



SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

As required by the state Constitution, the five members of the Tennessee Supreme Court normally hear cases in Nashville, Jackson, and Knoxville. Pictured in the courtroom at the Supreme Court Building in Nashville are (seated) Chief Justice William M. Barker and (standing left to right) Justices Janice M. Holder, E. Riley Anderson, Adolpho A. Birch Jr., and Cornelia A. Clark.

Supreme Court

*401 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37219-1407*

(615) 741-1529

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The Tennessee Supreme Court is the state's highest court and the court of last resort. The court normally meets in Jackson, Knoxville, and Nashville, as required by the state Constitution.

The five justices may accept appeals of civil and criminal cases from lower state courts. They also interpret the laws and Constitutions of Tennessee and the United States. The Supreme Court may assume jurisdiction over undecided cases in the Court of Appeals or Court of Criminal Appeals when there is special need for a speedy decision. The court also has appellate jurisdiction in cases involving state taxes, the right to hold public office, and issues of constitutional law.

Attorneys may present oral arguments before the Supreme Court. Unlike trials in lower courts, there are no witnesses, juries, or testimonies in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, or Court of Criminal Appeals. After Supreme Court justices have heard oral arguments and reviewed the attorneys' written materials, or briefs, they issue written decisions, known as opinions. Tennessee Supreme Court opinions on constitutional issues can be appealed only to the federal courts, which may or may not agree to consider the appeals.

Judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and Court of Criminal Appeals are elected on a “yes-no” ballot every eight years. When a vacancy occurs, the seventeen-member Judicial Selection Commission interviews applicants and recommends three candidates to the governor, who appoints a new judge to serve until the next August general election. By state law, judges on the three courts must be evaluated every eight years. Results of the evaluations are published in newspapers across the state, to help voters decide whether the judges should be retained.

Chief Justice William M. Barker

540 McCallie Avenue, Suite 410, Chattanooga, TN 37402-2096

Born September 13, 1941, Chattanooga, Tennessee; married; three children; Presbyterian; B.S., University of Chattanooga, 1964; J.D., University of Cincinnati College of Law, 1967; United States Army Medical Service Corps, 1967-69; admitted to Bar, 1967; private practice until 1983; president, Chattanooga Trial Lawyers Association, 1977-78; director, Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association, 1978-79; fellow, Chattanooga Bar Foundation; Board of Governors, Chattanooga Bar Association, 1979-80; fellow, Tennessee Bar Foundation; adjunct professor, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 1984-present; member, Alpha Society, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; member, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Alumni Council; Chattanooga Rotary Club; American Legion; chairman, Board of Deacons, First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga, 1995-97; Circuit Court Judge, 1983-95; appointed, Court of Criminal Appeals, February 1995, elected to unexpired term, 1996; appointed, Supreme Court, April 1998, elected August 1998; Chief Justice October 2005.

Justice E. Riley Anderson

Supreme Court Building, P.O. Box 444, Knoxville, TN 37901

Born August 10, 1932, Chattanooga, Tennessee; married; four children; graduated 1955; LL.B., J.D., University of Tennessee College of Law, 1957; graduate, Appellate Judges Program (1988) and Advanced Appellate Judges Program (1999) New York University; private law practice, Oak Ridge, 1958-87; elected charter commissioner, City of Oak Ridge, 1962-64; past president, Anderson County Bar Association; past member, Board of Delegates, Tennessee Bar Association; past president, Tennessee Defense Lawyers Association; past president, Tennessee Chapter, American Board of Trial Advocates; past president, Hamilton Burnett American Inn of Court; chair, Tennessee Judicial Council, 1990-95; chair, Select Senate and House Committee on Court Automation, 1990-94; vice-chair, Courts, Children and the Family Committee, Conference of Chief Justices, 1998-99; member, Board of Directors, Conference of Chief Justices, 1999-2000; Judge of the Year Award, American Board of Trial Advocates, Tennessee Chapter, 1998; Oak Ridge Rotary Club's Vocational Service Award, 2000; Tennessee Bar Association's William M. Leech Jr. Public Service Award, 2001; appointed, Court of Appeals, March 2, 1987; elected, Court of Appeals, August 1988; elected, Supreme Court, August 1990, reelected August 1998; chief justice, October 1994-May 1996, July 1997-August 1998, and September 1998-August 2001.

Justice Adolpho A. Birch Jr.

304 Supreme Court Building, 401 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37219-1407
Born September 22, 1932, Washington, D.C.; three children; Episcopal; graduate, Dunbar High School, Washington, D.C., 1950; attended Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, 1950-52; B.A. and J.D. degrees, Howard University, Washington, D.C., 1956; member, Howard Law Review, 1954-56; National Bar Association Judicial Council; Tennessee, Nashville, and Napier-Looby Bar Associations; U.S. Naval Reserve, active duty, 1956-58; former associate professor of Legal Medicine, Meharry Medical College; former lecturer in law, Fisk University and Tennessee State University; private practice of law, 1958-66; assistant public defender, Davidson County, 1963-66; assistant district attorney general, Davidson County, 1966-69; General Sessions Court of Davidson County judge, 1969-78; Criminal Court of Davidson County judge, 1978-87; Trial Courts of Davidson County presiding judge, 1981-82; member, Court of the Judiciary, 1983-86; teaching faculty, Nashville School of Law, 1991-present; University of Memphis Distinguished Jurist in Residence; appointed, Court of Criminal Appeals, April 1987, elected August 1988, reelected August 1990; appointed, Supreme Court, December 1993, elected August 1994, reelected August 1998; chief justice, May 1996-July 1997.

Justice Janice M. Holder

Pembroke Square, Suite 310, 119 South Main, Memphis, TN 38103

Born August 29, 1949, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania; attended Allegheny College, 1967-68; B.S., *summa cum laude*, University of Pittsburgh, 1971; J.D., Duquesne University School of Law, 1975, and Recent Decisions Editor, *Duquesne Law Review*, 1974-75; senior law clerk to Herbert P. Sorg, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court, Western District of Pennsylvania, 1975-77; practiced law, 1977-90; editor, *Memphis Bar Forum*, 1987-91; chair, Tennessee Bar Association Commission on Women and Minorities, 1994-96; trustee, Tennessee Bar Foundation, 1995-99; secretary, Tennessee Bar Foundation, 1996-99; Master of the Bench, Leo Bearman Sr. American Inn of Court, 1995-97; recipient, Memphis Bar Association's Sam A. Myar Award as outstanding young lawyer, 1990, Charles O. Rond Outstanding Jurist Award, 1992, and Divorce and Family Law Section Judge of the Year Award, 1992; member, American, Tennessee, and Memphis Bar Associations; founding member, Tennessee Lawyers' Association for Women; elected circuit court judge, Thirtieth Judicial District at Memphis, Division II, 1990; appointed, Supreme Court of Tennessee, December 1996, elected August 1998.

Justice Cornelia A. Clark

318 Supreme Court Building, 401 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37219-1407

Born September 15, 1950, Franklin, TN; B.A. Vanderbilt University, 1971; M.A.T. Harvard University, 1972; J.D. Vanderbilt School of Law, 1979; Director, Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts, May 1999-September 2005; Circuit Judge, 21st Judicial District, 1989-1999; private practice, Farris, Warfield & Kanaday (now Stites & Harbison PLLC), 1979-1989; Board of Directors, Lawyers Association for Women, Marion Griffin Chapter; previously served as Second Vice President of the Nashville Bar Association; 2004 was named one of the 21 members of the ABA Commission on the American Jury; faculty member of the National Judicial College; served 10 years as an adjunct professor at the Vanderbilt University School of Law; served as a faculty member of the American Academy of Judicial Education; previous member Supreme Court Commissions on the Rules of Civil Procedure and Technology; member, Williamson County, Tennessee and American Bar Associations, Tennessee Lawyers' Association for Women, American Judicature Society; Fellow of the Tennessee, American and Nashville Bar Foundations; May 2005, first Liberty Bell Award recipient by the Williamson County Bar Association; Appointed to Supreme Court September 2005.