



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

Administrative Office
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Bldg. 1, Room, E-316
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
(304) 340-2305 Jennifer Bundy
(304) 340-2306 April Harless
(304) 558-1212 FAX
Web Site: www.courtsvw.gov
Facebook: [wjudiciary](https://www.facebook.com/wjudiciary)
Twitter: [WVcourts](https://twitter.com/WVcourts)
Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/courtsvw/
Email: Jennifer.Bundy@courtsvw.gov
Email: April.Harless@courtsvw.gov

Business Court Issues Annual Report for 2019

For immediate release Friday, January 24, 2020

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Business Court Division Judges issued more than 200 orders in cases the Division addressed last year, according to the Business Court Division 2019 Annual Report.

The report was delivered to the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia this week and posted on the West Virginia Judiciary website:

<http://www.courtsvw.gov/lower-courts/business-court-division/annualReports.html>.

“These specially trained judicial officers use their expertise to handle complex business litigation competently and efficiently, giving parties a resolution as quickly as possible,” said Supreme Court Chief Justice Tim Armstead. “The Supreme Court appreciates the dedicated work of the Business Court Division Judges.”

A majority of cases referred to the Business Court Division involve contract disputes or alleged tortious practices. Any party or judge may seek to refer business litigation to the division by filing a motion. The Supreme Court Chief Justice reviews all such motions and can act directly on the motion or refer the matter to the Business Court Division for a recommendation. The Chief Justice then can grant or refuse the motion. Once the Chief Justice has assigned a case to the Business Court Division, the division chairman assigns one of the division judges as the presiding judge and may also assign resolution judges.

Since the Business Court Division began operating in 2012, 103 cases have been referred to the division, including 10 referred in 2019.

In the 12 cases disposed of in 2019, Business Court Division judges scheduled approximately 60 hearings, resolved about 145 motions, and entered about 210 orders. Additionally, there were 15 mediations or mediation status hearings scheduled. Approximately 75 percent of the 12 cases were settled partially or completely by agreement, resulting in agreed dismissal orders.

“This has been a year of transition for the Business Court Division,” said Twenty-Third Judicial Circuit (Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan Counties) Judge Michael D. Lorensen, who became Chairman of the Business Court Division on February 1, 2019.

“We welcome two new members – Judge Shawn D. Nines of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit (Barbour and Taylor Counties) and Judge Jennifer P. Dent of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit (Greenbrier and Pocahontas Counties). We are grateful for the services of James J. Matish of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit (Harrison County), who leaves the Business Court Division but continues to serve the citizens of Harrison County,” Judge Lorensen said. “Judge Christopher C. Wilkes retired earlier this year, but

will continue to serve on the Business Court Division as a senior status judge. We are delighted that we will continue to have the experience and wisdom of Judge Wilkes at our disposal and for his continued willingness to serve.

“With the consent of the Supreme Court of Appeals, we also have re-structured our terms so that we have only one judge’s term expiring each year. I hope this will lend stability and continuity to the services the Division is able to provide,” Judge Lorensen said.

Business Court Division judges receive no extra pay for their work on Business Court matters and maintain their own general circuit court dockets. Together with Judge Lorensen, Judge Dent, Judge Nines and Judge Wilkes, the other members of the Business Court Division are Twenty-Fourth Judicial Circuit (Wayne County) Judge James H. Young, Jr.; Sixth Judicial Circuit (Cabell County) Judge Paul Farrell; and Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit (Hampshire, Hardy and Pendleton Counties) Judge H. Charles Carl, III.

##