

## **ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT**

Many folks (and I used to as well) think the County Judge spends the workdays running the county. Yes, the County Judge has a lot of influence in county operations. But most of the departments either answer to an elected official (who does not work for me) or commissioner's court which I preside over but manages by plurality.

And, what most don't know is that over 50% of the functions of my job are court related. I am primary in my court for guardianships and probate. I am the Juvenile Court Judge and Mental Health Court Judge. And, I do many other court related bench responsibilities such as occupational licenses and more. I also back up our County Court at Law Judge in misdemeanor court if needed. I am on the Juvenile Probation Board which oversees that department.

A few weeks ago, I had a new experience where I had to issue an order to take two elderly married adults out of their home and put them in a nursing home. This is very unusual method, but they had no relatives in the state and were in a deteriorating state of health, sanitary and mental condition. I appointed their own attorney to make sure their rights were properly attended to. So, in this unusual situation the law gave APS (Adult Protective Services) 10 days to have a hearing on their placement with the people's attorneys (ad litem) in place. They had to get their guardianship proposal papers in place. I sent a "court visitor" who works for my court to get an "eyes on" visit with the prospective wards and report back to me. We completed the guardianship, assigned a relative as the guardian and the court (which is me) is satisfied that they are together and well cared for, in a nursing home. The wards of guardianships and their guardians are under the authority of County Court (me) and are an important responsibility. I consider them to be some of the most vulnerable citizens in our county.

We are working on reviewing, updating and purging our guardianship files back to 1940. This is a major project that has never been done on this scale and I will tell you more about it next week.

Thanks for listening.

We want you to be proud of your County Government.