



Supreme Court of Georgia

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SUMMARIES OF OPINIONS

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CHATHAM COUNTY ET AL. V. MASSEY, CLERK (S16A0682)

The **Chatham County** Clerk of Superior Court has won his case against the County government with an opinion today by the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Daniel W. Massey, who was first elected Clerk in 2004 and is currently serving his third term, is entitled not only to *state* cost of living increases but also to *local* cost of living increases, according to today's unanimous opinion. The County argued it had overpaid Massey by paying him a salary that exceeded the minimum required under Georgia statute and he therefore was not entitled to the County cost of living increases, on top of the State cost of living and longevity increases he was already receiving.

But in today's opinion, written by **Justice Robert Benham**, the high court disagrees.

According to briefs filed in the case, when Massey took office in 2005, he was paid an annual salary of \$78,667. In 2006, Massey asked the Board of Commissioners to raise his salary to \$110,000, and by passing a resolution, the Board did so. At the time, Massey earned more than the state-mandated minimum salary for a superior court clerk in a county with a population the size of Chatham County's, as prescribed by Georgia Code § 15-6-88. In 2007, the County asked its state representatives to pass a "local act" that restructured salary arrangements for local officials, and Georgia's legislature passed the local act. Among its provisions was one setting the minimum salary for the Clerk of Superior Court at \$56,000 a year, which was lower than the state mandated minimum under § 15-6-88. The state law says that the "county governing authority may supplement the minimum annual salary of the clerk of the superior court in such amount as it may fix from time to time; but no clerk's compensation supplement shall be decreased during any term of office." Because the minimum salary under the local act was lower

than the minimum salary under the state act, Massey was to be paid in accordance with the state's statutory structure, which included receiving state-granted cost of living adjustments (called COLAs) and longevity pay. At issue in this case is whether Massey is also entitled to county-granted cost of living adjustments. The County claimed it was not required to pay Massey local cost of living increases. But Massey claimed that under the 2007 local act, the County was required to pay him the local COLAs. The 2007 local act states that the County is to grant every official listed in the act, including the court clerk, "the same percentage increases in salary that it grants as cost-of-living increases to employees of Chatham County."

In August 2013, Massey sent a letter to the County and county attorney claiming they had been miscalculating his salary and he should be paid for all past due salary. The County claimed he was not owed the local COLAs, arguing the 2007 local act was unconstitutional and therefore did not apply to Massey. In December 2014, Massey sued the County for his past due salary claim. In June 2015, the trial court ruled in Massey's favor, finding that he had a right to be paid the local COLAs provided by local legislation and instead of being paid \$128,523, which was the amount the County argued he was due and which included State COLAs and longevity pay, he should have been paid \$133,701.75. The trial court also awarded Massey attorney's fees. The County then appealed to the state Supreme Court.

"We reject the County's argument that the 2007 Local Act is unconstitutional," today's opinion says. While the County argued the local act is unenforceable because it authorizes the superior court clerk to be paid less than what is required by the state statute, "the 2007 Local Act does not establish \$56,000 as the salary for the clerk," the opinion says. "It simply states that the clerk's salary may not be *less than* \$56,000. Consequently, it is not inconsistent on its face with the terms of the general statute requiring a clerk to be paid no less than the amount set by the county population schedule set forth in the statute, and is not unconstitutional."

The Supreme Court also rejects the County's argument that the county COLAs do not apply to Massey because he was paid a salary that was set by resolution of the Board of Commissioners. "The County has failed to show that the cost-of-living provision in the 2007 Local Act is unenforceable," the opinion says.

"We affirm the trial court's order declaring that the 2007 Local Act is constitutional as applied to Massey and that he is entitled to the same percentage increases in salary that the County has granted to other county employees as cost-of-living increases during his tenure in office," the opinion concludes. "Applying the 2007 Local Act and the applicable state statutes to Massey's compensation, he is entitled to both state COLAs and local COLAs, and also to state longevity adjustments to his salary, without setting off these increases from the amount the County supplements his salary over the statutory minimum...."

Attorneys for Appellants (County): R. Jonathan Hart, Jennifer Burns

Attorneys for Appellee (Massey): Steven Scheer, Craig Call

THE STATE V. HAMILTON (S16A0986)

A woman convicted of murdering her ex-husband is entitled to a new trial under a ruling today by the Georgia Supreme Court.

For years, Marlina Hamilton allegedly suffered beatings and even rape at the hands of her boyfriend and eventual husband, Christopher Donaldson, before she shot and killed him. In 2011, a **Dougherty County** jury found her guilty of felony murder and she was sentenced to life

in prison. But in 2015, the trial judge – using his discretion to sit as a “thirteenth juror” – granted Hamilton’s motion for a new trial, concluding that the jury’s guilty verdicts were “decidedly and strongly against the weight of the evidence” and “contrary to the principles of justice and equity.” State prosecutors appealed that ruling to the Georgia Supreme Court.

But in today’s opinion, “we affirm it,” **Justice David Nahmias** writes for a unanimous court.

According to the facts of the case, Hamilton and Donaldson began dating in 2000, moved in together in 2001 and had a son. Hamilton also had a son, D’Angelo, from a previous relationship. At trial, several witnesses testified that over the years, Donaldson physically abused Hamilton on multiple occasions. Beginning in 2001, he beat her after accusing her of cheating on him. He beat her after blaming her for a burglary of their home. And he beat her and hit her in the stomach with a broom after an argument. Hamilton’s friend, Angela Whitaker, testified that she saw bruises on Hamilton’s arms and legs, and Hamilton told her they were from fights with Donaldson. Following one of those fights, Whitaker had to remove a piece of glass from Hamilton’s back. When Hamilton became pregnant with twins in 2004, Donaldson punched her in the mouth and said he did not want the babies. She subsequently had an abortion and moved in with her mother, but the couple reunited in 2005. That same year, Donaldson was arrested for drug crimes. After his attorney suggested he would receive a lighter sentence if the couple wed, the two got married in 2006. She eventually found out he was cheating on her and filed for divorce, which became final in 2008.

Donaldson was released from prison in March 2010, and three months later he asked Hamilton to move back in with him. When she refused, he punched her several times and raped her in her home. As a result, Hamilton again became pregnant and again had an abortion. In August of that year, Donaldson became angry about Hamilton’s relationship with another man, and he hit her in the face and punched her in the side in front of her children. In October, she agreed to let him move into her home in Albany, “if you will just stop this.”

According to her testimony at her murder trial, the evening of Oct. 11, 2010, Donaldson became angry at her and started punching his fists and threatening Hamilton. She went to the bathroom and sent a text message to her friend, asking her to call police. Officers responded about 11 p.m., ordered Donaldson to leave and gave Hamilton information on how to get assistance for domestic violence. After police left, Donaldson returned to the home, let himself in, and when she asked him to leave, began pacing back and forth. Donaldson then hit Hamilton in the back of her head. When he swung at her again, Hamilton grabbed a gun that she had under the sofa and shot him twice in the lower body. He then began beating and choking her as they wrestled for the gun. He pointed the gun at her, but she was able to remove the magazine. He then hit her in the head with the gun and punched her. Meanwhile, her son D’Angelo called police and pulled Donaldson off his mother. When police arrived, Hamilton was waiting on the porch. She told them she “felt like he was going to kill [her] that night.”

In February 2011, a grand jury indicted Hamilton for malice murder, felony murder based on aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, aggravated assault-family violence, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. At her March 2011 trial, the defense attorney argued that Hamilton had shot Donaldson in self-defense due to battered person syndrome. The defense presented an expert witness who testified on the syndrome; the State did not present any contrary expert testimony. The jury acquitted

Hamilton of malice murder but found her guilty of the other charges. The judge then sentenced her to life plus five years in prison. In April 2011, Hamilton’s attorney filed a motion requesting a new trial. By then, she had a new attorney who raised several claims, including “ineffective assistance” by her trial attorney for failing to do a number of things during trial, including failing to call a nurse who would have corroborated the claims of Donaldson’s abuse of Hamilton. In September 2015, the trial judge granted Hamilton a new trial. The State then filed this appeal with the Georgia Supreme Court.

Two Georgia statutes are at issue in this case. Georgia Code § 5-5-20 states that, “In any case when the verdict of a jury is found contrary to evidence and the principles of justice and equity, the judge presiding may grant a new trial before another jury.” Georgia Code § 5-5-21 states that the presiding judge may also grant a new trial, “where the verdict may be decidedly and strongly against the weight of the evidence even though there may appear to be some slight evidence in favor of the finding.”

In today’s opinion, the Supreme Court finds that “the evidence presented at trial and summarized above was, when viewed in the light most favorable to the verdicts, legally sufficient to authorize a rational jury to reject Hamilton’s claim of self-defense and find her guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of the crimes for which she was convicted.”

But the State is “incorrect,” the opinion says, in asserting that “because the evidence was sufficient under the due process standard, the trial court erred in granting a new trial under § 5-5-20 and § 5-5-21.”

“As this Court has clearly explained: Even when the evidence is legally sufficient to sustain a conviction, a trial judge may grant a new trial if the verdict of the jury is ‘contrary to...the principles of justice and equity,’ § 5-5-20, or if the verdict is ‘decidedly and strongly against the weight of the evidence, § 5-5-20,’” the opinion says.

“In this case, the trial court explained that after it carefully reviewed the trial transcript and exhibits and ‘considered the conflicts in the evidence, the credibility of the witnesses, and the weight of their testimony,’ it had concluded that the jury’s guilty verdicts were ‘decidedly and strongly against the weight of the evidence’ and ‘contrary to the principles of justice and equity,’” the opinion says. “The court therefore exercised its discretion to grant a new trial. Having reviewed the record, we cannot say that this conclusion was an abuse of the trial court’s substantial discretion to act as the ‘thirteenth juror’ in the case.”

The opinion concludes by noting that because the evidence at Hamilton’s first trial was constitutionally sufficient to support the jury’s guilty verdicts, the State may elect to retry her on those counts. “However the case is resolved, the parties and the trial court should proceed with dispatch, given that Hamilton has already served more than five years in prison,” the opinion says.

Attorney for Appellant (State): Gregory Edwards, District Attorney

Attorney for Appellee (Hamilton): Troy Golden, Chief Asst. Public Defender

BRYSON, COMMISSIONER ET AL. V. JACKSON (S16A1023)

A man whose conviction for murdering his girlfriend’s father was thrown out by a lower court has had the conviction reinstated under an opinion today by the Georgia Supreme Court.

In today’s unanimous opinion, **Justice Harold Melton** writes that a Coffee County judge was wrong to rule that Fanoris Jermaine Jackson had received ineffective assistance from both

his attorney for his appeal and his attorney at trial. As a result, the high court has reversed the lower court's ruling.

According to the facts of this **Clayton County** case, around 3:00 a.m. on Feb. 24, 1997, Jackson's girlfriend, who was the mother of his son, arrived home after going out with a man to the house she shared with her parents, brother, and son. As she walked up the driveway, Jackson appeared, grabbed her by her jacket, asked where she had been, threatening to kill her. Screaming, she slipped out of the jacket and ran into the house. As she told her mother what had happened outside, she saw Jackson's shadow on the exterior door of her bedroom. She went to the back door, saw Jackson there, and went to the front living room where her father was sleeping naked on a mattress on the floor. As she relayed to her father what was happening, Jackson kicked in the back door. He forced his girlfriend's mother and brother to accompany him at gunpoint to the front room. When her father started to sit up and pull the covers over himself, Jackson told him to stay down and shot him in the hand. Jackson then shot him several more times, fatally wounding him in the head. Jackson unplugged the telephone in the living room, then forced the others to go with him to the room where the child had been sleeping. After the telephone in that room had been unplugged, he made everyone sit on the bed while he sat in a chair in front of the door. From there he conducted a conversation with his girlfriend about her date and their relationship, then began to threaten to kill himself. His girlfriend's mother eventually persuaded Jackson to take the bullets from the gun and let her call police. Jackson was arrested when police officers came to the house.

In June 1998, a jury convicted Jackson of murder, aggravated assault, false imprisonment, burglary and weapons charges, and he was sentenced to life plus 50 years in prison. In 1999, the Georgia Supreme Court upheld his convictions and sentence. In 2008, Jackson filed a petition for a "writ of habeas corpus." Habeas corpus is a civil proceeding that allows already convicted prisoners to challenge their conviction on constitutional grounds in the county where they're incarcerated. They generally file the action against the prison warden, but in this case the plaintiff is Department of Corrections Commissioner Homer Bryson. In his petition, Jackson argued he had received "ineffective assistance" from his trial attorney, in violation of his constitutional right to effective assistance, and that his attorney for his appeal was also ineffective for failing to raise the trial counsel's deficiencies when his case was appealed to the Georgia Supreme Court. In January 2016, the habeas court in Coffee County ruled in Jackson's favor and granted the writ, throwing out his convictions. But in today's opinion, "we reverse."

Jackson argued that his trial attorney was ineffective in four ways, but in today's opinion, the Supreme Court rejects all his arguments. "Because trial counsel did not render ineffective assistance in any of the ways claimed by Jackson, Jackson cannot show that he suffered actual prejudice resulting from his appellant counsel's failure to preserve the issue of trial counsel's performance on direct appeal," the opinion concludes. "Judgment reversed. All the Justices concur."

Attorneys for Appellant (Commissioner): Samuel Olens, Attorney General, Beth Burton, Dep. A.G., Paula Smith, Sr. Asst. A.G.

Attorney for Appellee (Jackson): Rodney Zell

HOOKS, WARDEN V. WALLEY (S16A0660)

The Supreme Court of Georgia has reversed a lower court's ruling that had thrown out the sexual battery and child molestation convictions a man received in **Forsyth County**. The lower court had ruled in the man's favor on the ground that the lawyer for the man's appeal rendered "ineffective assistance of counsel" in violation of his constitutional rights.

But in today's unanimous opinion, **Presiding Justice P. Harris Hines** writes that there was "no evidence" to overcome the presumption that the man's attorney had made "an appropriate strategic decision" in handling the case when it was appealed to the Georgia Court of Appeals.

According to briefs filed in the case, a 12-year-old child testified that Ray K. Walley touched her "private part" underneath her underwear in the middle of the night while she was asleep. Once she realized what he was doing, she rolled over so that he would stop. Walley was her mother's live-in boyfriend, and the child and her mother testified that Walley and the girl had had a good relationship and they were all "a family." At his trial, the judge allowed the State to introduce evidence of his prior rape of a 22-year-old woman while he was a pilot and she was a flight attendant. In May 2006, Walley was convicted of the aggravated sexual battery and child molestation of the 12-year-old girl, and he was sentenced to 20 years to serve 15 behind bars. He appealed to the Georgia Court of Appeals, arguing the trial court erred by allowing in the "similar transaction evidence" of the rape because it was not sufficiently similar to the allegations made against him by the 12-year-old. However, the Court of Appeals upheld his convictions.

In 2013, Walley's attorney filed a petition for a "writ of habeas corpus," again challenging the validity of his Forsyth County convictions involving the 12-year-old. (Habeas corpus is a civil proceeding that allows already convicted prisoners to challenge their conviction on constitutional grounds in the county where they're incarcerated. They generally file the action against the prison warden, who in this case was Brad Hooks.) In his habeas petition, Walley raised one ground for relief: He argued his attorney for his appeal was ineffective because he failed to argue that his trial attorney had also rendered "ineffective assistance of counsel," in violation of his constitutional rights, based on the fact that he never told him the State had offered a plea arrangement in which he only would have had to spend five years behind bars. At a hearing in September 2014, his pre-trial attorney Billy Spruell, his trial attorney Charles Haldi, and his appeal attorney Brian Steel all testified. Following the hearing, the habeas court granted relief to Walley, threw out his convictions and granted him a new trial on the ground that attorney Steel's performance was deficient on appeal because he failed to argue that Spruell had been ineffective for failing to advise Walley about the State's five-year plea offer. The Attorney General's office, representing the State and the prison warden, then appealed to the Georgia Supreme Court.

Under the U.S. Supreme Court's 1984 decision in *Strickland v. Washington*, to prove "ineffective assistance of counsel," a defendant must show that his attorney provided deficient performance and that, but for that unprofessional performance, there is a reasonable probability the outcome of the court proceeding would have been different.

"It is certainly true that trial counsel's failure to convey a plea offer may form the basis of a claim that counsel's performance was deficient so as to satisfy the first prong of the *Strickland* standard, and that the failure to raise on appeal a valid claim of ineffective assistance of trial

counsel based on the failure to convey a plea offer may constitute ineffective assistance of appellate counsel,” today’s opinion says. “However, while part of Walley’s burden in the habeas court included showing that trial counsel failed to convey the plea offer, and was ineffective in doing so, those deficiencies alone do not demonstrate that *appellate* counsel was ineffective in failing to pursue a claim based upon trial counsel’s performance.” It was Walley’s burden in the habeas court “to overcome the presumption that Steel’s decision not to pursue such a ground was reasonable, and instead show that this ‘decision was an unreasonable one which only an incompetent attorney would adopt.’ And this Walley simply failed to do.”

While Walley testified he would have taken the plea deal had he known about it, the record shows that the situation faced by Steel was one in which Spruell said one thing and Wally said another. During the habeas hearing, Spruell testified that he recalled discussing the five-year plea with Walley and that while initially Walley “turned down the offer of the five years,” he later indicated he would take the deal but he was “not willing to admit any responsibility for this act.” When Spruell contacted the prosecutor, she informed him the five-year plea offer was no longer on the table and she would only be satisfied with seven years.

“Although the evidence placed before the habeas court may have authorized that court’s conclusion that Spruell rendered ineffective assistance of counsel, we need not decide that question; simply put, there was no evidence presented to the habeas court sufficient to overcome the presumption that Steel made an appropriate strategic decision in withdrawing the claim that Spruell had rendered ineffective assistance of counsel, and without Walley having met his burden to produce such evidence, the habeas court was not authorized to grant the writ. Accordingly, the judgment of the habeas court must be reversed.”

Attorneys for Appellant (State): Samuel Olens, Attorney General, Beth Burton, Dep. A.G., Paula Smith, Sr. Asst. A.G., Matthew Crowder, Asst. A.G.

Attorney for Appellee (Walley): Brenda Joy “B.J.” Bernstein

WILLIAMS V. THE STATE (S16A0965)

The Supreme Court of Georgia has reversed a **Bulloch County** judge’s order and thrown out one of the felony murder charges a man was facing in the death of a baby boy.

Under today’s opinion, **Justice Carol Hunstein** writes for a unanimous court that the felony, “contributing to the deprivation or delinquency of a minor,” cannot be the “predicate,” or basis, for felony murder.

Allan Ray Williams was indicted for the death of Collen Durden, an infant boy who died in 2013 while in Williams’ care. In a 5-count indictment, Williams stands charged with the following crimes: (1) felony murder, “predicated” – or based on – the crime of contributing to the deprivation of a minor; (2) contributing to the deprivation of a minor; (3) felony murder, based on cruelty to a child; (4) cruelty to children in the second degree; and (5) making a false statement. In October 2014, Williams’ attorney filed a “general demurrer” to count 1, objecting to the charge and asking the court to throw it out. Williams filed objections to his other charges, but it is the demurrer involving the first count that was the subject of this appeal.

Count 1 of the indictment states that in September 2013, Williams “did commit the offense of murder when the accused caused the death of Collen Durden, a human being, irrespective of malice while in the commission of a felony, Contributing to the Deprivation of a Minor, by willfully failing to care for said child so that said child died from asphyxiation in

violation of [Georgia Code § 16-12-1]. . . .” The second count of the indictment accuses Williams of contributing to the deprivation of a minor “in that accused did fail to properly supervise said child, said failure to act resulted in the death of said child. . . .” Under state law (Georgia Code § 16-5-1), felony murder is defined as “when, in the commission of a felony, he or she causes the death of another human being irrespective of malice.” It is punishable under the law by death, imprisonment for life without parole, or imprisonment for life with the possibility of parole. Under another state statute (Georgia Code § 16-12-1), contributing to the deprivation of a minor is defined as when a person, “Willfully commits an act or acts or willfully fails to act when such act or omission would cause a minor to be adjudicated to be a dependent child. . . .” If the offense results in “serious injury” or death, it is a felony punishable by one to 10 years in prison for the first offense and three to a maximum of 20 years in prison for a subsequent offense. Williams objected to the felony murder charge, arguing that a violation of § 16-12-1 cannot be the basis for a felony murder count because § 16-12-1 provides its own penalty scheme for violations that result in death. And under that scheme, 10 years in prison would be a far less harsh punishment than life if Williams were ultimately convicted. In 2015, however, the judge denied Williams’ objection to this charge, as well as the others. Williams then appealed to the state Supreme Court, which agreed to review the issue prior to trial to determine whether the trial court erred in denying his objection to Count 1 of the indictment.

In today’s opinion, the Supreme Court agrees that the trial court was wrong and the judge should have thrown out the charge.

With Georgia Code § 16-12-1, “the General Assembly created, and later enacted a specific sentencing scheme for individuals convicted under the felony deprivation statute, including for acts resulting in the serious injury *or death* of a child,” the opinion says. “Consequently, this offense cannot be used as a predicate for felony murder because it has a separate and distinct criminal disposition for those that cause the death of another.”

“The plain language of § 16-12-1 establishes that the felony deprivation statute cannot be used as a predicate offense for felony murder,” the opinion concludes. “Accordingly, the trial court should have granted Appellant’s [i.e. Williams’] demurrer to count 1 of his indictment.”

Attorneys for Appellant (Williams): Robert Persse, Amy Ihrig, Office of the Public Defender
Attorneys for Appellee (State): Richard Mallard, District Attorney, Keith McIntyre, Sr. Asst. D.A., Samuel Olens, Attorney General, Beth Burton, Dep. A.G., Paula Smith, Sr. Asst. A.G.

IN OTHER CASES, the Supreme Court of Georgia has upheld **murder** convictions and life prison sentences for:

- * Marquice Burks (Fulton Co.)
- * Samuel Ellis (Fulton Co.)
- * Ronald Fisher (Fulton Co.)
- * Courtney DuBose (DeKalb Co.)
- * Stanley Harris (DeKalb Co.)
- * Johnny McClendon (Fulton Co.)

- BURKS V. THE STATE (S16A0700)***
- ELLIS V. THE STATE (S16A1251)**
- FISHER V. THE STATE (S16A0852)**
- DUBOSE V. THE STATE (S16A1299)**
- HARRIS V. THE STATE (S16A1188)**
- MCCLENDON V. THE STATE (S16A0699)***

- * Bernard Henry Robinson (Glynn Co.) **ROBINSON V. THE STATE (S16A1274)**
- * Benji Cortez Sanders (Sumter Co.) **SANDERS V. THE STATE (S16A1081)**
- * Courtney Tremaine Smith (Gwinnett Co.) **SMITH V. THE STATE (S16A1146)****
- * Christopher Antoin Snelson (Gwinnett Co.) **SNELSON V. THE STATE (S16A0855)****
- * Chrissharnard J. Stewart (Gwinnett Co.) **WELCH V. THE STATE (S16A0799)****

* Burks and McClendon were tried jointly and convicted of the murder of Christopher Crawford. Although the Georgia Supreme Court has upheld their murder convictions and life prison sentences, the trial court erred by “merging” their felony murder convictions into their malice murder convictions instead of “vacating” them. With today’s decision, the Supreme Court has vacated their felony murder convictions.

** Smith, Snelson, and Stewart were convicted of the felony murder of Eric Smith and the aggravated assaults of two others. Although the Court has upheld their murder convictions and life prison sentences, the trial court erred by “merging” each man’s felony murder count that was “predicated,” or based, on armed robbery into each man’s felony murder count that was based on aggravated assault. That was error, as the second felony murder count was actually “vacated” according to law. That is because both murder counts against each man involved only one victim, and therefore one of the murder verdicts must be thrown out. Furthermore, the underlying felony of the first murder count – armed robbery – does not merge into the conviction for felony murder that was based on aggravated assault. Therefore, the court erred in also failing to sentence each man for armed robbery, so the Supreme Court is remanding the case for additional sentencing.

IN DISCIPLINARY MATTERS, the Georgia Supreme Court has **disbarred** the following attorney:

- * C. Michael Rose **IN THE MATTER OF: C. MICHAEL ROSE (S16Y1601)**

The Court has accepted petitions for **voluntary surrender of license** – tantamount to disbarment – from attorneys:

- * Holly De Rosa Hogue **IN THE MATTER OF: HOLLY DE ROSA HOGUE (S16Y1592)**
- * Timothy Eugene Moses **IN THE MATTER OF: TIMOTHY EUGENE MOSES (S16Y1436)**

The Court has ordered the **indefinite suspension**, during the pending of federal charges in federal court, of attorney:

- * Nathan E. Hardwick, IV **IN THE MATTER OF: NATHAN E. HARDWICK, IV (S16Y0976)**

The Court has **rejected a petition for voluntary discipline**, finding the proposed three-year suspension “an inadequate suspension,” given “the lengthy criminal conduct” of attorney:

* Trent Carl Gaines

IN THE MATTER OF: TRENT CARL GAINES (S16Y1335)