

## Another Robe on the Rack

Written by Dan Juneau  
Wednesday, 19 September 2012 07:08 -

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### *Another Louisiana Judge Announces Retirement*

In what appears like an impending changing of the guard at the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeal comes the news that another judge on the nine-member bench is retiring.

Judge Gay Gaskins, who has been on the appellate court since 1995, has notified the Louisiana Supreme Court that Friday, September 21 will be her last day to wear the black robe.

Her retirement concludes a distinguished judicial career that spanned 22 years. Judge Gaskins was a trailblazer for women in judicial circles. When elected to the Shreveport City Court in 1990, she became the first female judge in Caddo Parish.

She continued that trend by becoming the first female elected to the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeal in 1995. Her election to those two courts paved the way for other females to wade into judicial waters.

The retirement announcement by Gaskins comes at a time when an election is being held in November to fill a vacancy on the appellate court created by the retirement of Charles Peatross.

Two sitting judges – Caddo District Judge Frances Pitman and Caddo Juvenile Court Judge David Matlock are seeking to move up the judicial ladder. Gaskins' retirement comes too late to be on the November ballot. The election to replace her

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will likely be held next April. It will be in the same election district as the Pitman-Matlock race.

The 2nd Court of Appeal has jurisdiction over 20 parishes across north Louisiana. Election District 3, in which these two races will be run, includes part of Caddo and all of DeSoto and Red River parishes.

Caddo District Judge Jeanette Garrett has already declared her intention to run for the Gaskins seat on the bench. She was elected to the Caddo District Court in 2002.

### **Gas and insurance: Ouch!**

The state of Louisiana is ranked high on another bad list. Nothing unusual there. This time it concerns gas and car insurance costs.

CarInsurance.com conducted a study to determine how much it cost residents annually in different states for gas and car insurance.

The study revealed that Louisiana has the third highest gas and insurance rates combined in the nation. A Louisiana resident spends an average of \$4,504 a year. The median income in the state is \$42,504, giving residents a Misery Index of 10.50 percent.

In Maine, for example, insurance costs alone average \$889 a year – the lowest – to \$2,589 in Louisiana – the highest in the nation.

But the costs can vary, depending upon where you live in the Bayou State. In some areas, insurance averages just \$1,874 a year, while other areas have an average of \$3,530.

Mississippi topped the Misery Index with an 11.6 percent rating, and Oklahoma was second with 10.7 percent. After Louisiana, in third place, came West Virginia 10.2 percent, Montana 9.7 percent and Georgia 9.7 percent.

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The cheapest gas and car insurance rates are found in New Hampshire with a Misery Index of 4.4 percent, Alaska 4.6 percent, and Connecticut 4.9 percent.

### **LABI voting scores**

For almost 40 years, the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI) has worked diligently to improve Louisiana's business climate for its members.

Beginning with the passage of Louisiana's right-to-work law in 1976 to supporting historic education reforms of 2012, LABI has been a powerful force for business in Louisiana politics.

It has 10 lobbyists working the Legislature to let legislators in the House and Senate know LABI's position on legislation.

After each session, the organization issues a scorecard to let voters know how their legislators voted on legislation important to LABI members. For 2012, LABI looked at votes on 16 bills – some it favored; some it didn't.

Here is the scorecard for area legislators. A 100 percent score means that the legislator voted every time the way LABI wanted him or her to vote.

#### Area State Senators

Barrow Peacock (R) – 100 percent.

Sherri Buffington (R) – 79 percent.

Greg Tarver (D) – 79 percent.

Robert Adley (R) – 75 percent.

#### Area State Representatives

Richie Burford (R) – 97 percent.

Henry Burns (R) – 97 percent.

Alan Seabaugh (R) – 97 percent.

Jeff Thompson (R) – 97 percent.

Thomas Carmody (R) – 86 percent.

Patrick Williams (D) – 49 percent.

Barbara Norton (D) – 38 percent.

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Gene Reynolds (D) – 36 percent.  
Kenny Cox (D) – 21 percent.  
Roy Burrell (D) – 20 percent.

### Political tidbits

\*Dog Park Affair – The Shreveport Dog Park Alliance is staging a “Wine & Whine, a Dog Park Art Affair” on Saturday, September 22 from 4-7 p.m. at Karpeles Museum, 3201 Centenary Boulevard.

A donation of \$15 will get you one glass of wine or lemonade, breads and spreads. Music will be provided by Sid Crump and Leonard Service.  
Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator’s Dog Park painting – prints signed and numbered – will be available for \$30. Also available will be selections by Shreveport-based Louisiana Society of Animal Artists.

\*GOP Women to Hear Candidates – The Republican Women of Bossier will have its monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 25 at Stonebridge Clubhouse. Meet and Greet starts at 5:30 p.m., followed by the meeting and program at 6 p.m.

All three candidates for Bossier-Webster District Judge – Bossier City attorney Whit Graves, Assistant District Attorney Mike Nerren, and Springhill City Judge John Slattery – will be speaking.

For reservations, contact Barb Dockall by e-mail at [rwbossier@gmail.com](mailto:rwbossier@gmail.com) no later than Thursday, Sept. 20. Dinner cost is \$15. No charge to listen.

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Lou Gehrig Burnett is a seasoned veteran of national and local politics. He publishes Fax-Net Update, a weekly political newsletter.