

# Bankruptcy court hosts investiture ceremony for judge

BY RAY VAN DUSEN  
 News Editor

ABERDEEN – In a courtroom full of family and colleagues, United States Bankruptcy Judge Jason Woodard of the Northern District of Mississippi was officially welcomed to his new family of judges Thursday in an investiture ceremony at the Thad Cochran United States Bankruptcy Courthouse.

Woodard presides over the Northern District of Mississippi as a U.S. bankruptcy judge.

"There are a number of relationships in this courtroom and now, Jason, you are part of this family," said Chief Judge Mike Mills of the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of Mississippi.

Woodard was sworn in as bankruptcy judge in January to fill the post held by former Judge David Houston III for nearly 30 years. Woodard formerly practiced in the business sector of Burr Forman, LLP in Birmingham, Ala.

"Jason epitomizes two important virtues – integrity and stability. He is bound to his word and has a deep commitment to ethics. He has high moral character and the ability to be a great judge. I'm confident you'll be as proud of him as I am," Houston said.

A native of Jasper, Ala., Woodard was officially welcomed to Mississippi

by Stephen Rosenblatt of Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens and Cannada, PLLC.

"Unfortunately, Mississippi has a reputation of exporting so much of its talent to other states like Alabama. With the addition of Jason, we'll see that trade level move back to the middle," Rosenblatt said.

Bankruptcy Judge Neil Olack of the Northern and Southern Districts of Mississippi offered Woodard a mostly light-hearted welcome to the bench.

"The first time we talked in my office, Jason said he always wanted to be a bankruptcy judge. I asked why he never wanted to be an astronaut or the President of the United States," Olack said.

Olack read fabricated information pulled from a manila envelope he jokingly stated was gathered from a TMZ.com investigative report including statements such as Woodard trick-or-treating in a long black robe and bringing a Chapter 7 trustee to career day in seventh grade.

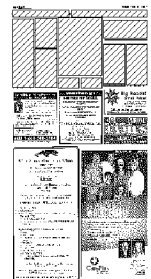
"I have no doubt you'll do a great job and be recognized nationally. I know you'll be a hard worker who holds this court to high ethical standards," Olack said.

The Northern District of Mississippi is in the top 10 busiest bankruptcy dis-

tricts nationally in a case load per judge basis.

"By the sheer numbers alone, we touch more lives than any other court. Bankruptcy offers people a second chance and offers a fresh start. Bankruptcy court isn't about winning or losing, it's about moving cases through," said Bankruptcy Judge James Robinson for the Northern District of Alabama.

"When people come through here, they're at an absolute low point in their lives. When I took my oath, I took it to heart. My only agenda here is to call balls and strikes the best I see them." Woodard said.





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**ROBING WOODARD** - Stephanie Woodard robes her husband, Judge Jason Woodard, during his investiture ceremony while their children, Mitchell, Charles and Oliver watch. Woodard presides over the Northern District of Mississippi as United States Bankruptcy Judge.

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**Judge David Houston III**  
*former bankruptcy judge*