

An Appreciation of the Many Roles and Responsibilities of a District Court Judge

In December, the School of Government held the first week of orientation for new district court judges. The class included thirty-one new judges. Most of the judges took the bench January 1, though a handful were sworn in last year to fill vacancies by gubernatorial appointment. One of the challenges in creating an orientation program for new district court judges (which my colleague Cheryl Howell has done for more than two decades) is addressing the [myriad of matters](#) that fall within their jurisdiction.

District court judges preside over civil cases (sometimes with [jury trials](#)), juvenile cases, misdemeanor criminal actions and infractions, first appearances and probable cause hearings in felony cases, involuntary commitment proceedings, and many other types of cases. At this year's orientation, we thought there was no better way to introduce the judges to the breadth and weight of their new positions than to share with them the wise words of Retired Judge Joseph Turner, who served as a district court judge in Guilford County for more than 20 years and then as a superior court judge, before retiring in 2012. The School of Government's talented instructional technology team put Judge Turner's words to music and added some video. The new judges said they appreciated the overview—and the wisdom—and we thought our readers might too.

You can watch the video [here](#).