



SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
244 WASHINGTON STREET, SUITE 572
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334



CONTACT: RICHARD DIGUETTE
diguette@gasupreme.us

(404) 651-9385
(404) 421-1463 (CELL)

Supreme Court Committee on Civil Justice

Atlanta, May 3, 2006—The Supreme Court, by order dated May 2, 2006, has finalized the member selection of the Committee on Civil Justice. The Committee will be chaired by Marc Gary, general counsel for BellSouth Corporation. Anne Lewis, a partner at Strickland, Brockington & Lewis, LLP, has been selected to serve as Vice Chairperson. Committee members will serve four-year terms

Created in May of 2005, the Committee on Civil Justice will work to strengthen Georgia's civil justice system by developing, coordinating and supporting policy initiatives to expand access to the courts for poor and vulnerable Georgians. Although Georgia has made significant strides in meeting the needs of indigent criminal defendants, for many of its poorest citizens requiring assistance in civil legal matters, the promise of meaningful access to justice has been slow in coming. In any given year, nearly 40% of the state's poorest citizens have at least one civil legal need, but only 1 in 10 is able to secure legal representation.

Legal services programs, pro bono legal organizations, and volunteer lawyers are currently working to meet the needs of indigent civil litigants, but their efforts have been hampered by inadequate resources. Additionally, they are often restricted in the types of cases they are authorized to handle, and their geographical reach usually does not extend to those requiring assistance in the more isolated areas of the state.

Building on the work begun by the State Bar of Georgia, the Committee on Civil Justice will assist stakeholder organizations in developing strategic alliances, eliminating duplication of effort, and securing the legal, financial, and political support necessary to improve the delivery of services to those in need. Some of the Committee's specific initiatives include: promoting public understanding of access to justice problems; improving collaboration and training for advocate organizations; increasing coordination of services; and encouraging lawyers and judges to take a leadership role in expanding access to justice.

SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE ON CIVIL JUSTICE

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Anne Lewis (Vice Chairperson)

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Linda Klein

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