



# FBA TODAY

Newsletter of the Montgomery Chapter of the Federal Bar Association

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Summer 2011

## FBA Member Sworn in as U.S. Attorney



**Chief Judge Keith Watkins (left) swears in George Beck (center), while Beck's wife, Carlotta, holds the Bible.**

**Prominent Montgomery attorney George L. Beck** became the U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama on July 6, 2011. Beck, a shareholder in the Montgomery firm of Capell & Howard, P.C., has been an FBA member since 2009.

Beck's 45-year career as a lawyer includes serving eight years as the Chief Deputy Attorney General under then Attorney General Bill Baxley from 1971-79. He also served in the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps of the Alabama Army National Guard for over 30 years, retiring at the rank of colonel.

President Barack Obama nominated Beck, 69, of Santuck, to the position in March 2011. Beck's private practice has featured defense of public and corporate officials accused of white-collar crimes, including his vigorous defense of a former Gov. Guy Hunt, who eventually received a full pardon. He has defended

and negotiated settlements under the Fair Sentencing Guidelines for corporate and public officials accused of wrongdoing.

Two of Beck's civil trials resulted in multi-million-dollar verdicts for his clients. One, a federal tort claim awards on behalf of 11 babies injured after birth by a hospital medical technician, was the focus of a CBS "60 Minutes" special. Interviewer Mike Wallace praised Beck for his persistence in pursuing the case and obtaining justice for the children. In 1999, he obtained the highest non-government jury verdict—\$37 million—in Montgomery County representing an insurance company against one of the "big three" accounting firms.

*The Montgomery Chapter of the Federal Bar Association invites you to a reception on September 27, 2011 honoring our federal judges and their staff and welcoming the new*

*law clerks to the*

*Middle*

*District of*

*Alabama.*

**See page 4 for more details!**



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# Reentry court celebrates first anniversary & graduation

Earlier this year, the Middle District of Alabama held its first ceremony congratulating four participants who successfully completed the District's pilot re-entry program. Present at the ceremony were representatives from the Federal Defender's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Montgomery FBA. The District, under the oversight of Chief Judge W. Keith Watkins and Chief Magistrate Judge Susan Russ Walker, began the program in January 2010 to help high-risk ex-offenders re-enter society.

Federal reentry courts are evidence-based programs for individuals who have been released under supervision after completing their required prison sentences for felony offenses. The participants met with the Court monthly and were tasked with a new goal every month, including looking for a job, maintaining a job, completing requirements toward a GED, and most importantly, staying alcohol and drug free. Only four of the original ten participants successfully completed the program, which qualified them for a year off their term of supervised probation. At the graduation, each of the graduates was presented with a certificate from their sentencing judge, as well as words of encouragement for these individuals as they re-enter society.

Throughout the year, the Chapter has assisted the Court with its program by attending the monthly sessions and providing awards for program participants as they reached certain milestones in the program. The second year of the program has already begun. If you would like to assist the Chapter with this program, please contact Terrie S. Biggs at [tsb@chl.com](mailto:tsb@chl.com) or R. Austin Huffaker, Jr. at [RAH2@rushtonstakely.com](mailto:RAH2@rushtonstakely.com)



## To our newest members

The Montgomery Chapter of the FBA is thrilled to welcome Greg Allen and Benjamin Baker, Beasley, Allen, Crow, Methvin, Portis & Miles, PC, Montgomery; and Freddie L. White, City Attorney's Office, Dothan

## In Memoriam: Judge Ira DeMent

Senior U.S. District Judge Ira DeMent III died July 16, 2011 in Montgomery after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's Disease. Judge DeMent was appointed as a U.S. District Court judge in the Middle District of Alabama in 1992. He assumed senior status in 2002.

A graduate of the University of Alabama Law School, Judge DeMent was an assistant attorney general of Alabama and the U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama in the 1970s. A member of the Inns of Court, he also worked as special counsel for three Alabama governors.

Judge DeMent also was a former Army officer and a retired two-star general in the Air Force. He served in the Army Infantry in Germany from 1953-55 and then in the Army Reserve, followed by the Air Force Reserve. He served as Mobilization Assistant to the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, the highest position a reserve attorney can hold, before retiring in 1989. He was instrumental in bringing the Air Force JAG School to Maxwell Air Force Base.

Judge DeMent issued important decisions on prayer in public schools and on Alabama's social services system while serving a federal judge. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Ruth Posey Dement; his son, Charles Posey DeMent; a granddaughter, Lola Frances DeMent; all of Montgomery, and his brother, Williams S. DeMent of Pell City. Funeral services were July 20. The Montgomery FBA chapter made a charitable donation in Judge DeMent's memory.





**FEDERAL PRACTICE SEMINAR PHOTO CAPTIONS** (clockwise from top left) Judge Moorer (l.) and Judge Fuller (r.) answer questions from the audience; attendees network while Judge Fuller sets up his slide presentation; chapter president



Terrie Biggs introduces EEOC Commissioner Connie Barker; Judge Watkins (l.) and Judge Walker respond to audience questions, and Sam Partridge of the Alabama State Bar discusses ethics.

## FBA, State Bar Sponsor Federal Practice Seminar

The Montgomery Chapter's first federal practice seminar since 2004 was such a success that we are already planning another one!

Last December, more than 50 attorneys attended the seminar, co-sponsored by the FBA and the Federal Practice Section of the Alabama State Bar. Held at the Renaissance Hotel, the seminar featured topics that included the State of the District, Appellate Issues, Emerging Trends in Prosecution and Defense cases, Sentencing, and an EEOC Update. It was such a success that many participants asked when we were going to do it again, so we have already begun planning a seminar for late 2012. Watch the newsletter and your e-mails for further details.

A special thanks goes to our participants, including the Honorable Joel F. Dubina, Honorable Ed Carnes, Honorable Mark E. Fuller, Honorable Myron H. Thompson, Honorable W. Keith Watkins, Honorable Susan R. Walker, and EEOC Commissioner Constance Baker.

If you would like a copy of the course material from the 2010 Seminar, please contact R. Austin Huffaker, Jr.

### *Federal Practice Section*

*As many of you may know, the Alabama State Bar has created a new Federal Practice Section. The section is in its infancy but has already begun making plans for section programs in the future. If you would like to know more, contact David Byrne at [David.Byrne@beasleyallen.com](mailto:David.Byrne@beasleyallen.com) or R. Austin Huffaker, Jr. at [RAH2@rushtonstakely.com](mailto:RAH2@rushtonstakely.com)*

# Join us at the annual Clerks' Reception



Above and right: Photos from the 2010 reception. Below left: At the 2010 reception, FBA 1<sup>st</sup> VP Matt Bledsoe presents Senior Judge Truman M. Hobbs with a certificate recognizing his 30 years on the bench. Below right: FBA President Terrie Biggs recognizes Judge Myron H. Thompson for his three decades of service.



*The Annual FBA Clerks Reception will be Tuesday, September 27, 2011, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., at the Frank M. Johnson U.S. Courthouse Complex, One Church St.,*



*Montgomery. There will be wine, beer and hors d'oeuvres catered by Leslie Bailey. FBA members may attend for no charge; the cost is \$20 for all others. Please RSVP by Sept. 22 to Terrie Biggs at (334) 241-8091 or [tsb@chlaw.com](mailto:tsb@chlaw.com).*

**Mark your calendar for these other events:**

- **Upcoming Brown Bag lunch: Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2011** at noon at the U.S. Courthouse. Attendance is limited to 10-12 attorneys to foster candid interaction with the judges, and attendees must be FBA members. Discussions have covered topics ranging from courtroom security to jury questionnaires to military history to judicial transitions. Reservations will be required, so watch your e-mail for more details as we get closer to the dates. The lunch is BYOB<sup>2</sup> (Bring Your Own Brown Bag)
- **39<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Government Acquisition: Nov. 2-3, 2011** at the Huntsville Marriott and featuring Professor Ralph Nash. Sponsored by the FBA Northern Alabama chapter, the seminar offers 12 hours of CLE, including 2 hours of ethics. Contact Cindy Van Rassen at (256) 450-2812 for more information.

# President's Corner

## by Terrie Scott Biggs



**MANY THANKS** to outgoing President Austin Huffaker for his stellar performance as the leader of the FBA for the past two years and his continued service on the FBA Board as Treasurer this year.

The FBA has had a busy 2010 and 2011. Just about a year ago, we hosted a reception at the Federal Courthouse honoring Senior Judge Truman M. Hobbs and Judge Myron Thompson for reaching their 30-year milestones on the federal bench in 2010. The reception also gave everyone the opportunity to meet and greet the incoming federal clerks. This year's reception is coming up – don't forget to RSVP!

In December, along with the State Bar's Federal Practice Section, we hosted a Federal Practice Seminar at the Renaissance Hotel & Conference Center in Montgomery. The line up of presenters was first class, including several federal judges and our own Connie Barker, once an FBA officer and now EEOC Commissioner in Washington, D.C. Thanks to all who helped with the seminar, especially Austin Huffaker, who organized the seminar and coordinated the speakers with the assistance of the federal bench, U.S. Attorney office and Federal Defender's office. We also appreciate the federal court for not only speaking at the seminar but for help funding the seminar.

On February 25, 2011, the FBA participated in the Court Reentry Graduation. Austin Huffaker addressed one of the graduates, congratulating him for successfully completing the program and offering words of encouragement. The court recognized the assistance and support of the FBA with the program. The FBA helped with the purchase of medals, plaques and helped with the reception honoring the graduates and their families.

The FBA has several exciting events upcoming in 2011, including Brown Bag Lunches, Suds and CLEs, and participation in the Court Reentry Program. But these activities don't happen without a lot of work behind the scenes. On behalf of the FBA, I would encourage you to participate in the many activities we have planned and let us know your ideas about how we can best serve the federal judiciary. We need you! Please take a minute to fill out the questionnaire attached, and send it to Terrie Scott Biggs at Cappell & Howard, 150 S. Perry St., Montgomery, AL 36104 or by e-mail to [tsb@chl.com](mailto:tsb@chl.com).

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### **I would like to be involved with the Montgomery chapter of the FBA through the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Committees

\_\_\_\_\_ Court Reentry

\_\_\_\_\_ Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ Brown Bag Lunches

\_\_\_\_\_ Community Service

\_\_\_\_\_ Suds and CLEs

\_\_\_\_\_ National FBA Activities

\_\_\_\_\_ Reception Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ Serving as an officer

Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Your name, firm or agency, telephone and e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_