



July 03, 2024

---

# Chapter V - Court System

---

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website ([ctas.tennessee.edu](http://ctas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

The University of Tennessee  
County Technical Assistance Service  
226 Anne Dallas Dudley Boulevard, Suite 400  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
615.532.3555 phone  
615.532.3699 fax  
[www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu)

<b>Chapter V - Court System .....</b>	<b>. 3</b>
<b>Court Officers .....</b>	<b>. 3</b>
<b>Private Acts of 1979 Chapter 32 .....</b>	<b>. 3</b>
<b>General Sessions Court .....</b>	<b>. 3</b>
<b>Criminal Jurisdiction .....</b>	<b>. 3</b>
<b>Private Acts of 1947 Chapter 536 .....</b>	<b>. 3</b>
<b>Judge's Retirement .....</b>	<b>. 4</b>
<b>Private Acts of 1961 Chapter 221 .....</b>	<b>. 4</b>
<b>Private Acts of 1939 Chapter 424 .....</b>	<b>. 5</b>
<b>Juvenile Court .....</b>	<b>. 7</b>
<b>Clerk .....</b>	<b>. 7</b>
<b>Private Acts of 1985 Chapter 22 .....</b>	<b>. 7</b>
<b>Private Acts of 2012 Chapter 56 .....</b>	<b>. 8</b>
<b>Court System - Historical Notes .....</b>	<b>. 9</b>

# Chapter V - Court System

## Court Officers

### Private Acts of 1979 Chapter 32

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 628 of the Private Acts of 1951 as amended by Chapter 152 of the Private Acts of 1971 and Chapter 203 of the Private Acts of 1971 and all acts amendatory thereto are hereby repealed.

**SECTION 2.** The presiding Circuit Judge shall have, and is hereby given, the power to appoint six (6) officers to wait upon the Circuit, Criminal and Chancery Courts, in Williamson County. The officers so appointed shall wait upon the Circuit, Criminal and Chancery Courts during the pleasure of the presiding Circuit Judge who shall have the power to remove such officer or officers at will, and appoint others. Any Circuit Judge holding criminal court shall have the power to appoint such additional officers as he deems necessary to serve temporarily as jury guards in sequestered jury cases. The legislative body of Williamson County shall fix the pay, to be paid out of the county general fund, of the officers appointed pursuant to the provisions of this Act; the pay shall be not less than five dollars (\$5.00) per hour or fraction of an hour for each hour on duty and each officer shall receive at least four (4) hours pay for each period of duty.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1986, Chapter 131

**SECTION 3.** The officers so appointed by the Circuit Judge shall have the power to summon witnesses or jurors and shall perform such duties as may be deemed necessary for the orderly dispatch of the business of the court.

**SECTION 4.** All laws or parts of laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed.

**SECTION 5.** This Act shall have no effect unless it is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the county legislative body of Williamson County before September 6, 1979. Its approval or non-approval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the county legislative body and certified by him to the Secretary of State.

**SECTION 6.** For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this Act, it shall be effective upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, it shall become effective being approved as provided in Section 5.

Passed: March 12, 1979.

## General Sessions Court

### Criminal Jurisdiction

#### Private Acts of 1947 Chapter 536

**SECTION 1.** That the Court of General Sessions for Williamson County, Tennessee, as created by Chapter 424 of the Private Acts of 1939, is hereby vested with jurisdiction to try and determine and render final judgment in all misdemeanor cases brought before said Court by warrant, of information wherein the person charged with such offense enters a plea of guilty or requests a trial upon the merits, and expressly waives an indictment, presentment and a Grand Jury investigation, and a jury trial. In such cases the trial shall proceed before the Judge and without a jury. The final judgment of such Court may be appealed to the Circuit Court of Williamson County, Tennessee, where such appeal shall be tried by the Judge of such Court without a jury, and without indictment or presentment.

**SECTION 2.** That it shall be the mandatory duty of the Judge of the Court of General Sessions when a defendant is brought before such Court upon arraignment for trial, to advise such defendant of his constitutional rights to the aid of counsel, the right to be tried only upon presentment or indictment by a Grand Jury, the right to make a statement in reference to the accusation or the right to waive such statement in reference to the accusation, and the right to a trial by jury. Upon the defendant agreeing to waive the right to be put to trial only by presentment or indictment by a Grand Jury and the right to be tried by a jury of his peers such Court may proceed to hear and determine said case as is provided by Section 1 hereof. Said waiver shall be written or attached to the warrant substantially in words and figures

as follows:

The defendant \_\_\_\_\_, pleads \_\_\_\_\_ guilty of such offense of \_\_\_\_\_ and waives his right to be tried only by presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury and likewise waives right of trial by jury of his peers.

---

**SECTION 3.** That the legislature expressly declares that each section, paragraph and provision of this Act is severable, and that should any portion of the Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the remainder of this Act, but such unconstitutional and invalid provision shall be elided, and the Legislature declares that it would have enacted this Act with such parts elided therefrom.

**SECTION 4.** That all laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act be, and the same **are, hereby repealed.**

**SECTION 5.** That this Act take effect from and after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: March 4, 1947.

## Judge's Retirement

### Private Acts of 1961 Chapter 221

**SECTION 1.** That in counties of this State having a population of not less than 25,260, nor more than 25,270 by the Federal Census of 1960, or any subsequent Federal Census, any Judge of General Sessions Courts who has been a Judge of his Court for 30 years or more, and had attained 60 (Sixty) years of age, or who has been such a Judge for 24 years and has attained the age of 65 (Sixty-five) years or who has been such a Judge for 20 years and has attained the age of 70 (Seventy) years, may upon complying with provisions hereinafter set out, apply for retirement and be retired under the provisions of this Act and shall thereupon be entitled to receive during the remainder of his life the total amount to which he would have been entitled if he had continued in said service.

That in the event of the death of a retired Judge or one subject to the benefit of this Act, then and in that event his widow or other duly designated dependent shall be entitled to receive one-half (1/2) of the benefits provided herein for and during their natural lives, to which said Judge would have been entitled had he been living. Said Judge shall designate and certify in writing to the County Judge of said county the dependent to whom payments hereunder shall be made.

Time served by any present or former General Sessions Judge in that capacity prior to the enactment of this Act shall be credited toward the aggregate number of years required for retirement. In the event of the death of the spouse or other designated dependent who is receiving benefits pursuant to this act, then and in that event all monies remaining in the General Sessions Retirement Fund which such spouse or designated dependent would have been entitled to had such spouse or dependent been living shall be transferred to the Williamson County General Fund.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1963, Chapter 279  
Private Acts of 2001, Chapter 20

**SECTION 2.** That any General Sessions Judge who has been Judge of his Court for sixteen (16) consecutive years, and has become, by reason of illness or injury, totally disabled to perform his judicial duties, may upon complying with the requirements hereinafter set out, apply for retirement and be retired under the provisions of this Act, and shall thereupon be entitled to receive, during continuance of such disability, the two-thirds (2/3) amount to which he would have been entitled if he had continued in such service.

**SECTION 3.** That any Judge who may elect to retire under the provisions of this Act, or any former Judge being eligible who, by virtue of prior service, and upon attaining the age provided hereunder, shall certify to the Governor his intention to retire during or at the expiration of the term of office then held by him in the case of present Judges then sitting, or upon the attaining of proper age by former Judges, stating the time at which he proposes to retire, and if he proposes to retire for disability, he shall at the same time file with the Governor of the State certificates of at least two physicians licensed to practice in the State of Tennessee certifying the fact of such disability. The Governor of the State shall thereupon inquire into the merits of said application for retirement and if he approves the same, he shall certify such approval to the Secretary of State and to the Clerk of the County Court of the County in which said Judge holds office, if then sitting, whereupon the retirement of such Judge shall become effective and the office vacant at the time indicated in his certificate of intention to retire, and the resulting vacancy shall be filled in the manner

provided by law; if said Judge be not then sitting, said retirement shall become effective in the time indicated in his certificate of intention to retire.

**SECTION 4.** That any Judge who may retire under the provisions of this Act, shall be empowered to conclude the hearing or trial of all cases and all matters subsequent thereto, in all proceedings pending before him where the trial or hearing has been begun by him prior to his retirement, including the entry of judgments and orders in connection with said trial or hearing.

**SECTION 5.** That upon the approval by the Governor of the State of an application for retirement under this Act, and the certificate of such approval as hereinbefore provided, such retired Judge shall, from and after the effective date of such retirement, thereafter be paid in monthly installments the amount to which, according to his status he is entitled under the provisions hereof, such payments to be made upon warrant of the County Judges upon the "General Sessions Judges Retirement Fund" in the hands of the Trustee of the County. It shall be the duty of the county legislative body to appropriate from the ordinary funds of the county a sum sufficient to make up any deficit in the hand of the trustee of the county to pay all retirement benefits hereunder, and it shall be the duty of the county executive to issue warrants for this appropriation, monthly, until such time as the general sessions judges retirement fund has sufficient funds on hand to pay retirement benefits. Provided further, that the counties, acting through their Quarterly County Court, may use such surpluses as may accumulate in said fund, for General County uses on a loan basis, with same to be repaid by the County when needed by the fund.

If at any time the General Sessions Judges Retirement Fund shall be inadequate to pay the compensation of such Judges of General Sessions as have retired as provided by law, the Quarterly County Court may, in its discretion, augment said "General Sessions Judges Retirement Fund" in the same manner provided by law for the payment of the salaries of such General Sessions Judges while in office.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1979, Chapter 5

**SECTION 6.** That for the purpose of creating the General Sessions Judges Retirement Fund hereinbefore mentioned, there shall be taxed and paid as part of the costs a litigation tax of \$2.50 on all civil cases in General Sessions Courts of counties included within the population bracket set out above; and \$5.00 on all criminal cases including those misdemeanor cases requiring the signing of a waiver by the Defendant to give such General Sessions Court jurisdiction. The litigation tax imposed by this Act shall be in addition to that now levied on such cases by the general law of the State for other purposes.

The funds derived from the litigation tax herein imposed shall be paid to the Trustees of such counties quarterly by the 10th day of each January, April, July and October, and by him credited to the General Sessions Judges Retirement Fund.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1979, Chapter 5

**SECTION 7.** That this Act shall have no effect unless the same shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Quarterly County Court of the county or counties falling within the population bracket set out in the caption of said Act within one year after the approval of this Act by the Governor of Tennessee. The action of the Quarterly County Court hereon shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of said county or counties and certified by said officer to the Secretary of State.

**SECTION 8.** That this Act shall become effective from and after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: March 8, 1961.

## Private Acts of 1939 Chapter 424

**SECTION 1.** That there is hereby created and established a Court in and for Williamson County, Tennessee, which shall be designated Court of General Sessions of Williamson County, Tennessee.

Said County shall provide a court room at Franklin, dockets, furnishings and necessary supplies for the equipment and maintenance of said court, and pay for same out of the ordinary funds of said county.

**SECTION 2.** That the Court of General Sessions is hereby vested with all the jurisdiction and shall exercise the authority conferred by the legislature upon Justices of the Peace in Civil and Criminal cases, suits and actions; and the Justices of the Peace of said county are hereby divested of all such jurisdiction and authority, but any Justice of the Peace was elected for any district, except the district in which Franklin is situated, may issue criminal and search warrants against and accept appearance bonds from any person charged with an offense committed in the district for which such Justice of the Peace was elected, and may issue civil process on any cause of action heretofore triable in his district, such warrants and process to be returnable to and triable by said Court of General Sessions. The authority of said

Justices of the Peace in their capacity as members of the Quarterly Court, or in the performance of the rites of matrimony is in no wise affected by this Act.

**SECTION 3.** That before the issuance of any warrant in a civil case, the plaintiff shall secure the costs by executing a cost bond with good security in the sum of \$25.00, or by making a cash cost deposit of not less than \$2.50 or more than \$25.00, or shall take the oath prescribed for poor persons, and on motion, the Court may increase the amount of such bond or deposit.

**SECTION 4.** That the rules of pleading and practice, form of writs and process and stay of and appeals from judgments in civil cases of said Court shall be the same as of Justices of the Peace. Except, that all cases set for trial in said court shall be set for a time certain, and the one hour grace period allowed in the Justice of Peace Court is hereby eliminated.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 186.

**SECTION 5.** That in all matters the costs and fees of said Court of General Sessions shall be the same as those provided by law for Justices of the Peace. The fees and other compensation of the sheriff, his deputies, constables, Game Warden and State Highway Patrolmen for the execution of writs and process of said Court, and the attendance and mileage of witnesses shall be the same in said Court as those provided by law for the Courts of Justices of the Peace.

The fees and compensation due for services rendered by said Court of General Sessions shall be paid to the clerk of said court and by him accounted for as hereinafter provided. Said costs, fees and mileage of witnesses the fees, commissions and emoluments of the Sheriff, his deputies, constables, State Highway Patrolmen, Game Wardens and other officers, for services to said court, and the fines and forfeitures adjudged by is shall be handled, accounted for and disbursed as required by law.

**SECTION 6.** That separate dockets shall be kept in said court for civil and criminal cases. Upon the civil docket shall be entered the style of each case, the date of issuance of the warrant or process, and the return of the process, in brief form, action of the court on the case, both interlocutory and final orders, judgments, executions, garnishments, lists of the fees of the court, the sheriff, his deputies, constables, game wardens and state highway patrolmen for their services, fees of witnesses for attendance et cetera and credits for payments upon the judgment and upon the costs. All cases shall be indexed and the dockets shall be substantially in the form of those of Justices of the Peace.

The Criminal Docket shall be kept in like manner.

**SECTION 7.** Beginning upon the appointment by the Williamson County Board of Commissioners of a second General Sessions Court Judge in 1995, the General Sessions Court shall be divided into Part I and Part II, and there shall be a judge for each part of the court. Each judge shall have all the qualifications as prescribed by law for general session judges, shall take the oath prescribed for general session judges, whether by general law or private act. The present judge of the court shall become the judge of Part I of the court. In 1995, the Williamson County Board of Commissioners, shall appoint a judge of Part II to serve until the 1996 regular August election, when the judge of Part II of the court shall be popularly elected to an initial two (2) year term, and to eight (8) year terms thereafter, and shall take office on September 1, 1996, after the popular election. Beginning with the appointment of the Judge of Part II of the Court, and continuing through until September 1, 1997, the judge for Part I shall be the senior judge, who shall be vested with the authority to assign for trial and disposition all matters, suits and cases which may be filed with the Court. At the end of one (1) year, from September 1, 1996, the judge of Part II shall be designated senior judge, with all the above authority and responsibility. The judges shall rotate the position of senior judge each year thereafter on September 1.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 186  
Private Acts of 1976, Chapter 261  
Private Acts of 1995, Chapter 9

**SECTION 8.** That the compensation of said Judge shall be Four Thousand Eight Hundred (\$4,800) Dollars per annum, payable in equal monthly installments. It shall be paid out of the ordinary funds of the county, and shall not be increased or diminished during the time for which said Judge is elected. Such compensation shall be in lieu of all other compensation, secretarial allowances or other emoluments of such office.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 900  
Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 186

**SECTION 9.** That the Governor shall appoint the first judge of said court, who shall serve until the first day of September, 1940, and until his successor has been elected and qualified.

His successor shall be elected by the qualified voters of the county at the election for judicial and other civil officers on the first Thursday of August, 1940, and shall hold said office from the 1st day of September, 1940, until the first day of September, 1948, or until his successor is qualified.

His successor shall be elected every eight years at such election for the term provided by law for Judges of inferior courts.

**SECTION 10.** That if the judge of said court fails to attend, cannot preside in a pending cause, or for any reason hold court, a majority of the attorneys present in such court may elect one of their number, who has the qualifications of such a judge, and when elected shall have the same authority as a regular judge to hold the court for the occasion.

**SECTION 11.** That in the case of a vacancy for any cause the Governor shall have the power to appoint some qualified person to fill such vacancy.

**SECTION 12.** That the Clerk of the Circuit and Criminal Courts of said county shall be the Clerk of said Court of General Sessions, and when acting as such shall be designated "Clerk of Court of General Sessions of Williamson County." The Clerk of said Court shall be compensated for his services as provided under Chapter 24, Tennessee Code, 1956, as amended, same being Sections 8-2403, et seq.

That the Clerk of the General Sessions Court of Williamson County, Tennessee shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter 22, Tennessee Code, 1956, as amended, same being Sections 8-2201, et seq., just as the Clerks of any other courts therein enumerated. The Clerk of the said Court of General Sessions and the Clerk of the Circuit and Criminal Courts of Williamson County shall have concurrent authority with the Judge to issue warrants and other processes and writs, other than those which the law requires shall be issued only by a judicial officer.

As amended by:

Private Acts of 1941, Chapter 204

Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 899

Private Acts of 1959, Chapter 127

**SECTION 13.** That the Sheriff of said county, or any deputy sheriff or constable thereof, shall serve legal processes, writs and papers issued by said court with the same authority as provided by law in the other inferior courts.

**SECTION 14.** That this Act shall in no wise impair the right, title or interest of any Justice of the Peace of said county to any unpaid fees, or funds in which he had a right or interest in any proceedings, judgment or suit, whether said cause is disposed of or pending when this Act becomes effective.

**SECTION 15.** That all of the official dockets, records and papers in cases that are undisposed of or pending in the offices of Justices of the Peace of said county at the time this Act becomes effective shall be delivered to said Court of General Sessions. The official dockets, records and papers in possession of Justices of the Peace of said county in cases which have been completed shall be turned over to said county, as provided by law.

**SECTION 16.** That said court shall have authority to hear and determine all undisposed of cases arising in the Courts of Justices of the Peace of said county as if such cases had originated in said Court of General Sessions.

**SECTION 17.** That the Legislature expressly declare that each section, subsection, paragraph and provision of this Act is several and that should any portion of this Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the remainder of this Act, but such unconstitutional or invalid portion shall be elided, and the Legislature declares that it would have enacted this Act with such unconstitutional or invalid portions elided therefrom.

**SECTION 18.** That this Act shall take effect thirty days after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: March 1, 1939.

## Juvenile Court

### Clerk

## Private Acts of 1985 Chapter 22

**SECTION 1.** There is hereby created and established in and for Williamson County, Tennessee, the office of clerk of the juvenile court. The clerk to serve in this position shall be appointed by the juvenile court judge for Williamson County. The first appointed term shall commence in 1985 and this initial term shall end on August 31, 1986. Thereafter, the juvenile court judge shall appoint the juvenile clerk for periods of two (2) years, unless the clerk fails to carry out all the duties of the office. The first two-year term shall commence on September 1, 1986, and continue through August 31, 1988. The salary and benefits for this clerk shall be set

by the county legislative body. The clerk shall have the power and authority to administer oaths and affirmations whenever the same are required by law in connection with any case, procedure, process or otherwise in the juvenile court.

**SECTION 2.** All of the official dockets, records and papers in cases that are completed, undisposed of, or pending shall be transferred to newly created juvenile court clerk's office.

**SECTION 3.** All functions performed by the Williamson County Clerk which under the law are functions required to be performed by the clerk of the court under which juvenile jurisdiction is vested, shall be and hereby are transferred to the clerk of the juvenile court who is appointed pursuant to this Act. The clerk shall execute a bond in the amount of \$15,000 (Fifteen Thousand Dollars).

**SECTION 4.** This Act shall have no effect unless it is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the county legislative body of Williamson County by August 30, 1985. Its approval or nonapproval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the legislative body of Williamson County and certified by him to the Secretary of State.

**SECTION 5.** For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this Act, it shall be effective upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, it shall become effective upon being approved as provided in Section 4.

Passed: March 14, 1985.

## Private Acts of 2012 Chapter 56

**SECTION 1.** As used in this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) "Court" means the juvenile court of Williamson County.
- (2) "Judge" means the judge of the juvenile court of Williamson County.
- (3) "Clerk" means the juvenile court clerk of Williamson County.

**SECTION 2.** There is created, in Williamson County, a juvenile court to be known and styled as the juvenile court of Williamson County. Such court shall be a court of record and shall be presided over by a judge who shall have the qualifications and salary provided by this act.

**SECTION 3.** A judge for such court shall be appointed by the Williamson County legislative body prior to January 1, 2013 who shall be licensed to practice law in this state and who possesses all other qualifications of judges of inferior courts, as provided by law. The appointed judge shall take office on January 1, 2013 and shall continue to serve until the next general election. Thereafter, the judge shall be elected in the 2014 August general election, and then subsequent county general elections. The term of office shall be eight (8) years, and such judge shall be licensed to practice law in the state and shall possess all the qualifications of the inferior courts. The judge shall take and subscribe to the same oath of office as that subscribed for the judges of the circuit and general session courts. In the event the office of the judge shall become vacant by reason of death, resignation, retirement, or any other reason before the expiration of said term of office, such vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote of the Williamson County commission members until the next county general election.

**SECTION 4.** The Williamson County juvenile court clerk shall continue to serve as clerk of the Williamson County juvenile court and any of such clerk's deputies shall also be deputies for the juvenile court created by this Act.

**SECTION 5.** The judge and clerk of such juvenile court shall have all of the jurisdiction, powers, duties, and authority of other juvenile court judges and clerks as provided in Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37 or any other general law.

**SECTION 6.** The judge shall be a full time juvenile judge and shall exercise exclusive juvenile jurisdiction in Williamson County. Nothing in this Act shall restrict the ability of the judge to participate in interchange with other judges should cause exist making an interchange necessary or for mutual convenience under the provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated § 17-2-208.

**SECTION 7.** Effective January 1, 2013, the annual salary of the position of Williamson County juvenile judge shall be established by the county legislative body to be effective for the entire term for which the judge is elected. The county legislative body shall annually appropriate from such funds as are necessary and appropriate for the orderly operation and administration of the court herein created.

**SECTION 8.** The judge is authorized to make and promulgate rules and regulations for the administration and efficient operation of the court and to fix the times and places at which all persons within the jurisdiction of the court shall have their causes set for disposition.



**SECTION 9.** The judge shall, pursuant to the laws and regulations of Williamson County, appoint such personnel as may be necessary to efficiently carry on the business of the court. All such appointments shall be limited by the total appropriations made for such personnel during each fiscal year by the Williamson County legislative body.

**SECTION 10.** The Williamson County legislative body shall provide the court with facilities adequate and sufficient to allow the court to perform its duties as a juvenile court.

**SECTION 11.** The juvenile judge shall have the power of appointment, retention, reappointment, and supervision of judicial commissioners subject to the applicable restrictions and qualification requirements and shall maintain supervisory authority over the judicial commissioners who shall have all powers granted to judicial commissioners pursuant to applicable law. The juvenile judge may appoint and supervise a temporary or part-time judicial commissioner to serve at the pleasure of the juvenile judge in cases of absence, emergency, or other need. All such appointments and salaries shall be limited by the total appropriations made for personnel by the Williamson County legislative body during each fiscal year and shall be subject to the provisions of Tenn. Code Ann. S 40-1-111 and all other applicable laws, rules, and policies concerning judicial commissioners and county employees;

As amended by: Private Acts of 2017, Chapter 18.

**SECTION 11.** All unfinished and pending matters in the court or courts exercising juvenile court jurisdiction, prior to the date this Act takes effect, shall be transferred to the court created by this Act at the close of business on the day preceding the day this Act becomes effective. On such date, all official books, records, and other documents pertaining to any matter within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall be delivered to such court.

**COMPILER'S NOTE:** Private Acts of 2017, Chapter 18, added a new Section 11 without repealing the existing Section 11 or renumbering subsequent sections, resulting in two sections that are numbered 11.

**SECTION 12.** If any provision of this Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, or application of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end, the provisions of this Act are declared to be severable.

**SECTION 13.** This Act shall have no effect, unless it is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the county legislative body of Williamson County on or before December 1, 2012 pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated § 8-3-202. Its approval or non-approval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the Williamson County legislative body and certified by the presiding officer to the secretary of state.

**SECTION 14.** For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this act, it shall be effective upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, it shall become effective as provided in Section 13.

Passed: April 16, 2012.

## Court System - Historical Notes

### **Board of Jury Commissioners - Jurors**

The following acts once affected jurors or boards of jury commissioners in Williamson County, but are no longer operative. Also referenced below is an act which repeals prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1799, Chapter 40, apportioned the number of jurors each county in the Mero District would be obligated to send to the superior courts of the District. Davidson County would send ten jurors, Sumner County, seven, Smith County, four, Wilson County, four, Robertson County, five, Montgomery County, five, and Williamson County, five.
2. Acts of 1803, Chapter 93, set up a schedule of jurors which each county in the recently enlarged Mero District would be compelled to send to the superior courts of the District. Jackson County would send two jurors; Smith County, four; Sumner County, six; Wilson County, three; Rutherford County, two; Williamson County, four; Davidson County, seven; Robertson County, four; Montgomery County, four; Dickson County, two; and Stewart County, two.
3. Acts of 1806, Chapter 24, was the authority for the counties in the Mero District to dispatch jurors to serve in the superior courts of the District. Davidson County would be responsible for 12 jurors; Sumner County, eight; Wilson County, six; Williamson County, eight; and Rutherford County, five.
4. Acts of 1817, Chapter 128, allowed several counties, numbering Williamson County among them,

to levy a tax to raise money with which to pay jurors attending the Circuit and County Courts some additional compensation but the same could not exceed fifty cents per day.

5. Acts of 1819, Chapter 62, declared that after January 1 of the following year it would be lawful for the County Courts of Davidson, Sumner, Williamson, Giles, Rutherford, Bedford, and Maury Counties to appoint 37 jurors for each of the counties who would serve in their respective counties Circuit and County Courts. The jurors were bound to attend under penalty and would be paid the same as any other jurors.
6. Acts of 1905, Chapter 461, created a four member Board of Jury Commissioners in Williamson County who would be appointed by the Circuit Judge of the county. If there was more than one circuit judge, then by all judges holding circuit or criminal courts jointly. They could not be practicing attorneys, or State or County officers, and could not have a suit pending in the Courts. The members would serve four year terms after the initial terms were completed. The Circuit Court Clerk would serve as Clerk to the Board and everyone must be sworn by the oath prescribed in this Act. It was the Board's duty and responsibility biennially on the first Monday in July, or within 30 days thereafter, to select from the tax rolls, or other public sources, a number in proportion to the district population, not less than one-fifth of the total votes cast in the County at the last Presidential election, but the number shall not exceed 4,000 nor be less 250, which number would be the jury list from which petit and grand jurors would come.
7. Private Acts of 1907, Chapter 75, amended Acts of 1905, Chapter 461, by deleting the provision "but in no case shall a panel be drawn to serve longer than two weeks." Section 7 was amended to limit regular jury service to once in every two years, and to require that records be kept of the days a juror has served.
8. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 427, created a Board of Jury Commissioners, repealing Acts of 1905, Chapter 461, by a general repealing clause. A four member Board was provided whose members, appointed by the Circuit Judge to serve for four year terms after the initial appointments, could not be attorneys, or State or County officers. The Circuit Court Clerk would serve as Clerk to the Board, all of whom would be sworn according to the oath prescribed and written in the Act.
9. Public Acts of 1937, Chapter 196, was the authority for the judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit to appoint a Minute Clerk for the Grand Jury in the counties on the Circuit who would hold the said office for a term of two years. The appointment would be made at the same time the Foreman of the Grand Jury was named so that their terms of office would coincide. The Minute Clerk would be a member of the Grand Jury possessing equal power and authority as the other members. The Clerk would be sworn according to the oath in the Act, would keep minutes of the meetings and record events as they transpired for which a salary of \$4 per day would be paid out of the county treasury. The Judge would likewise fill any vacancy which might occur.
10. Public Acts of 1939, Chapter 67, amended Public Acts of 1937, Chapter 196, by removing Hickman County from the terms and conditions of that Act.
11. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 85, provided that in Williamson County the Foreman and Clerk of the Grand Jury would be paid at the rate of \$8 daily for each day served on official business, and other jurors, both grand and petit, shall be compensated at the rate of \$4 per day spent on official business, but no pickup juror shall be paid unless he serves for more than one day.

### **Chancery Court**

The following acts form an outline of the development of equity jurisdiction in Williamson County, although they no longer have the force of law since they have either been superseded by general law, repealed, or failed to receive local ratification. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1799, Chapter 3, which created Williamson County placed it in the Mero District of Tennessee for civil and military purposes, which included the administration of justice through the various courts.
2. Acts of 1822, Chapter 13, provided that the Chancery Courts of Tennessee would be held by one of the Judges of the Supreme Court at least once each year at the present places of the meetings of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court would hold the Chancery Court at Rogersville on the first Monday in November, at Knoxville on the third Monday of November, at Charlotte on the fourth Monday in December, at Sparta, on the second Monday in December, at Nashville on the fourth Monday in January, and at Columbia, on the second Monday in January each term to continue for two weeks unless the dockets were cleared sooner than that.
3. Acts of 1824 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 14, Section 8, directed the Justices of the Supreme Court to

arrange among themselves to hold the Chancery Court at least twice each year at Greeneville, Rogersville, Kingston, Carthage, McMinnville, Franklin, Columbia, Charlotte and Jackson. The court at Franklin would hear causes arising in the counties of Williamson, Davidson and Rutherford on the first Monday in May and November of each year. The Clerk of the Supreme Court at Nashville was ordered to transfer the records of equity cases to the court at Franklin.

4. Acts of 1825, Chapter 6, provided that the Chancery Court held in Franklin would hereafter meet on the third Monday in April and October. All process outstanding would be made to conform to the change in terms. Acts of 1825, Chapter 25, amended this Act so that its effective date was postponed until January 1, 1826, and the next term of the Chancery Court at Franklin would begin on the second Monday in December and would be held by John Haywood.
5. Acts of 1826, Chapter 77, Section 3, was the authority for John Haywood to hold the Chancery Court for the counties of Williamson, Davidson and Rutherford at Franklin on the first Monday in December, 1826, which term would continue until the business of the court was completed.
6. Acts of 1827, Chapter 79, divided the State into two Chancery Divisions. The Western Division consisted of the courts at Franklin, Columbia, Charlotte, Jackson and Paris. This Act repealed all laws giving Judges of the Supreme Court original chancery jurisdiction.
7. Acts of 1829, Chapter 59, Section 3, stated that the Chancery Court at Franklin in Williamson County shall hereafter start its terms on the first Monday in May and November, all process being required to be returnable to those dates.
8. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 4, enacted pursuant to the new 1835 Constitution of the State, formed Tennessee into three Chancery Divisions which would be presided over by a Chancellor, one Chancellor in each Division, who would be appointed by the General Assembly for an eight year term, and be paid as were other Judges in the State. The Divisions were further divided into Districts with two terms of court for each annually. Davidson County and Williamson County composed the 15th District of the Middle Division whose Court would be held in Franklin on the third Monday in April and October. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 20, Section 13, amended Chapter 4 to the effect that the terms of the Chancery Court at Franklin would begin on the fourth Monday of April and October.
9. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 21, reset the terms of the Chancery Court at Franklin to start on the third Monday in April and October. 10. Acts of 1845-46, Chapter 53, constituted Davidson County as a separate Chancery District in the Middle Division of the State whose court would be held at Nashville. The Chancery Court at Franklin after the passage of this Act was authorized to transfer all Court records and papers in all causes to the Court at Nashville upon application of both parties.
10. Acts of 1845-46, Chapter 168, Section 2, rescheduled the opening dates for the terms of the Chancery Courts at Franklin whose Court would hereafter convene on the first Monday in April and October.
11. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 178, Section 3, changed Chancery Court terms for the counties in the Middle Division of Tennessee but left the court at Franklin to continue to meet on the first Monday in April and October.
12. Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 88, reformed the Equity Courts of Tennessee into the Eastern, Middle, Western, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Divisions. The Middle Division now contained the counties of Marshall, Cheatham, Giles, Maury, Lewis, Stewart, Montgomery, Davidson, Robertson, and Williamson where the Chancery Court would still meet on the first Monday in April and October at Franklin.
13. Acts of 1867-68, Chapter 45, Section 9, directed that the Judge of the Ninth Judicial Circuit would hold the Chancery Court at Franklin in Williamson County, possessing all the power and jurisdiction of other chancellors, but the Judge would also continue to hold the Circuit Court of the County at those times specified by law. This Act was repealed by Act of 1868-69, Chapter 15.
14. Acts of 1867-68, Chapter 64, reset the terms for the Chancery Courts of some of the counties in the Fourth Chancery Division. The Court at Franklin would begin its terms on the third Monday in April and October.
15. Acts of 1868-69, Chapter 15, kept Williamson County in the Fourth Chancery Division and Chancery Court would continue to meet on the third Monday in April and October.
16. Acts of 1870, Chapter 32, organized the lower court system of the State into twelve Chancery Districts. The Eighth Chancery District contained the counties of Williamson, Maury, Marshall and Giles.

17. Acts of 1870, Chapter 47, scheduled the terms of the Chancery Courts in every county in Tennessee. The Court would meet in Williamson County on the first Monday in April and October.
18. Acts of 1875, Chapter 12, Section 2, changed the opening dates of the Chancery Court terms in Williamson County to the first Monday in June and December.
19. Acts of 1885 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, was the next major reorganization of the lower judicial system of the State in which eleven Chancery Divisions were formed. The Sixth Chancery Division was composed of the counties of Davidson and Williamson whose Court would meet on the first Monday in June and December in Williamson County.
20. Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, was a major reformation of the lower court system in which new Chancery Divisions were created. The Fifth Chancery Division was made up of the counties of Rutherford, Bedford, Marshall, Williamson, Lincoln, Lawrence, Maury, Giles, Lewis, and Wayne. The court terms would begin in Williamson County on the third Monday in March and September. Acts of 1901, Chapter 134, Section 2, amended Chapter 427, by taking Williamson County out of the Fifth Chancery Division and placing it in the Seventh Chancery Division with Davidson County and by scheduling the court terms for the first Monday in May and November. Acts of 1903, Chapter 62, repealed Section 2, Acts of 1901, Chapter 134, and then provided that the Chancery Court of Williamson County would meet hereafter on the first Monday in March and September. This was further amended by Acts of 1903, Chapter 107, so as to change the court terms in Williamson County to the second Monday in March and September.
21. Private Acts of 1909, Chapter 571, detached Williamson County from the Seventh Chancery Division and constituted it into a separate Chancery Division alone, calling it the "Chancery Division of Williamson County." The Court would be held by the Circuit Judge holding the Circuit Court of Williamson County who was vested with all the power and jurisdiction of a chancellor but the Judge would not receive any additional compensation for holding this Court.
22. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 761, changed the opening dates for the terms of the Chancery Courts in the counties of Williamson, Wayne, Lewis, and Perry. The Court terms for Williamson County would commence on the first Monday in June and the fourth Monday in November.
23. Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 827, rearranged the Chancery Court terms in Williamson County to begin on the first Monday in June and the third Monday in November of each year.
24. Public Acts of 1931 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 38, was the last major revision of the lower judicial system of Tennessee appearing in the volumes of the Private Acts. All future changes would be in the form of amendments to the Code. Thirteen regular, and one special, Chancery Divisions were created under this Act. The Special Division comprised the counties of Williamson, Wayne, Lewis, and Perry, and the Courts would be presided over by the Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit. Court terms would start in Williamson County on the first Monday in June, and the fourth Monday in November.
25. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 642, reset the terms of the Chancery Court of Williamson County to begin on the first Monday in June and December of each year.

### **Chancery Court - Clerk and Master**

The reference list below contains acts which once applied to the clerk and master in Williamson County.

1. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 661, amended Section 10726, William's Code of Tennessee, as the same applied to Williamson County, by creating a new population Class of 3A and assigning Williamson County to that Class. The Act then proceeded to set the annual salary of the Clerk and Master of the counties in that Class at \$2,500 per year. All local and private acts which were in conflict with this Act were not repealed or modified.
2. Private Acts of 1982, Chapter 278, provides that the County Clerk in Williamson County shall be the clerk in the probate of wills and administration of estates. The County Clerk will have all the powers granted to the Clerk and Master under T.C.A. § 16-16-201(b).

### **Circuit Court**

The following acts were once applicable to the circuit court of Williamson County but now have no effect, having been repealed, superseded, or having failed to win local approval. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1799, Chapter 3, which established Williamson County, made no special provisions for the Circuit Court other than to assign the county to the Mero District and to require the Court to meet in Franklin at a place to be designated by the Justices and which could be adjourned to another location if the Justice so decided.

2. Acts of 1806, Chapter 19, divided the Mero District into three Districts which were the Mero District, the Robertson District, and the Winchester District. The Mero District contained the counties of Davidson, Sumner, Williamson, and Rutherford.
3. Acts of 1809, Chapter 49, divided Tennessee into five Judicial Circuits. The Fourth Judicial Circuit embraced the counties of Davidson, Wilson, Rutherford, Williamson, Maury, Giles, Lincoln, and Bedford. The Circuit Court would convene in Williamson County on the second Monday in May and November. The courts would have original jurisdiction over all causes at common law and in equity and appellate jurisdiction over the courts of pleas and quarter sessions. The superior courts of law and equity were abolished.
4. Acts of 1812, Chapter 68, Section 2, changed the opening dates for the terms of the Circuit Court in Williamson County whose Court would meet on the first Monday in May and November instead of the second Monday.
5. Acts of 1817, Chapter 138, rescheduled the dates for the Circuit Court terms in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Judicial Circuits assigning the Circuit Courts of Williamson County to commence its terms on the first Monday in February and August.
6. Acts of 1825, Chapter 333, provided that the Circuit Court of Williamson County would hereafter be held in the courthouse at Franklin on the first Monday in February and August to continue for a period of three weeks unless the business of the court were completed sooner.
7. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 5, passed to conform to the new 1835 State Constitution, provided for three terms each year for the Circuit Courts of Tennessee and created eleven Judicial Circuits. The Sixth Judicial Circuit contained the counties of Williamson, Davidson, and Sumner. Court terms would start in Williamson County on the second Monday in March, July, and November. The Circuit Court would have exclusive jurisdiction of all causes triable by jury, both criminal and civil, of which the county courts had jurisdiction prior to this Act.
8. Acts of 1853-54, Chapter 52, Section 3, stated that the counties of Davidson, Sumner, and Williamson would elect an Attorney-General who shall prosecute in the Circuit Court of Sumner County and the Criminal Court of Davidson County. The counties of Davidson and Williamson would elect the Judge of the Circuit Court for those counties which would hereafter compose the Sixth Judicial Circuit. This section was repealed by Acts of 1853-54, Chapter 59.
9. Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 98, formed sixteen Judicial Circuits for the State. The 9th Judicial Circuit was made up of the counties of Davidson, Sumner, and Williamson whose courts would meet on the second Monday in March, July, and November.
10. Acts of 1867-68, Chapter 45, Section 9, provided that the Judge of the Ninth Judicial Circuit would hold the Chancery Court at Franklin in Williamson County with all the powers and jurisdiction of a Chancellor, and he would also hold the Circuit Court at the times fixed by law.
11. Acts of 1868-69, Chapter 15, Section 3, added Williamson County to the 11th Judicial Circuit and Solicitorial District and repealed all laws assigning the county to the 9th Judicial Circuit. These courts would be held by the Judge of the 11th Judicial Circuit on the first Monday in February, June, and October of each year.
12. Acts of 1868-69, Chapter 35, Section 2, set the terms of the Circuit Court in Williamson County to start on the second Monday in March, July, and November, at Franklin.
13. Acts of 1870, Chapter 31, organized the lower court system in Tennessee into fifteen Judicial Circuits after the 1870 State Constitution. The Ninth Judicial Circuit contained the counties of Williamson, Marshall, Maury, Giles, and Lawrence.
14. Acts of 1870, Chapter 46, established a schedule for the three annual terms of the Circuit Court for every county in this State. Williamson County's Circuit Court would begin the terms on the first Monday in March, July, and November.
15. Acts of 1879, Chapter 147, stated that the Honorable John V. Wright, of Maury County, was commissioned to hold the Circuit Courts of the counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles, Lawrence, and Marshall, because of the illness of W.P. Martin, the regular judge, which the said Wright did according to the instructions given him. This Act directed the State Comptroller to pay him \$1400 for services rendered to the State of Tennessee.
16. Acts of 1885 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, reorganized the lower court system of Tennessee. The Seventh Judicial Circuit was composed of the counties of Davidson (for civil cases only), Williamson (for both civil and criminal), and Cheatham (both civil and criminal cases). Williamson's Circuit Court terms would commence on the first Monday in March, July, and November. For an exhaustive treatment of enabling legislation for the judicial system by the

Supreme Court, of which this Act was a part, see *Flynn v. State*, 203 Tenn. 341, 313 S.W.2d 248 (1958). This Act was amended by Acts of 1889, Chapter 14, which changed the schedule of Circuit Court terms in the counties composing the Seventh Judicial Circuit. Williamson County would take up the Circuit Court Docket on the first Monday in January, April, and September. It was again amended by Acts of 1891, Chapter 140, by rearranging the opening dates of the Circuit Court terms in the counties of Cheatham, Davidson, and Williamson where the terms would start on the second Monday in February, the first Monday in May, and the first Monday in September.

17. Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, created the 19th Judicial Circuit by removing Hickman County and Dickson County from the 9th and 10th Judicial Circuits and by taking Williamson County and Cheatham County out of the 7th Judicial Circuit and combining them to form the new 19th Judicial Circuit. Court terms were fixed for the new Circuit as they were now scheduled under the law except that Williamson County would begin its first term of the year on the first Monday in January instead of the second Monday in February. The Attorney-General for the Seventh Judicial Circuit would continue to prosecute in Williamson and Cheatham Counties. This was amended by Acts of 1895, Chapter 19, to change the time for holding the Circuit Court of Williamson County from the first Monday in January to the first Thursday after the first Monday in January. Acts of 1899, Chapter 154, abolished the 19th Judicial Circuit which contained the counties of Hickman, Dickson, Cheatham, and Williamson, repealing Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20.
18. Acts of 1899, Chapter 409, Section 6, returned Hickman County and Cheatham County to the Seventh Judicial Circuit and added Williamson to the 9th Judicial Circuit. Section 12 fixed the terms of Court for Williamson at the first Monday in April, August, and December. These sections were repealed by Acts of 1901, Chapter 382 and Acts of 1901, Chapter 397.
19. Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, was the next major reorganization of the States lower courts. Fourteen Judicial Circuits were formed of which the 8th Circuit contained the counties of Wilson, Rutherford, Bedford, Marshall, Cannon, and Williamson. Court terms would start in Williamson on the third Monday in April, August, and December.
20. Acts of 1901, Chapter 365, stated that the Circuit Court of Williamson County would be held on the first Monday in January and May and on the fourth Monday in September of each year, the court to be presided over by the Judge of the Second Circuit Court of Davidson County.
21. Acts of 1901, Chapter 397, detached Williamson County from the Ninth Judicial Circuit and attached it to the Seventh Judicial Circuit fixing the court terms to begin on the first Monday in April, August, and December of each year which terms would be held by the Judge of the Second Circuit Court of Davidson County. This act takes effect on the second Monday in February, 1901 and expires by its own limitations on the August 1, 1902. The Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, would then apply.
22. Acts of 1903, Chapter 261, detached Williamson County from the 8th Judicial Circuit and attached it to the Second Circuit Court of Davidson County and its Circuit. That portion of Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, which placed Williamson County in the 8th Judicial Circuit was repealed. Terms of court would begin on the second Monday in April, August, and December, held by the Judge of the Second Circuit Court of Davidson County, and would continue for four weeks when necessary. The jurisdiction of the court would remain as it now existed under the law. Acts of 1903, Chapter 460, amended this Act by changing the terms of court for the Williamson County Circuit Court to begin on the first Wednesday after the first Monday in January, April, and August.
23. Private Acts of 1909, Chapter 572, removed Williamson County from the Second Circuit Court of Davidson County and constituted it into the "Judicial Circuit of Williamson County." The Governor would appoint a Judge to serve until a successor could be elected by the people. The Judge would have both civil and criminal jurisdiction in the same manner and to the same extent as other Circuit Judges. The salary would be \$1,500 annually, and the Attorney-General of Williamson County would prosecute in this Court.
24. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 813, provided that the terms of the Circuit Courts of the 17th Judicial Circuit shall be according to this Act. In Williamson County, circuit court terms would begin on the first Monday in January, April, and September.

### **Circuit Court - Clerk**

The following acts have no current effect, but once applied to the Williamson County Circuit Court Clerk. They were repealed, superseded, or never received local approval. Also referenced below is an act which repeals prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1903, Chapter 255, was a salary act which concerned Circuit Court Clerks only and which set their annual salaries, according to population classes stated in the Act. Clerks were required to

file an annual report, sworn to and itemized, showing the total amount of fees collected in the office. If the fees did not equal the salary the county must pay the difference but if the fees exceeded the salary the Clerks were permitted to retain them as their own.

2. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 639, stated that in Williamson County the Circuit Court Clerk would be paid \$1,200 per annum, provided the Clerk would file a sworn, itemized statement with the County Judge, or Chairman, on January 1 of each year, showing the total amount of fees collected by the office. If the fees failed to equal the salary, the county would pay the difference, but, if the fees exceeded the salary, the Clerk could retain the excess.
3. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 94, provided that the Circuit Court Clerk would be paid \$2,000 a year in Williamson County under the same terms and conditions as stated above in the 1919 Act. This Act was repealed by Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 708.
4. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 659, declared that in Williamson County the Circuit Court Clerk would be paid \$1,500 per year provided that the Clerk filed with the County Judge, or Chairman, a sworn, itemized statement showing the total amount of fees collected in the office. If the fees were less than the salary, the county would make up the difference, but, if the fees were more than the salary, the surplus would be disposed of as the County Court saw fit, whether as a supplement to the salary, or not.
5. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 661, amended Section 10726 of William's Code of Tennessee, by creating a new population class 3A, and assigning Williamson County to that class. The salaries of several county officials were then prescribed, including the Circuit Court Clerk at an annual salary of \$1,500. This Act did not repeal Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 659.

### **Court Officers**

The following Acts are no longer effective having been repealed.

1. Private Acts of 1951, Chapter 628, would allow the Circuit Judge of Williamson County to appoint two officers to wait upon the Circuit Court and Criminal Courts at the pleasure of the Judge who could remove them at will. These positions were formerly elected by the Williamson Quarterly County Court. Section 1 of this Act used population figures which would cast doubt on its validity as a Private Act applying to Williamson County.
2. Private Acts of 1971, Chapter 152, amended Private Acts of 1951, Chapter 628, in Section One by changing the population figure to conform to the 1970 Federal Census, and by adding a sentence which provided a \$15 per diem for the officers.
3. Private Acts of 1971, Chapter 203, amended Private Acts of 1951, Chapter 628, by deleting from Section 2 the portion of the last sentence which set the compensation of the Circuit Court Officers as the same as other court officers.

### **District Attorney General - Assistantces and Criminal Investigators**

The following acts once affecting Williamson County are no longer in effect but are listed here for historical purposes. Also referenced below is an act which repeals prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1799, Chapter 58, appropriated \$400 to be paid to Andrew Jackson as full compensation for his services as the Attorney-General of the Mero District.
2. Acts of 1817, Chapter 65, divided Tennessee into ten Solicitorial Districts. The Seventh Solicitorial District contained the counties of Davidson, Williamson and Sumner. One Attorney General would be appointed for each district by the General Assembly.
3. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 28, enacted into law subsequent to the 1835 Constitution, made each Solicitorial District hereafter to conform to each Judicial Circuit.
4. Acts of 1853-54, Chapter 52, provided that the counties of Williamson, Sumner and Davidson would elect an Attorney-General and the said Attorney-General would attend the circuit court of Sumner County and the criminal courts of Davidson County (nothing was said about Williamson County). This Act was repealed by Acts of 1853-54, Chapter 59.
5. Acts of 1903, Chapter 335, provided for an Attorney-General to be elected by the people of Williamson County who would attend the Circuit Court of the county and prosecute all crimes and offenses against the State in the county. The first election would be held on the first Thursday in August, 1904, and occur every eight years thereafter. The salary would be \$500 per year to be paid out of the State Treasury. The Governor would appoint the first Attorney- General to serve until the regular election in August. Acts of 1905, Chapter 441, amended this Act by increasing the Attorney-General's annual salary from \$500 to \$800.

6. Public Acts of 1971, Chapter 140 and Public Acts of 1976, Chapter 512, created additional positions for assistant district attorneys general in the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit. Williamson County is now a part of the Twenty-First Judicial District, according to T.C.A. 16-2- 506, which also stipulates the number of judges, assistant district attorneys general and investigators for the district.

### **General Sessions Court - Criminal Jurisdiction**

The private acts listed below refer to those few years in the 1870's when Williamson County had a separate and distinct Criminal Court.

1. Acts of 1871, Chapter 73, established a Criminal Court in the counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles and Marshall, which courts were given exclusive jurisdiction in lieu of the Circuit Courts in the trial and presentment of crimes and offenses against the State. The Circuit Court Clerks would be the Clerks of these courts recording all the essential data in books kept separately from the civil cases. Details for keeping order, for the operation and maintenance of the court and juries were all incorporated into the Act. The Judge was granted all the power and jurisdiction of Circuit Judges and Chancellors, could interchange with them as necessity might dictate, and was paid the same compensation. The State's Attorney elected on the first Thursday in August, 1870, by the voters of the above counties would prosecute in all the Criminal Courts founded above. The Judge must have been a practicing lawyer for five years at least, and meet the standards and qualifications of the other Judges of Circuit and Chancery Courts. There would be three terms of court each year, which would begin in Williamson County on the second Monday in February, June, and October in Franklin.
2. Acts of 1873, Chapter 7, provided that the Criminal Court of Williamson County would hold its sessions on the first Monday in February, June and October.
3. Acts of 1877, Chapter 143, repealed Acts of 1871, Chapter 73, to take effect on September 1, 1878, and restored all the criminal jurisdiction heretofore conferred upon this court back to the Circuit Courts. The second Monday of each term of the Circuit Court would be the day of taking up the criminal docket.

### **General Sessions Court**

The following act once affected the general sessions court of Williamson County, but is no longer in effect and is included herein for reference purposes.

1. Private Acts of 1965, Chapter 227, amended Private Acts of 1959, Chapter 127, by removing the provision that the Clerk of the Circuit and Criminal Courts would be the Clerk of the General Sessions Court but this Act was rejected by the Williamson County Quarterly Court and never became an effective law.

### **Juvenile Court**

The following act once affecting juvenile courts in Williamson County is included herein for reference purposes.

1. Private Acts of 1965, Chapter 245, established a Juvenile Court in Williamson County which would be a court of record, presided over by a Judge who must meet the qualifications stipulated therein. The Judge could appoint a Clerk and fix the salary for that position. All the jurisdiction contained in Sections 37-242 to 37-274, Tennessee Code Annotated, was conferred upon this Court. The Act named J. W. Warren as Judge who would serve until the next general election. The Judge elected at that time would serve an eight year term. The salary was fixed at \$7,500 per annum, and required the full time of the Judge. This Act was not approved by the Quarterly County Court and did not become effective.

### **Secretarial Assistance**

The following act is no longer in effect but is listed here for historical purposes.

1. Private Acts of 1947, Chapter 537, allowed the Judge of the General Sessions Court the sum of \$85 per month to defray stenographer expenses, to be paid from the general funds of the county.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/private-acts/chapter-v-court-system-21>