

Contact: Michael Mears,
Director,
The Georgia Public
Defender Standards
Council

The Georgia Public Defender
Standards Council
104 Marietta Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
404.232.8900

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Press Release

The Georgia Public Defender Standards Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Burt Baker as the Council's new Training Director. Mr. Baker is replacing Mr. Jon Rapping who left the position to work with the development of a new public defender system in New Orleans.

Burt Baker graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1990 with a J.D. Degree. He is a member, in good standing, of the State Bar of Georgia and the State Bar of Florida. He received his B.A. degree from Valdosta State College in 1984. Burt worked for the Florida Office of the State Attorney in 1990 and 1991. Burt has taught for nine years as adjunct professor in Criminal Justice and Political Science at Valdosta State College. Burt has also served as an officer with the United States Army's JAG Corp at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah in 1991 through 1993. Mr. Baker was the first circuit public defender appointed after the Georgia General Assembly passed the Indigent Defense Act of 2003 which created the first state-wide public defender system in Georgia. Burt was instrumental in organizing and operating the Cordele Judicial Circuit. His replacement for that position will be named by the local appointing committee for that judicial circuit.

Burt will continue the excellent training programs offered by Georgia Public Defender Standards Council for all public defenders in Georgia. Every public defender working within the Standards Council's office must undergo a rigorous mandatory training program. The Standards Council has instituted an Honors Program for new licensed attorneys who are entering the field of criminal defense as public defenders. The Honors Program, conducted each summer on the campus of Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Georgia, has already received national acclaim for the quality and intensity of training provided to new attorneys who have elected to special in criminal defense. In addition to the Honors Program, Mr. Baker will supervise a staff dedicated to providing on-going training to every public defender in Georgia.

Michael Mears, Director of the Georgia Public Defender Council pointed to Burt Baker's long history as a "Georgia" lawyer and his professional commitment to training young lawyers as critical factors in the decision to name him to this post. Mears, said. "With Burt's extensive knowledge of Georgia practices and procedures in the area of criminal law, he will bring an understanding and approach to the training of public defenders which is based upon his extensive experience as a Georgia lawyer."

For Immediate Release