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SUPREME COURT OF ARKANSAS

IN RE ARKANSAS SUPREME
COURT COMMITTEE ON
CRIMINAL PRACTICE

Opinion Delivered: March 5, 2026

PER CURIAM

The Supreme Court of Arkansas previously created the Arkansas Committee on Rules of Criminal Procedure, currently known as the Arkansas Committee on Criminal Practice. See *In re Sup. Ct. Comm. on Rules of Pleading, Prac., & Proc. in Crim. Cases*, 281 Ark. App'x 506 (1983) (per curiam); see also *In re Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 312 Ark. App'x 612 (1993) (per curiam). By subsequent per curiam order, this Court authorized the appointment of up to fifteen members to the Committee. See *In re Sup. Ct. Comms. & Bds.*, 315 Ark. App'x 751 (1993) (per curiam). It has been the Court's longstanding custom and practice to appoint circuit judges, prosecuting attorneys, and criminal defense attorneys from

across the state to the Committee.¹ Historically, a circuit judge has served as Chair of the Committee.²

Effective immediately, this per curiam shall govern the appointment process for the Arkansas Committee on Criminal Practice. The Committee shall consist of fifteen members, as follows:

- Five (5) circuit judges who are currently serving in judicial office;
- Five (5) prosecuting attorneys who are currently serving in that office; and
- Five (5) attorneys who are actively engaged in the practice of criminal defense.

The Chair of the Committee shall be one of the five circuit judges, appointed by this Court. Members of the Committee shall serve three-year terms and may be reappointed for one additional consecutive three-year term. *See In re Sup. Ct. Comms. & Bds.*, 315 Ark. App'x 751 (1993) (per curiam). The Committee's staggered terms shall expire on January 31 of the applicable calendar year. *Id.* A member whose term has expired shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed. *Id.*

¹*See In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2024 Ark. 58 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Crim. Prac. Comm.*, 2021 Ark. 20 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2020 Ark. 406 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2018 Ark. 132 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2018 Ark. 25 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2017 Ark. 16 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2015 Ark. 128 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2012 Ark. 31 (per curiam).

²*See In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Crim. Prac. Comm.*, 2021 Ark. 20 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2018 Ark. 25 (per curiam); *In re Ark. Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2015 Ark. 128 (per curiam); *In re Sup. Ct. Comm. on Crim. Prac.*, 2009 Ark. 331 (per curiam).

A member who ceases to hold the qualifying office or to actively engage in the qualifying practice shall be deemed to have vacated the position. If a vacancy occurs for any reason, this Court shall appoint a successor to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. Service of more than two years of an unexpired term shall constitute a full term for purposes of the consecutive-term limitation. Service of less than two years of an unexpired term shall not constitute a full term, and the successor may thereafter serve two full consecutive three-year terms.

Consistent with this Court's customs and practices, the Executive Director of the Arkansas Public Defender Commission and the Prosecutor Coordinator for the Arkansas Office of Prosecutor Coordinator shall serve as non-voting ex officio advisors to the Committee. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall continue to assign a staff attorney to provide administrative support.

Effective immediately, the following individuals are appointed to the Arkansas Committee on Criminal Practice for an initial term expiring January 31, 2029:

- Carol R. Crews of Conway, Prosecuting Attorney, 20th Judicial District;
- T. Chris Walton of Benton, Prosecuting Attorney, 22nd Judicial District;
- Hon. Hugh A. Finkelstein of Little Rock, Circuit Judge, 6th Judicial District;
and
- Hon. Troy B. Braswell, Jr. of Conway, Circuit Judge, 20th Judicial District.

In furtherance of this Court's intent that its committees maintain staggered terms so that only one or a limited number of appointments expire in any given year, it is necessary to assign adjusted initial terms to certain newly appointed members. Accordingly, effective

immediately, the following individuals are appointed to the Committee for an initial term expiring January 31, 2028:

- David L. Ethredge of Mountain Home, Prosecuting Attorney, 14th Judicial District;
- Hon. Melanie H. Martin of Little Rock, Circuit Judge, 6th Judicial District;
- Bobby R. Digby II of Benton, attorney; and
- Zachary W. Morrison of Lake City, attorney.

The Court expresses its appreciation to the newly appointed members for their willingness to serve on this important Committee. The Court further extends its gratitude to the following outgoing members, whose terms have expired, for their years of valuable service: Hon. Keith L. Chrestman of Jonesboro, Michael K. Kaiser of Little Rock, and Michael S. Robbins of Dover.