

# Investiture of Justice Pierce is January 30 in Leakesville

January 15, 2009

An investiture ceremony for Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Randy G. “Bubba” Pierce is scheduled for 1 p.m. Jan. 30 at Greene County High School Gymnasium in Leakesville. The public is invited.

Lieutenant Governor Phil Bryant will be the keynote speaker. Other speakers will include House Speaker William J. McCoy, University of Mississippi Chancellor Dr. Robert Khayat, University of Southern Mississippi President Dr. Martha Saunders and Jones County Junior College President Dr. Jesse Smith.

Greene County Superintendent of Education Richard Fleming will give a welcome. Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice William L. Waller Jr. will recognize special guests.

Education will be the focus of the investiture. Speakers include representatives of each of the colleges and universities from which Justice Pierce graduated.

Justice Pierce said, “Education is the ultimate door-opener. There is no question that I wouldn’t be where I am today, but for those educational institutions.”

The student body of Greene County High School will attend. Smaller groups of students from Leakesville Elementary School, Leakesville Middle School, McLain Elementary School and Sand Hill Elementary School also will attend.

Justice Pierce said he hopes to inspire the young people to pursue their dreams. They will have an opportunity to see and hear state and local leaders.

Justice Pierce in discussing the investiture program said, “I want it to be for those kids. I want them to be challenged. I want them to see that they can work hard and achieve their dreams. They need to recognize that if they work hard, they can achieve their goals and succeed.”

Charles W. Pickering Sr., who formerly served on the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, will administer the ceremonial oath to Justice Pierce during the investiture. Justice Pierce’s wife, Gayla Smith Pierce, will hold the Bible and assist Justice Pierce in donning his judicial robe.

Justice Pierce took the oath of office Jan. 5 with three other justices of the Supreme Court in Jackson, and began his duties on the court. It is traditional to have a formal investiture ceremony, including a ceremonial administering of the oath, at a later time. Justice Pierce chose to have the investiture in his home county to express appreciation to the community.

Greene County Sheriff Kevin Fortinberry will open the ceremony. Rev. Fred McCann, pastor of New Covenant Ministries, will give the invocation. Members of Troop 127 of the Boy Scouts of America will post the colors. Greene County High School Senior Class President Karen Lott will lead the Pledge of Allegiance. The Greene County High School Band will play the national anthem. Members of the Leakesville Elementary second grade class, which includes Justice Pierce’s daughter, will sing the state song, *Go, Mississippi*. Barbara Ricks of Leakesville will perform a musical selection. Rev. Tony Williams, associate pastor of Unity Baptist Church, will give the benediction.

Sen. Michael Watson of Pascagoula, Rep. Brandon Jones of Pascagoula and Rep. Shaun Walley of Leakesville will introduce some of the speakers. Sen. Watson and Rep. Jones are co-chairs of the Investiture Committee.

Justice Pierce grew up in the Unity community near Leakesville and graduated from Leakesville High School. He attended Jones County Junior College. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and a Masters degree in business administration from the University

of Southern Mississippi. He earned his law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Justice Pierce began a private law practice in Greene County in 1997. In 1999, he was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives from District 105, where he served for five years. He served as chairman of the House Education Committee and of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Education. He also served on the Agriculture, Corrections, Forestry, Judiciary and Transportation committees.

Gov. Haley Barbour appointed him in February 2005 to a vacancy on the Sixteenth Chancery Court, which is made up of George, Greene and Jackson counties.

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