

JAMES GRAVES

JUSTICE

Mississippi Supreme Court . 450 High Street . Post Office Box 117 . Jackson, Mississippi 39205 . (601 359-3697)

Biographical Sketch

Justice James E. Graves, Jr., began his term as judge on the Mississippi Supreme Court on November 1, 2001. He was appointed by the Governor and then was elected by the people in November 2004. Justice Graves previously served as a Circuit Court Judge for 10 years. He was appointed in February 1991 to serve as Circuit Court Judge. He was elected to the position in a special election in September 1991, where he received seventy-seven percent of the votes cast. He was re-elected without opposition in 1994 and 1998.

He graduated from Sumner Hill High School in Clinton, Mississippi, where he was **valedictorian**. He was also selected as the school's Star Student because he had both the highest grade point average and the highest ACT (American College Test) score. He attended Millsaps College, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. After working at the Department of Public Welfare for almost two years, he enrolled at Syracuse University College of Law, where he received his law degree. He also holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

He worked as a staff attorney at Central Mississippi Legal Services. As a special assistant attorney general, he was head of the Human Services Division of the Attorney General's Office. Just prior to being appointed Circuit Judge, he was director of the Division of Child Support Enforcement of the Mississippi Department of Human Services. He was also engaged in the private practice of law for more than three years.

His teaching experience includes serving as a teaching team member at **Harvard Law School** where he has taught trial advocacy five times during the past six years. He has been a presenter at **Stanford Law School** on two occasions and was a jurist-in-residence at **Syracuse University School of Law**. Justice Graves has also served as an adjunct professor at Jackson State University, Tougaloo College, and Millsaps College where he taught media law, civil rights law, and sociology of law.

Justice Graves is a noted educator, orator, and humanitarian. He is committed in his continuing efforts to teach, motivate and inspire our youth. In that connection, he has delivered speeches and lectures at countless schools, churches, and universities throughout the country. He recently gave a keynote address at the International Reading Association 50th Annual Conference. On numerous occasions, Justice Graves served as host to various student groups and classes at the Hinds County Courthouse where he taught youth about the legal system. He also coached student mock trial teams from 1991-2003, reaching state finals every year. The Jackson Murrah High School mock trial team that he helped coach won the 2001 state championship. Millsaps College named him a recipient of the Livesay Award in 2004 for his service to the College and the community. The United States Department of Health and Human services presented him the Commissioner's Award in 2001 for outstanding leadership and service in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. **The Mississippi Association of Educators** presented him with the Humanized Education Award in 2002. This is the highest award presented to a non-teacher. Jackson Public Schools named him **Parent of the Year for 2000-2001 and he was first alternate to Parent of the Year for the entire State of Mississippi.** In recognition of his continuing efforts to save our youth, Justice Graves received the award as Champion Adopter for his mentoring in Lake Elementary Schools' Boys for a Brighter Tomorrow program.

Justice Graves has been recognized by numerous organizations for his commitment to the principle of "equal justice for all" and for his outstanding ability as a judge. The Hinds County Bar Association named Justice Graves the recipient of its **Innovation Award** in 2000 in recognition of his pioneering efforts in creating the first state-of-the-art high-tech courtroom in Mississippi state courts, in establishing the first court website for a Mississippi state trial court, and in implementing electronic filing of court documents. The National Bar Association awarded him its first **Distinguished Jurist Award in 1996.** The National Conference of Black Lawyers selected him from among judges nationwide to receive the **Judge of the Year Award** in 1992. The Millsaps College Black Students Association named Justice Graves the recipient of its Alumnus of the Year Award in 1993. He received the NAACP Legal Award in 2004.