

### Clerk's Corner

# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH MAY



May is Mental Health Awareness Month, an opportune time to discuss mental health and criminal justice issues. The increasing number of individuals with mental health illness in the criminal justice system has enormous fiscal, health and human costs. Consideration must be given to divert individuals with mental health conditions away from jails and prisons and towards more appropriate and culturally competent community-based mental health care.

We must, as a community, support those who need services, we need law enforcement, public defenders, prosecutors, mental health professionals, advocates, court personnel, legislators, and others in the criminal justice system to come together to create a system that will improve outcomes for all. First and foremost, we must attempt to eliminate the stigma associated with mental health illness. People avoid or delay seeking treatment due to concerns about being treated differently that's because stigmas, prejudice and discrimination against people with mental illness is still very much a problem. The rate of mental illness among criminal defendants has risen along with the skyrocketing rate of incarceration in the U.S. and unfortunately since untreated mental illness is more common among people of low socioeconomic status, who are also more likely to be charged with committing a violent act.

People with a mental illness are three times more likely than the general population to interact with police and are more likely to be arrested, according to a report in *Health & Justice*. Efforts to reduce the prison population depends on innovative programs that replace punishment by incarceration with policies that address the socioeconomic and health-related causes of crime. The high number of people with mental illness in prisons and jails is a result of our failure to provide mental health services to populations in communities of greatest risk. We must develop an approach to community health that emphasizes prevention and access to treatment which can improve people's lives and make our communities stronger and more resilient. Change starts with you.

#### Contact Us

**Address**  
201 Poplar Avenue  
Suite 3034  
Memphis, TN 38103

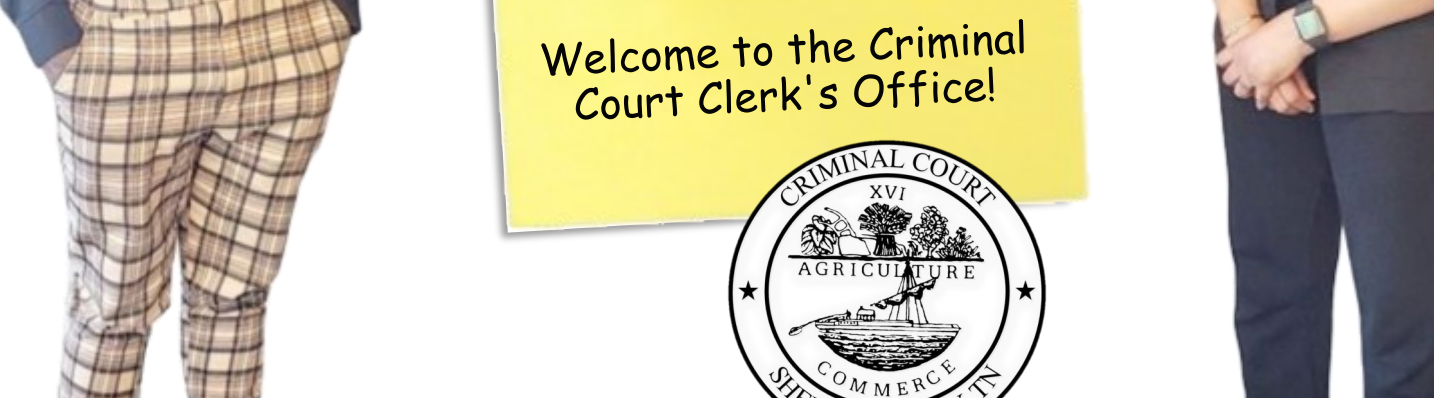
**Phone**  
901-222-3200

**Hours of Operation**  
Monday - Friday  
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

#### Quick Links

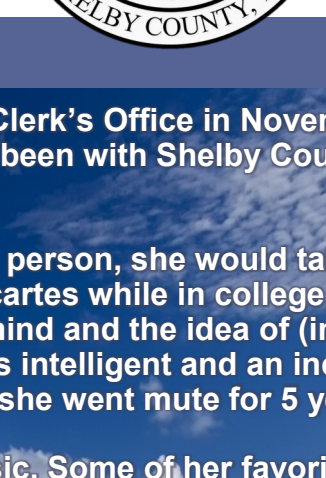
- [Criminal Court Case Information](#)
- [Tennessee Supreme Court](#)
- [United States Supreme Court](#)
- [Access to Justice - Justice for All website \(Self-Represented Litigant Resources\)](#)
- [Court Interpreters \(Foreign Language\)](#)
- [Forms on a variety of legal matters](#)
- [Interpreters for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and ADA policy](#)
- [Tennessee Code online](#)
- [Tennessee Judges and Clerks for all 95 counties](#)

### New Employees



Please join us in welcoming new team members, Mr. Charles Moore and Ms. Amber Hripps who were both hired as a Deputy Court Clerk II.

Welcome to the Criminal Court Clerk's Office!



### Employee Spotlight

Mrs. Selidthe Holliman joined the Criminal Court Clerk's Office in November of 2017 and is a Principal Court Clerk II in the courtroom; she has been with Shelby County Government for 15 years.

If she could have a conversation with any famous person, she would talk to Rene Descartes and Maya Angelou. Selidthe learned about Rene Descartes while in college; she would like to know more about his ideas on God, the idea of (finite) mind and the idea of (indefinite) body. Maya Angelo is intriguing to Selidthe because Maya was intelligent and an incredible storyteller. Selidthe said she would ask Maya Angelou the time she went mute for 5 years.

Ms. Holliman enjoys listening to all genres of music. Some of her favorite artists are New Edition, Phil Collins, Pit Bull, and Beyonce. She enjoys traveling often - she travels to Orlando, Florida at least once per year for a beach trip. Ms. Holliman likes to unwind by sitting by the water for hours on end and watching the waves of the ocean or the stream of a river.



### Retirement and Years of Service

The Criminal Court Clerk's Office celebrated Mr. Carl Townsend who retired after 33 years in our office. In his time with the office, Carl worked with five different Criminal Court Clerk administrations. Since Carl is rarely seen without his baseball hat, staff members wore baseball hats to his retirement ceremony to celebrate him. We also congratulated staff members for their respective Years of Service with Shelby County Government, ranging from 5 - 35 years of service. Congratulations everyone!



# CARL Townsend



## HAPPY RETIREMENT DAY

### Re-Entry Job Fair

Thank you to Ms. Guy and Ms. Lucas for inviting the Criminal Court Clerk's Office to the Re-Entry job Fair. Our office offered information about the expungement process, and there were several companies at the event that offered employment opportunities to the attendees. Several people left with a smile and new opportunities.




### Grizz Day




The Criminal Court Clerk's Office was excited to Grit & Grind for the playoffs against the Lakers.

Go Grizz!



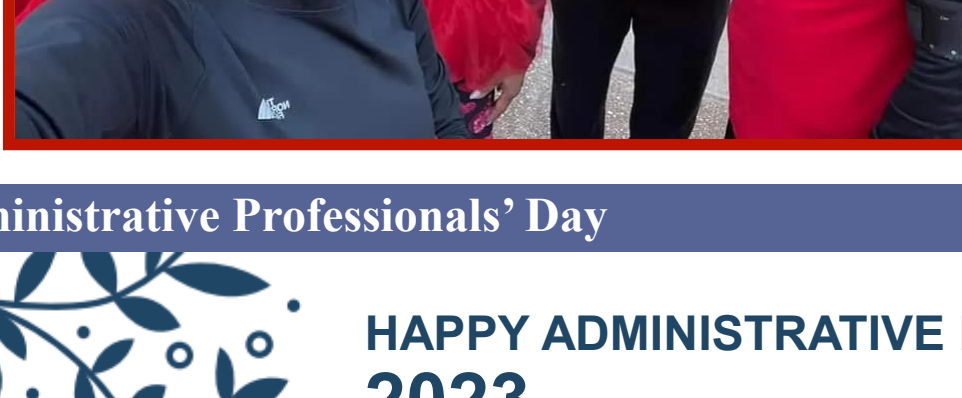

### Denim Day



**DENIM DAY INFO.ORG** **SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN** **THERE IS NO EXCUSE AND NEVER AN INVITATION TO RAPE**

We wore denim to take a stand to end sexual violence. Denim Day is an annual event established in April 1999, as a response to a 1998 ruling by the Italian Supreme Court. The Italian Supreme Court overturned a rape conviction and claimed the victim's jeans were too tight during the time of the assault, which allegedly implied consent. The following day, women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans, showing their support and solidarity for the victim.

### American Heart Association Walk





Team members participated in the Heart Walk for the American Heart Association's premiere event for raising funds to save lives from the USA's #1 and #5 killers - heart disease and stroke. What a beautiful day for a 5K!

### Administrative Professionals' Day

## HAPPY ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY 2023

# Thank You for all that you do!



Administrative Professionals' Day recognizes the professionals who keep the office running smoothly everyday. The Criminal Court Clerk's Office recognized Mrs. Mary Smith for her hard work and dedication to our office. We appreciate you, Mary!

### Featured Criminal Court Judge



## JUDGE JENNIFER JOHNSON MITCHELL

Jennifer Johnson Mitchell is the sitting judge in Criminal Court Division 10 of the 30th Judicial District of Tennessee. She was successful in her county-wide election, being the first person to unseat an incumbent in Criminal Court in Shelby County and is the second African American woman to be elected judge in Criminal Court in Shelby County.

As a judge, she presides over all types of felony and misdemeanor criminal cases. Her daily duties include presiding over trials, hearings, and all types of criminal matters.

Before taking the bench, Judge Mitchell was a practicing defense attorney in her own practice. Her primary focus was criminal defense where she served her clients with sound legal representation. She began her legal career with the Office of the Shelby County Public Defender in 2001 where she served the indigent community for 13 years, litigating cases of all types.

Judge Mitchell has a heart for people and tries to help all those she comes into contact with. She particularly has an interest in young people because she understands that they are our future leaders. Judge Mitchell has served this community in some capacity all her adult life. Prior to law school, she was employed with Youth Villages foster care and residential programs where she worked with at-risk youth. She was also employed at the Shelby County Correctional Center working in women's treatment. She has also worked with the chronically mentally ill population helping them attain necessary services.

She received her law degree from Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law in 2001. She also attained a master's degree from The University of Memphis in Criminal Justice in 1993 and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1992. She attended high school at Memphis Catholic High School.

Judge Mitchell is a life-long Memphian who cares about the community and its people. She is a wife, mother, and a Christian.

### Second Chance Month

## WE BELIEVE IN SECOND CHANCES



In 2017, the White House declared the month of April as Second Chance Month. This is a nationwide effort to raise awareness of a criminal conviction and unlock second-chance opportunities for justice involved individuals. The Shelby County Commissioners acknowledged Clerk Kuhn and the Criminal Court Clerk's Office for helping people obtain a second chance.