

Liberty County Clerk of Courts Receives Superior Court Clerks' Association of Georgia's 2015 Achievement Award

Liberty County Clerk of Courts F. Barry Wilkes received the 2015 Superior Court Clerks' Association of Georgia's (SCCAG) ÉCLAT Award on October 8 during ceremonies in Savannah.

Presenting the prestigious award during the SCCAG's business meeting, John Earle, director of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority, said, "Over twenty years ago, Barry was integral to the creation of the Clerks' Authority and currently serves as our chairman. Having worked closely with him for many years



F. Barry Wilkes, Clerk of Courts of Liberty County (center) and Greg Allen, Clerk of Superior Court of Forsyth County (left), receive 2015 ÉCLAT Award from John Earle, Director of Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority Authority (right)

through the Authority, I can say with absolute conviction that there is no greater advocate for Superior Court clerks in our state than Barry Wilkes. He has spent the last three decades fighting for clerks and ensuring that they have the resources to be successful and the ability to control their destiny so that they can adequately serve the citizens of their respective counties. Among his many accomplishments, this year's award was bestowed in admiration and appreciation for Barry's recent legislative efforts in crafting SB 135 and ensuring its ultimate passage. This monumental piece of legislation protects the future of Superior Court clerks as it codifies that clerks are the

sole and official custodians of all records in their offices, that no one can legally usurp this role, and protects such invaluable records from unauthorized and illegal access or usage. The importance of this legislation and Barry's role in its successful passage cannot be overstated. His foresight and leadership serve to protect the entire Superior Court clerk community not just today but into the future. This (SB 135) is one of the most important pieces of legislation on which (superior court clerks) have worked throughout your history. Because of his vision and leadership, the records court and land records of the citizens of Georgia in your office can now be adequately archived and protected for everyone's sake."

Earl noted that, in light of the migration from paper to electronic records in many superior court clerks' offices throughout the state, both measures were essential to safeguard such archival records not only from illegal and unauthorized threats but also to ensure that the records of every superior court clerks' office in the state are archived in the event of catastrophic events.

In an brochure provided for the award ceremony and provided to clerks of superior court in attendance, Connie Cheatham, Clerk of the Superior Court of McDuffie

County and former president of the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia, said, “There is very little in the ‘clerk world’ that Barry has not done or accomplished...One of his best attributes is his ability to see into the future, plan for it, and take action on those plans. One prime example is his participation in the creation and implementation of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks’ Cooperative Authority, which has proven to be one of our and the citizens’ of Georgia greatest assets. Without his and others’ foresight, most clerks’ offices would not have the resources and technology they have today. He is a born leader who exemplifies exceptionalism, leadership, teamwork, commitment, and accomplishment.”

Greg Allen, clerk of the Superior Court of Forsyth County and chairperson of the Association’s legislative committee, was co-recipient of the ÉCLAT award. He received the award for the marked leadership and lobbying efforts he provided to enact SB 135.

The ÉCLAT Award was established in 2005 by the Superior Court Clerks’ Association of Georgia as a means for recognizing superior court clerks for “exceptional commitment, leadership, accomplishment, and teamwork” (the first letters of each word form the acronym“ éclat”). The award may be presented annually, although the selection committee that selects recipients can elect to not confer the award in any year that it does not deem any superior court clerk(s) deserving. A recipient must be an actively serving clerk of superior court—regardless of how long he or she has held office—who has exhibited exemplary leadership and/or administration in his or her office that has produced tangible improvements and enhancements to service delivery to constituents; invented, created, implemented, or promoted new policies, procedures, or technological and/or other applications that benefit other clerks of superior court statewide, Georgia’s judicial system, and/or real estate and personal property recordation systems throughout the state; or provided exemplary or extraordinary leadership beneficial to all clerks of superior court or, likewise, to the citizens of Georgia or the United States.

Wilkes was in 2013 the first superior court clerk to receive a lifetime achievement award from the Superior Court Clerks’ Association of Georgia. He also received the ÉCLAT Award that year for authoring HB 665, which modernized and overhauled almost all pertinent provisions of law affecting superior court clerks and clerical processes and procedures employed by them to ensure the integrity and archiving of court and land records.

For more information about Wilkes and his accomplishments, visit www.libertyco.com/info/BWilkes.html at www.libertyco.com, the official website of the Office of the Clerk of Courts of Liberty County.

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