FAMILY MATTERS
IN THE FOURTH CIRCUIT COURT

Updates and Announcements for the Fourth Circuit Court

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OCTOBER'S LEGACY: Honoring Survivors, Strengthening Our Response

As October and **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** come to a close, we reflect with gratitude on the individuals and organizations whose dedication strengthens our community's response to domestic violence. Throughout the month, opportunities to honor, remember, learn, and collaborate reinforced our shared responsibility to support survivors and protect individuals, children, and families.

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Diane Lance and Whitney Blanton

The month began on October 1 with the *Domestic Violence Awareness Month Kickoff* hosted by the Office of Family Safety. A highlight was the presentation of the *2026 Hope Hero Award* to Whitney Blanton in recognition of her longstanding commitment to supporting survivors. Whitney has been an integral part of this community for many years, and it was an honor to see her service and dedication celebrated.

On October 3, the Nashville Coalition Against Domestic Violence held its annual *Meet Us at the Bridge* event, honoring those in our city who lost their lives to domestic violence over the past year. Remembering these lives reminds us that behind every case is a person, a family, and a community affected by violence. Their memory calls us to remain steadfast in the work of prevention, protection, and support.



Meet Us at the Bridge, 10/3/2026

We also extend our appreciation to Diane Lance and Becky Bullard for convening a meeting on firearms compliance and facilitating a candid, productive discussion about improving compliance and enforcement. The meeting brought together representatives from multiple courts and key partners within the system, creating an opportunity to ask questions, share perspectives, and consider how we can better coordinate this critical work.

That spirit of collaboration continued on October 22, when the entire Fourth Circuit domestic violence team attended the *Third Annual Intimate Partner Violence Summit*. With more than 100 participants in attendance, the summit offered valuable opportunities to learn about the departments, organizations, and individuals serving our community. We left with a deeper understanding of their work and new ideas for how those partnerships can strengthen our response as a court.



Becky Bullard, OFS


2026 IPV Summit



We are especially encouraged by the conversations we have begun with the General Sessions Court domestic violence judges about creating a more unified approach to order of protection cases. We share a vision of a coordinated system in which those who encounter our courts experience greater consistency and clarity. By sharing resources, ideas, and legal knowledge, we can strengthen our practices and better serve the people who depend on us.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month ends, but our responsibility continues. To every organization, advocate, service provider, and court partner who helped bring this month's events and conversations to life: thank you. The most meaningful way we can honor survivors—and remember those whose lives were lost—is to carry this commitment into our daily work. May the connections strengthened this October lead to lasting collaboration, greater accountability, and a safer community for the individuals, children, and families we serve.



11/12 DISMISSAL DOCKET: IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED

The November 12 Dismissal Docket is very full. **If you have a case on this docket or believe you may have a case on this docket you must review its status immediately and take the necessary steps to prevent dismissal if you intend to proceed.**

A CASE WILL REMAIN ON THE DISMISSAL DOCKET AND WILL BE DISMISSED UNLESS IT HAS BEEN CLOSED OR SET FOR A FINAL HEARING.

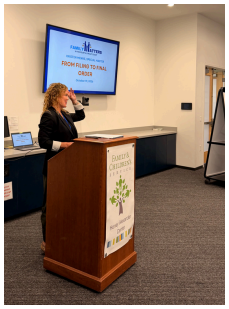
Please do not assume your case has been removed from the docket. **It is your responsibility to verify the status of your case and ensure the required action has been taken before November 12.**

Termination of Parental Rights & Adoption CLE

Thank you to all who joined us for our second annual ***Termination of Parental Rights & Adoption CLE!*** This two-day event gave attorneys and legal professionals the opportunity to learn more about practicing these types of cases in Davidson County and Tennessee. Sessions provided information on best practices, updated case law, roles of attorneys, pathways to adoption, and more. ***We are especially grateful to Family & Children Service for partnering with us and presenting at this CLE.***













2026 Remaining Dockets

The year is coming to an end faster than we can say, "Halloween is this weekend?" With it, the list of our remaining docket days for 2026 is dwindling. Additionally, upcoming holidays, court events, and renovations have limited some of those remaining dockets.

As you continue monitoring your cases and filing hearings, reference the below list of remaining docket dates and final hearing dates for 2026:

Remaining Motion Docket Dates:

November 13 December 11
November 20 December 18

Last Adoption Final Hearing Date:

December 14

Last Show Cause/Contempt/OP Rehearing Date:

December 17

Last ID/Default Divorce Final Hearing Date:

December 17

It's Back! 4th Circuit End of Year CLE & Holiday Mixer

Please join the Fourth Circuit Court for our third annual end-of-year CLE featuring an exclusive live taping of ***Off the Record with Dr. Donny and Judge Stephanie*!** Whether you have listened to the podcast or not, this session will provide insight into the emotional and legal process of divorce as well as a chance to ask the hosts your burning questions.

PLUS *stay (or join) for a holiday mix and mingle beginning at 3:30 p.m. for a chance to practice your line dancing skills!*



Where? Nashville Palace
When? Dec. 2nd, 1-3:30 p.m.
$50, 2 CLE credits



To learn more and register, click **HERE** or scan the above QR code.

Calendar



11/4 + 5: Irreconcilable differences divorce docket via waiver appearance ONLY

11/6: No motion docket

11/11: Office closed for Veteran's Day Holiday

11/12: Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in Person or Via Zoom

Dismissal Docket at 2:30 p.m.

11/19: Irreconcilable differences divorce docket via waiver appearance ONLY

Home for the Holidays Adoption Day @ Two Rivers Mansion

11/24 + 25: Irreconcilable differences divorce docket via waiver appearance ONLY

11/26 + 27: Office closed for Thanksgiving Holiday



12/1 - 3: Irreconcilable differences divorce docket via waiver appearance ONLY

12/2: End of Year CLE at Nashville Palace

12/4: No motion docket

12/17: Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in Person or Via Zoom

Dismissal Docket at 2:30 p.m.

12/18: Final motion docket of 2026

12/21 - 1/1: Office closed for winter holidays

Share! @JudgeStephanieJWilliams Judge Stephanie J. Williams

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