



LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

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Acadiana judge takes on new role as State Judicial Outreach Liaison

The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission is pleased to announce that 15th Judicial District Court Judge Jules David Edwards III, who is retiring from the bench in 2021, has been named Louisiana's State Judicial Outreach Liaison (SJOL).

Judge Edwards has served as a district judge for 27 years in the Acadiana area. He succeeds retired Judge Marion Edwards, who was named as Louisiana's first SJOL in 2018. Louisiana is one of only a few states that retains an SJOL.

The SJOL is a specialized judge who provides education, training, and technical assistance on traffic-related matters to judges and court personnel throughout the state. The LHSC recently was awarded a grant from the American Bar Association (ABA), in partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), to secure an SJOL.

"Judge Edwards' expertise will serve our agency well in the furtherance of its mission to reduce traffic crashes and the resulting deaths, injuries, and property damage," said Lisa Freeman, Executive Director of the LHSC. "We are very fortunate and excited to have him on board."

"The ABA's longstanding partnership with NHTSA has been vital in providing peer-to-peer education for judges who handle impaired driving cases," said ABA President Patricia Lee Refo. "We are proud that Judge Edwards will be providing judicial education and support to judges in Louisiana."

Judge Edwards has enjoyed a long, illustrious career in the criminal justice system. He was named Chief Judge of Louisiana's 15th Judicial District from 2001 to 2003, and he served as chairman of the Louisiana Judiciary Commission from 2013 to 2017.

Judge Edwards is a past president of the Louisiana District Judges Association, and from 2011 to 2018, he worked with the Louisiana Sentencing Commission to implement a uniform sentencing policy for judges. In recognition of his service to the criminal justice system, Judge Edwards was inducted into the Louisiana Justice Hall of Fame in 2013.

During his tenure on the bench, Judge Edwards has been a pioneer and strong advocate of drug courts and re-entry courts. He continues to serve as a member of the Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE Council) and the Louisiana Drug Policy Board.

Prior to his election to the bench, Judge Edwards served as an indigent defender attorney, an assistant district attorney, counsel to the Louisiana Senate's Select Committee on Crime and Drugs, and a partner in the Law Offices of Edwards and Edwards.

Judge Edwards also has given many years of service to his country. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in 1997 and then served in the Louisiana National Guard, where he was recognized as the best Staff Judge Advocate in the United States. Judge Edwards retired from the National Guard at the rank of Colonel in 2007.

“Judge Edwards has devoted his entire adult life, both in the criminal justice system and in the military, to serving citizens,” Freeman said. “His accomplishments have been numerous and impressive. I cannot wait to see what his efforts will bring to the traffic safety arena.”

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