

DISTRICT CLERK COURIER

Summer 2009



25-YEAR VETERAN OF DISTRICT CLERK OFFICE, VIRGINIA ETHERLY, NAMED AS NEW CHIEF DEPUTY



With a reputation for having an exemplary work ethic, solid problem-solving skills and extensive knowledge of court procedures, Virginia Etherly was the ideal candidate for Chief Deputy. During her 25 years in the District Clerk's office, Virginia has held positions of increasing responsibility in almost every division, including Records and Trust and Accounting, giving her an unmatched wealth of information about the office in which she is now second in command. "Virginia's long list of qualifications also includes her productive relationships with other departments in the County and a proven track record of leadership," said District Clerk Gary Fitzsimmons, who appointed Virginia to her new post in May. "I know I have the best partner possible to help this office achieve its goals in this continually challenging environment."



DISTRICT CLERK'S LETTER

By Gary Fitzsimmons



As we officially enter Summer, I want to encourage all District Clerk employees to take time for vacation, whether that means time at home relaxing, traveling to a favorite destination, or exploring a new one. Human resource data show that workers genuinely need to take breaks from work for their physical as well as mental health. We all experience stress in our professional and personal lives as we try to balance our obligations, so take these next few months to go see friends and your family, or do whatever you need to do to return to our office refreshed and ready to resume a productive and rewarding life at work.

MARIA SANCHEZ NAMED CIVIL/FAMILY MANGER

Maria Sanchez demonstrated her strength and determination early in life when she moved from New York City to Dallas on her own and got a job as a deputy in the District Clerk's office. In almost 25 years of service, she has steadily risen through the ranks, gaining knowledge of every aspect of the office's Civil/Family section, including Juvenile, where she



headed operations until her appointment to Civil/Family Assistant Manager.



STEVE GRIGGS NAMED CIVIL/FAMILY ASST. MGR.

A native of North Texas who attended TCU and American University Washington College of Law, Steve Griggs brings experience working with Federal agencies, such as the

US Senate Committee for Indian Affairs, to his new post. Steve returned to this area to become involved in local politics, and accepted a position as Executive Assistant to the Dallas County Judge. "Steve brings a broad perspective of national and local levels of government, which will help us move ahead with many of our programs such as the Digital Courts Project," said District Clerk Gary Fitzsimmons. "Maria and Steve create a strong balance of County, state and national experience."

Only Woman Dallas County District Clerk to be Featured in Exhibit at Old Red Museum

It's a Woman's World



When Pearl Smith was first sworn in as District Clerk of Dallas County, she was the only woman in the office. She was sworn in by Judge Sarah T. Hughes, who was the first woman elected to the bench of Dallas County's oldest Civil Court, the 14th. Judge Hughes became famous in another photograph 30 years later as she sworn in Lyndon B. Johnson as President of the United States aboard Air Force One following the assassination of John F. Kennedy.



Just When It Gets Small—District Clerk Pearl Smith, County assessor-comptroller of Dallas County, is being sworn in by Judge Sarah T. Hughes, who was the first woman elected to the bench of Dallas County's oldest Civil Court, the 14th. Judge Hughes became famous in another photograph 30 years later as she sworn in Lyndon B. Johnson as President of the United States aboard Air Force One following the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

This photograph will be among several from the 1930s' collection of newspaper clippings about Pearl Smith, the only woman Dallas County District Clerk, included in a case exhibit at Old Red Museum, running through the end of September, 2009. The exhibit will consist of a Plexiglas free-standing case in which numerous clippings and other memorabilia about Ms. Smith will be included. The photograph to the left shows District Clerk Smith, left, being sworn into office by Judge Sarah T. Hughes, who was the first woman elected to the bench of Dallas County's oldest Civil Court, the 14th. Judge Hughes became famous in another photograph 30 years later as she sworn in Lyndon B. Johnson as President of the United States aboard Air Force One following the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Mrs. Smith, who had received a great deal of media coverage as the County's first Deputy Sheriff and had gained a reputation for doing everything male deputies did, is shown at left with a casino wheel confiscated in an illegal gambling raid. Known for her frugality and resourcefulness during the Great Depression and World War II, Mrs. Smith used the wheel for jury selection and placed thousands of Dallas County residents' names in the wheel to be chosen for jury panels. Even though the process is completely automated today, the process is still referred to as the jury wheel. Mrs. Smith served in a time much like the economic climate today, and ran on a platform pledging that no one would be employed in her office unless the position was funded by the Budget Office. Marsha Bills is coordinating the exhibit, which will be moved to the George Allen Building following its display at Old Red.

PASSPORTS MAKES HOSPITAL VISIT TO HELP CRITICALLY ILL PATIENT AWAITING TRANSPLANT

The Passports division has been widely recognized for its unsurpassed customer service, holding special sessions for church choirs going abroad and for deaf seniors who needed signing interpreters to communicate. But there may never be a more dramatic circumstance in which Passports offers special service than the one in which Mike Lindley, shown at right, and Ruth North went to Methodist Hospital to administer the oath required to complete the application process to Sheryl Wimberly as she lay confined to her bed. After a worldwide search for a kidney to replace her failed one, Ms. Wimberly located a match in Colombia where the surgery would occur. Because the applicant was too ill to leave the hospital, Mike and Ruth went to the hospital to accommodate her needs. "We are proud to have been a part of a process that literally helped to save a woman's life," said Mike.



Welcome to:

Carla Barclay, supervisor
Civil/Family Collections, GACB
Barbara LeMaire, clerk
SAFP Court, GACB
Shundra Young, cashier
Civil/Family Collections, GACB

The District Clerk Courier is published for staff and friends, and is edited by Marsha Bills. Send ideas to mbills@dallascounty.org.

District Clerk Cookbook Coming

To raise money for the District Clerk Benevolent Fund, an all-occasion cookbook is being assembled and will be sold this fall, featuring a wide variety of recipes contributed by staff in all areas of our department. Send your favorite recipes before July 31 to our committee for consideration for inclusion at Brittney.Owens@dallascounty.org

