District Courts
of Harris County

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Judges Heath and Reeder elected to lead Family and Civil District Courts in Harris County

June 25, 2025 — The Harris County District Courts have announced new administrative leadership for two of their four divisions, with Judge Sonya Heath and Judge Lauren Reeder elected by their peers to serve as administrative judges of the Family and Civil Divisions, respectively.

Family Administrative Judge Sonya Heath:

Judge Sonya Heath, presiding judge of the 310th District Court, assumed the role of Family Administrative Judge on June 1, 2025. She is known for her steadfast commitment to supporting children and families in crisis. The Family District Courts oversee some of the most emotionally charged cases, including divorce, custody, visitation, child support, adoption, and Child Protective Services (CPS) matters. Judge Heath will serve a one-year term, guiding the division through high-volume and high-stakes dockets that require both compassion and sound legal judgment.

Civil Administrative Judge Lauren Reeder:

Judge Lauren Reeder, who presides over the 234th District Court, began her one-year term as Civil Administrative Judge on January 1, 2025. Judge Reeder brings a collaborative and strategic approach to leading one of the largest civil court divisions in the state. The 24 Harris County Civil District Courts handle matters including personal injury, breach of contract, property disputes, and complex litigation involving significant monetary or equitable claims.

Additional Current Administrative Judges:

- **Criminal Division:** Judge Te'iva Bell, elected in 2023, continues her two-year term through September 2025. She presides over the 339th District Court and has led efforts to reduce criminal case backlogs and improve court processes across the 29 Criminal District Courts.
- **Juvenile Division:** Judge Michelle Moore of the 314th District Court continues to serve as Juvenile Administrative Judge through December 2025. She leads the county's juvenile justice courts in balancing public safety with rehabilitative approaches tailored to young offenders.
- **Local Administrative Judge:** Judge Latosha Lewis Payne, who presides over the 55th District Court, is serving her second two-year term as the Administrative Judge for all Harris County District Courts. In this role, she spearheads countywide administrative initiatives, such as adoption of the language access plan, creation of the Integrated Justice Technology Committee, and the addition of new courts, as well as performs all other duties specified in Chapter 74 of the Government Code.

Administrative judges are elected by fellow judges within each division and serve fixed terms. Their leadership ensures consistent application of court policies, enhances access to justice, and strengthens coordination between the judiciary and the broader legal community. As new challenges and demands emerge, this elected leadership helps guide the Harris County District Courts in serving the public with fairness, integrity, and transparency.

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