023)

Court: **101st Judicial District Court**

Judge's Name: **Staci Williams**

Date Licensed: **1986**

Year Elected/Appointed: **Elected, November 2014; Re-elected, November 2018;
Re-elected, November 2022.**

Previous legal experience/area of practice before becoming a judge and with whom:

Judge Williams' legal career spans over 35 years. Her legal career includes a Judicial Clerkship in the U.S. Virgin Islands; In-house Corporate Counsel positions in the defense, telecommunications, and retail industries; Trial Attorney and Administrative Judge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Arbitrator for NASD/FINRA, U.S. Postal Service, Dallas Area Rapid Transit ("DART"), and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service ("FMCS").

Clerk's Name and Phone No.: **Carolyn Sellers
(214) 653-7256**

Court Coordinator's Name and Phone No.: **Rene Talley
(214) 653-6937
101court@dallascounty.org**

Bailiff's Name and Phone No.: **Deputy Christian Neboh - (214) 653-6937**

Court Reporter's Name and Phone No.: **Terri Etekoachay, CSR, CRR, RPR - (214) 653-7815
Terri.etekochay@dallascounty.org**

SCHEDULING ORDERS/COURT SETTINGS:

Does the Court use a specific scheduling order? What specific dates are included in the scheduling order and are there specific time periods used (e.g., mediation set at 6 months from filing, trial date set at 10 months from filing). Is the scheduling order used in all cases or just in level 3 cases?

The Court accepts any Agreed Scheduling Order submitted if the following information is included: dates for mediation, joinder of parties, amendment of pleadings, dispositive motions, expert challenges, and pre-trial motions. The parties should select the mediator.

Does the Court have any settings such as DWOP, mediation, trial dates, others that are set and noticed automatically upon filing suit or some other triggering date?

The Court has a policy of setting a newly filed case on the dismissal (DWOP) docket approximately 60 days after filing. The case is taken off the dismissal docket if an answer is filed. Once an answer is filed, the Court will issue a trial setting.

If the defendant has been served but no answer has been filed, a Motion for Default Judgment (“MDJ”) should be filed prior to the date of the Dismissal (DWOP) Docket. When the Motion for Default Judgment is filed, please request that the clerk place your Motion for Default Judgment on the MDJ Submission Docket. Failure to file a Motion for Default Judgment by the date of the Dismissal (DWOP) docket may result in the dismissal of the case.

If you have been unable to obtain service of process and you wish to retain the case on the docket, a Motion for Substitute Service should be filed. Please request that the clerk’s place your motion on the Rule 106 (Motion for Substitute Service) Submission Docket.

Generally, the Dismissal, Rule 106, and Default Judgment Dockets are conducted every Friday. If the Judge is in trial, rulings on these motions will be delayed.

EMERGENCY RELIEF/CONTACTING THE COURT:

What is your preferred procedure for contacting the court in a true emergency? What if the emergency occurs after hours?

Contact the Clerk at (214) 653-7256 and Court Coordinator via phone 214) 653-6937 and email 101court@dallascounty.org.

Judge Williams hears all TROs assigned to the 101st District Court. Please do not “shop” your TRO to other Courts. Judge Williams will hear another Court’s TRO only with the express permission of that Court.

Can the court be contacted by e-mail or fax? If so, what is the number or address?

Contact the Court Coordinator via email at 101court@dallascounty.org

DISCOVERY:

Describe your expectations or specific requirements of parties bringing discovery disputes before the Court. How does the Court handle discovery disputes that arise during a deposition? Can the attorneys contact the Court directly? If the Court is not available can the attorneys contact the master and, if so, who? Does the Court refer all discovery disputes to the master initially?

Parties are expected to attempt to resolve discovery disputes and conference in compliance with Local Rules PRIOR to filing motions regarding discovery disputes. The Court holds a weekly Discovery Dispute Docket.

During a deposition, the parties should contact the Contact the Clerk at (214) 653-7256 and Court Coordinator via phone 214) 653-6937 and email 101court@dallascounty.org. Specifically state that the parties are in a deposition and need the Judge immediately. The Judge will hear the dispute.

PLEADINGS & MOTIONS:

Describe any specific requirements of the Court regarding filing pleadings or motions with the Court? Is there any specific time or other requirement for filing responsive or reply motions prior to the hearing (other than summary judgment motions)? How soon before a hearing should all responses be filed for the Court to have the opportunity to review the response?

**The Court prefers that pleadings be as succinct as possible.
There are no page limitations.**

How do you like briefs to be organized?

The Court prefers that the brief be incorporated into the motion. The Court appreciates succinct motions and copies of all cases referred to in the motion. Pertinent language should be highlighted. The Court requires courtesy copies if the total number of pages of the submission (motion and exhibits) is more than 25 pages. Courtesy copies should be delivered (not emailed) to the Court no later than three (3) business days before the scheduled hearing. The Court requests that parties provide a proposed order which provides the relief counsel is requesting from the Court.

Does the court accept filings by fax or e-mail? If available, is this filing limited to the District Clerk, or can fax filings be made directly with the Court's clerk?

Generally, no. All filings must be e-filed. If a party is pro-se, the filing may be mailed or filed in person with the District Clerk.

What is your preferred procedure for contacting the court or court staff regarding the status of motions (e.g., rulings on motions taken under advisement)?

1. Check online at <https://courtsportal.dallascounty.org/DALLASPROD/Home/Dashboard/29>.
2. Email the court: 101court@dallascounty.org

PRE-TRIAL HEARINGS/HEARING DOCKET:

Describe any specific policies of the Court relating to hearings, scheduling hearings, days of the week

set aside for hearings, certain types of hearing on certain days or at certain times of the day (e.g., default judgment, discovery disputes, special exceptions, sanctions, severance, consolidation, summary judgment, others).

Motion hearings are scheduled, generally, on Mondays.

The Discovery Docket is conducted, generally, on Fridays.

Motion for New Trial Docket is conducted , generally on Fridays, twice a month.

Status Conferences are conducted once a month, generally on Fridays.

Prove-ups are conducted twice a month.

There are separate submission dockets on Fridays for Rule 106 Motions and Motions for Default Judgment.

When and how should motions be set for submission or oral hearing? (i.e., does the Court automatically set hearings and notify the parties or should the movant contact the coordinator to set the hearing?)

Please contact the Clerk at (214) 653-7256 to schedule a hearing on a motion or to indicate that the parties have agreed to submit the motion on the Agreed Submission Docket. Each motion must comply with the Certificate of Conference requirements of the Dallas County Local Rules.

Does the Court automatically allow oral hearings if requested? What procedures should be followed to obtain an expedited hearing?

Parties must request that a motion be set for oral hearing or placed on the agreed submission docket. If there is a need for an expedited hearing, be prepared to explain the need for the “expedited” hearing, the dates, and times all parties are available for an expedited hearing, and the amount of time needed for such hearing. Contact the Clerk at (214) 653-7256 to schedule hearings.

Do you allow telephone conferences for the resolution of motions? If so, who arranges them and when, and how are they scheduled?

Yes. Appearances by telephone should be arranged through the Court Coordinator via email at 101court@dallascounty.org. Telephonic hearings are only permitted if neither evidence nor testimony will be presented.

What is your preference on cases attached to briefs or motions? Do you prefer pertinent provisions of the cases to be highlighted?

Cases relied upon should be attached to the brief with relevant provisions highlighted.

How are attorneys or parties notified of rulings on motions not made during the hearing?

Please check for updates

<https://courtsportal.dallascounty.org/DALLASPROD/Home/Dashboard/29>.

MASTERS & VISITING JUDGES:

Describe the Court's policy on the use of masters, visiting judges, visiting judges and masters the Court uses, for what purposes or types of matters, and the Court's policy on the parties objecting to the use of masters or visiting judges.

The Court may use an associate judge or a visiting judge occasionally. If the Court finds it necessary to use a visiting judge, the parties will be notified promptly and given an opportunity to object.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

What is the Court's policy on appointing mediators and setting mediation deadlines? What is the Court's policy on referring cases to alternative dispute resolution? Under what circumstances do you order mediation, when is it ordered, and how is the mediator chosen? Is the Court amicable to the parties agreeing on and using a mediator other than the one appointed by the Court? Is a motion to substitute mediators required before the Court will allow the use of an alternate mediator or may the parties simply agree on and use another mediator? What if the Court has already appointed a mediator?

Mediators are usually selected by the parties. Failure of parties to mediate before trial will not be the basis for granting a continuance of a trial setting. Mediation must be conducted 30 days prior to the first trial setting.

At times, the Court may mandate mediation.

TRIALS:

What is the Court's procedure for setting a trial? How are cases that are not reached reset? Do you grant special trial settings, and, if so, under what circumstances (e.g., lengthy trials, witnesses or parties with disabilities or serious health conditions, out of town parties or witnesses). How should they be requested?

Once an answer is filed, the Court will set a case for trial on its two-week trial docket. Cases that are not reached in each 2-week trial docket are automatically reset. The Court may grant a special trial setting if the case is expected to last longer than 5 days, or if the witnesses or parties are from out-of-town or have disabilities or serious health conditions. In some instances, the Court will specially set a case. If the parties would like to request a special trial setting, the parties should submit an agreed request for a special trial setting specifying why a special set is needed.

If a case has been pending for 3 or more years, that case may be subject to a four -week trial docket.

When and in what form do you want proposed jury charges or findings of fact and conclusions of law presented (e.g., prior to trial, first day of trial, charge conference)?

The Court requests that the parties email either the proposed jury charge or findings of fact and conclusions of law before the trial. These documents also should be emailed in WORD format to the Court Coordinator at 101court@dallascounty.org

What is your procedure for continuing trials? How early or late will you grant/deny a request and how early do you want the request made? Is a first motion for continuance usually granted if requested at a reasonable time prior to trial? Are agreed motions for continuance usually granted?

A Motion for Continuance should be filed as far in advance of trial as possible and be specific as to why a continuance is needed. If discovery has not been conducted, the parties must explain why and how such discovery is material to the case. Continuances will not be granted due to a party's failure to schedule mediation prior to the trial date. Each request for continuance will be considered on a case-by-case basis, even if the motion is agreed to by all parties.

The filing of a Motion for Continuance does not relieve the parties of their obligation to make a trial announcement. A trial announcement MUST be made unless the judge has granted the motion.

If the continuance is granted, the parties must submit a revised scheduling order based on the new trial date. In most circumstances, the Court will designate the new trial date as the final trial setting.

Trial Motions

When should parties present motions for continuance, motions to exclude, motions in limine, Robinson/Daubert motions, or any other specific trial motion? What is the Court's policy on hearing such motions? Do you have any particular rules governing pre-trial exhibits, motions, or orders (i.e., witness lists, draft jury charges, etc.)? Is a form available? When is it presented?

Most motions can be addressed during the pre-trial conference. Pre-trial conferences are conducted usually on the day of trial. If the pre-trial conference is expected to last longer than 1 hour, the parties should email the court coordinator at 101court@dallascounty.org and request a pre-trial conference.

Voir Dire

Describe the Court's specific policies on conducting voir dire. Does the Court conduct any portion of the voir dire and, if so, describe what the Court does. What is the Court's policy on setting time limits on voir dire? Does the Court have specific time limits for certain types of cases and, if so, what are they? (e.g., MISTI cases) What are the Court's procedures for striking jurors (peremptory, for cause – i.e., during voir dire outside the presence of the panel, en masse after completion of voir dire, other matters)?

The Court imposes no time limits on voir dire. Counsel may agree upon time limits. After

the parties have conducted voir dire, the Court will cover exemptions, disqualifications, and hardships/special concerns. Outside the presence of the venire panel, the Court will permit attorneys to identify specific jurors to be questioned individually before making “for cause” challenges.

Opening

Describe any specific requirements the Court has regarding opening statements. Does the Court impose specific time limits? What are they? Do they vary by type of case? Give examples of typical time limits, if any, for common cases.

The Court has no specific policies on opening statements. Counsel may agree upon time limits.

Direct Examination

Describe any specific policies on direct examination. For example - do you require attorneys to stand, sit, use a podium, or use microphones?

The Court has no specific policies on direct examination.

Cross-Examination

Describe any specific policies on cross-examination.

The Court has no specific policies on cross-examination.

Closing

Describe any specific requirements the Court has regarding closing statements. Does the Court impose specific time limits? What are they? Do they vary by type of case? Give examples of typical time limits for common cases.

The Court imposes no time limitations on closing statements. Counsel may agree upon time limits.

Audio/Visual Equipment

Does the Court provide its own blackboard, easel, Elmo, overhead projector, video equipment, or other presentation equipment? What arrangements must be made to use them? What arrangements can be made to become familiar with them or prepare them before trial?

The Court is equipped with a document reader (“ELMO”) with the capacity for counsel to connect a laptop computer to project presentations and video in the courtroom. Counsel are strongly urged to test their equipment for compatibility with the system well in advance of a hearing or trial. Please email the court at 101court@dallascounty.org

TRIAL DOCKET:

What is the Court's procedure for notifying parties of assignment to trial? Describe any specific policies of the Court relating to its trial docket, scheduling trials, continuances, days of the week set aside for trials versus hearings. Does the Court set aside certain days, weeks, or months for certain types of cases (e.g., MISTI cases, complex commercial litigation, others)?

Parties are expected to make their trial announcements via email at 101court@dallascounty.org, beginning all day on the Thursday before the beginning of the two-week trial docket and continuing until Friday at 11:00 a.m.

Trial announcements must be made, even if there is a pending Motion for Continuance. The trial announcement should state, ready or not ready. If ready, the announcement should provide the number of hours/days it will take to try the case and the number of witnesses etc.

Once the Court has determined the order in which cases will be tried during the two-week trial docket, the Court will provide parties with the specific day and time that the case will be called to trial. Pre-trial conferences are conducted on the day of trial unless the parties will need more than 1 hour. If more than 1 hour is needed, the parties are encouraged to schedule a pretrial conference.

Cases that have been pending for 3 or more years may be subject to a four-week trial docket.

What are the Court's procedures and criteria for court appointments of ad litem?

The Court maintains a wheel for court-appointed ad litem. Individuals wishing to serve as ad litem should send a resume and letter explaining their experience to 101court@dallascounty.org

Anything the Court would like attorneys practicing before it to know that is not covered above. For example: Do you have any special rules governing courtroom decorum? (e.g., addressing the Court, opposing counsel or witnesses, requirement that counsel use only podium, approach the witness, talking or passing notes at the counsel table, beverages allowed at the counsel table).

- **All motions must be accompanied by a proposed order.**
- **In multi-party cases, a motion for non-suit must identify the non-suiting party and the parties remaining in the active case.**
- **Contact the Clerk at (214) 653-7256 to SCHEDULE or CANCEL a HEARING.**
- **Contact the Court Coordinator at (214) 653-6937 to schedule a TRIAL.**
- **All courtesy copies of documents more than 25 pages must be submitted no later than three (3) business days before the scheduled hearing.**

- For Rule 106 Motions, the Court's order MUST be used. https://www.dallascounty.org/Assets/uploads/docs/courts/civil-district/101/ORDER-FOR-SUBSTITUTE-SERVICE_0917.pdf
- If counsel wishes to withdraw from a case, this Court strictly enforces Rule 10 of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure and Local Rule 4.02.
 - o Contemporaneous with advising the corporate entity of its right to object to the withdrawal of counsel, counsel must advise the corporate entity that only an attorney licensed by the State of Texas can represent the corporate entity's interest in Court.
- All attorneys should be familiar with the Texas Lawyers' Creed prior to entering the 101st Judicial District Court. <https://www.legalethicstexas.com/Ethics-Resources/Rules/Texas-Lawyer-s-Creed/Texas-Lawyer-s-Creed>
- All attorneys should be familiar with the Dallas Local Rules. https://www.dallascounty.org/Assets/uploads/docs/district-clerk/New_LocalRules_for_CivilCourt.pdf

COURT REPORTER'S NOTICE TO ATTORNEYS

EXHIBITS

Any exhibits that need to be entered/used during the Zoom proceedings being held must be pre-marked and sent to me at **TERRI.ETEKOCHAY@DALLASCOUNTY.ORG** AT LEAST 72 hours PRIOR to the proceedings. Where possible, please include any slideshows or other demonstrative aids that could potentially be screen-shared during these submissions. They will remain confidential until published by counsel and/or the parties.

Please have all exhibits marked numerically or with letters prior to going on the record. Photographs are best marked separately as their own exhibit for clarity purposes.

Media exhibits, such as audio recordings, videos, etc., should be submitted on a thumb-drive, or on an SD card, in .wav, .mp3 or .mpeg formats ONLY.

Please include case number and style of the case in the subject line. In the body of the email, please also include the date of proceedings and which attorney/party they are being sent for. If there is an exhibit that is unable to be transmitted via email due to size, please email me so we can discuss how best to submit it.

Once the COVID restrictions are lifted and we are resuming back in-person proceedings, please look

for further updates on how we will be handling exhibits for hearings, trials, and motions in the 101.

PRETRIAL

At pre-trial conferences, you will be dealing with Motions in Limine, witness lists, deposition designations and exhibits. The Court prefers that both sides exchange and discuss these items prior to the hearing and reach any agreements.

Please discuss exhibits and any Motions in Limine with the opposing side beforehand to see if any agreements can be reached.

VIDEO/DEPOSITION TESTIMONY

If video deposition testimony will be offered in lieu of live testimony, please provide the reporter with the video cuts in (1) MP4 format and (2) the excerpt deposition transcript that reflects the video cuts. If deposition testimony will be offered in lieu of live testimony, please provide the reporter with the complete transcript with page and line designations.

TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS FOR THE REPORTER'S RECORD

Please download and fill out the "Request for Reporter's Record" form and email ALL transcript requests to me at **TERRI.ETEKOCHAY@DALLASCOUNTY.ORG**

Please be advised that turnaround times may vary based on reporter's workload. Expedited requests will be honored, time permitting, to the best of my ability. If you believe a hearing transcript will need to be expedited, please inform the reporter, where possible, PRIOR to the proceedings. This will greatly increase the chance that I will be able to honor the request.

Normal turnaround times for a non-appeal transcript is 30 days from the date of the request. If an accelerated appeal or regular appeal will be filed, please let me know as soon as possible so that the appropriate invoice can be sent over. A delay in informing the reporter will result in a delay of submission to the Court of Appeals.

To download the "Request for the Reporter's Record" form go to:
https://www.dallascounty.org/government/courts/civil_district/101st

REAL-TIME/DAILY COPIES

If you think you may need real-time, daily copies or rough drafts, please notify the reporter as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. My contact information is **TERRI.ETEKOCHAY@DALLASCOUNTY.ORG**