



FAMILY MATTERS

IN THE FOURTH CIRCUIT COURT

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 12 | JUNE 30, 2025

UPDATES AND
ANNOUNCEMENTS
FOR THE FOURTH
CIRCUIT COURT



BEAT THE HEAT

We've all felt the heat these past few weeks. Record breaking temperatures all through the Eastern and Southern United States (mixed with Tennessee's humidity) have made for some scorching days and nights. Be sure to drink plenty of water and stay indoors whenever possible.

While Mother Nature turns up the heat outside, Fourth Circuit is turning up the clocks inside! Judge Williams has implemented the use of timers during certain hearings, especially those that require testimony. The timers will be implemented on a case by case basis to assist the Court in conducting hearings as effectively and efficiently as possible. While these time constraints may not apply to all hearings, they are beneficial in many cases because they focus the testimony of witnesses and arguments of counsel on the issues currently before the Court for determination.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS ISSUE

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Don't sweat the tick tock, keep reading for some tips to stay cool if your case is on the clock!

TIPS TO KEEP THE HEAT AT BAY IF THE CLOCK TICKS AWAY

Note: The following tips are a list of ways to prepare in the event you are given time limits at the time of your hearing.

- 1** 9:30 a.m. Motion Docket: Prepare to present all pertinent evidence within 10 minutes.
- 2** 11:00 a.m. Motion Docket: Prepare to present all pertinent evidence within 15 minutes.
- 3** Show Cause Docket: Prepare to present all pertinent evidence within 20 minutes.
- 4** The time limit includes opening statement, testimony of all witnesses (including direct, cross, redirect, and rebuttal), and closing arguments.
- 5** When Judge Williams indicates she has read the pleadings in your case, it is advisable to waive your opening statement.
- 6** Prepare your questions in advance of the hearing.
- 7** Get straight to the point, do not belabor a point, and focus on presenting the proof Judge Williams needs to make a decision. Once your time has expired, you will not be permitted to present additional proof.
- 8** Prepare your witnesses to answer questions in a direct and concise manner.
- 9** Watch the clock to keep track of your time. If you don't know your time, ASK.

JUDGE PHILIP E. SMITH PORTRAIT UNVEILING



We are deeply honored to announce the portrait unveiling of Judge Philip E. Smith honoring his judicial legacy and service to the people of Davidson County as Judge of the Fourth Circuit Court. This event will be held August 14, 2025, at 2 p.m. More details to come.

BEHIND THE BENCH: COMMUNICATIONS WITH COURT STAFF

Who knew our office was filled with movie stars? A few weeks ago, Special Master Dana Ballinger filmed an informational video explaining her Order of Protection docket for the benefit of attorneys and litigants alike.

This week, our Judicial Assistant, Ms. Ronnell Griffin, filmed a video explaining communications with the Fourth Circuit Court, common mistakes on orders, pleading requirements, temporary restraining order requirements, procedures for continuances and announcements, and so much more. This is a great resource for everyone who practices in our court as it explains some of the rules outlined in our Chamber Rules. You may view this and Special Master Ballinger's video on our website by clicking here: [Resources](#) or scanning the QR code:



**CLICK TO
WATCH!**

COURT CLOSED FOR FOURTH OF JULY

This Friday, July 4, our office will be closed for the Independence Day holiday. Our office is open this week, but we will not have hearings June 30 through July 7. As always, feel free to call or email our office should you have any questions. Enjoy the long weekend and remember to stay cool!



CHAMBER RULE SPOTLIGHT



RULE VII. (F), PAGE 18: MOTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Please be sure to call chambers at: 615-862-5910 or email: ronnellgriffin@jnsnashville.gov to provide information on docket announcements (e.g., continuance, agreed order, strike, etc.). This should be done even if a notice or Agreed Order has been filed, as the court does not receive these notices.
- B. Please be sure to notify the court of these announcements no later than 8:45 a.m. on the Friday of the Motion hearing; otherwise, you may announce in open court the day of the hearing.
- C. When calling regarding a case on the motion docket, please be prepared with the number that your motion is on the docket.
- D. Continuances of motions should be to a date certain versus indefinitely.
- E. First time continuance requests on motion hearings are liberally granted.

When you call or email our office with a motion announcement, please be prepared with not just the docket number, but also the number that the case appears on the docket. This can be found in the left most column of the docket listing.

Our Friday Motion Dockets are finalized and published on the Circuit Court Clerk's website by noon on the Tuesday before the Friday Motion Docket. You may view the dockets by clicking here: [Dockets](#) or by scanning the QR code:



You can read the rest of our Chamber Rules on our website by clicking here: [Resources](#) or by scanning the QR code:



CALENDAR

S M T W Th F S

		1	2	3	4	
	7			10	11	
				17		

JULY

7/1--7/3: No Hearings, Office Open

7/4: Office Closed, Happy Fourth of July!

7/7: No Hearings, Office Open

7/10: No Show Cause or Contempt Hearings

7/11: No Motions, Office Open

7/17: Judge Williams' Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in person or via Zoom

S M T W Th F S

				7		
				14		
				21		

AUGUST

8/7: Special Master's Status Conference Docket at 9 a.m. via Zoom, No Pro Se Docket

8/14: Judge Philip E. Smith's Portrait Unveiling

8/21: Judge Williams' Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in person or via Zoom

For a complete view of our regularly scheduled dockets and available court dates, please see the calendar page on our website by clicking here: [Website Calendar](#) or by scanning the QR code:



SHARE!



@JudgeStephanieJWilliams



Judge Stephanie J. Williams

Feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who may be of interest. You may also email RebekahLHaralson@jnsnashville.gov to be added to the mailing list!

Additionally, you may view this and all previous newsletters on our website by clicking this link: [Updates and Announcements](#) or by scanning the QR code:

