

Addendum

ALABAMA STATE BAR
A Bi-Monthly Online Publication
of the Alabama State Bar

Archives

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Statewide Volunteer Mediation Initiative Launched

Program asking for donations of time from trained mediators
Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb announced the implementation of a statewide program to use volunteer attorney mediators to address the reduction and layoffs in court funding during this time of financial crisis. Baldwin County District Judge Jody Bishop and Baldwin County lawyer and mediator Sam Crosby have been asked to co-chair the volunteer mediation initiative. Crosby is a past president of the Alabama State Bar and an experienced mediator. Judge Bishop is the current president of the Alabama District Judges Association.

Chief Justice Cobb stated, "I am asking the 400+ lawyers in the state who are trained, registered mediators to donate one day per year, in addition to their other volunteer efforts, to assist the district courts in settling cases by mediating cases assigned to them by the district judges."

Initiative could help reduce pending cases
In 2009, over 78 percent of the reported cases referred to registered attorney mediators were settled by the parties. According to Chief Justice Cobb, this initiative has the potential to help citizens throughout Alabama by resolving hundreds of pending cases through mediation. The volunteer mediation initiative will complement the nine existing district court mediation programs and establish such programs statewide in other judicial circuits that wish to participate.

A pilot initiative began in Baldwin County in June and will be expanded through the Alabama Center for Dispute Resolution to other circuits. The volunteer mediation initiative is a joint effort of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, the Alabama Center for Dispute Resolution, the Alabama District Judges Association, the Alabama Supreme Court Commission on Dispute Resolution, and the Administrative Office of Courts.

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Judge Jody Bishop



Sam Crosby