

FILED THIS 20th DAY OF
March, 20 20

IN THE CHANCERY COURTS OF
HANCOCK, HARRISON AND STONE COUNTIES, MISSISSIPPI

SAMUEL TOM SMITH
Chancery Clerk

Samuel Tom Smith
D.C.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER REGARDING COVID-19 #1

The law requires that the Courts follow the United States Constitution, the Mississippi Constitution, the President's Executive Orders, the Chief Justice's Orders from the United States Supreme Court, the Chief Justice's Orders from the Mississippi Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, and the Resolutions and Proclamations of the Boards of Supervisors of Hancock, Harrison and Stone Counties. For the purposes of judicial economy as well as to protect the health and welfare of the public, court personnel, lawyers, litigants, witnesses and any other persons having an interest at the Chancery Courts of Hancock, Harrison and Stone Counties, the Court does hereby

FIND, ORDER AND DECREE as follows:

I

The Emergency Administrative Orders issued by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Mississippi relative to COVID-19, which may be found on the website of the Court, www.courts.ms.gov, are hereby incorporated as if set forth in full. Due to information from the Center for Disease Control regarding COVID-19, no contested matters will be heard until further order, unless there is an emergency involving immediate or irreparable harm in which case the court administrators will be notified.

II

NEW FILINGS

All lawyers or self-represented parties are encouraged to use the U.S. Postal Service for initial filings, or such procedures as may be provided and announced by the chancery clerk.

III

IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCE DIVORCES

All Irreconcilable Difference Divorces will be scheduled for hearing before the Masters on or after April 21, 2020, or may be electronically submitted to the assigned Judge at the discretion of the Judge.

IV

HEIRSHIPS AND RULE 81 MATTERS

Heirships and Rule 81 matters will be called either by the deputy clerks or the bailiffs and accompanied by a continuance Order in compliance with the requirements of Rule 81. In the event that an heirship is called with no response and all necessary parties have been joined, the Judge, in his or her discretion, with the express waiver of testimony by counsel for the estate, may entertain a proposed Order, preferably submitted by email, to the Court.

V

DOMESTIC ABUSE, INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT, AND OTHER EMERGENCY MATTERS

Upon the filing of a Petition for Domestic Abuse Protection, the Clerks will contact the assigned Chancellor's Court Administrator, who will determine if, when and where a hearing will be held.

The Chancery Judges will be available for Rule 65 emergency matters. Contact should be made through the Court Administrators.

The current procedures for involuntary commitment proceedings will continue.

VI

DOCKETS

Pursuant to the Emergency Administrative Orders of the Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, each Judge has the authority to control their own docket. However, serious attention will be given to how those dockets will be handled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Until further Order, all Ex Parte Vacation days (“Motion Days”) are hereby canceled. Any Orders relative to such matters may be e-mailed to the Court Administrators for electronic presentation to the assigned Chancellor.

VII

COURT ADMINISTRATORS

The Court Administrators will be working from their homes. They may be contacted by e-mail at bpollard@co.harrison.ms.us or jdanzey@co.harrison.ms.us.

VIII

This Administrative Order will be posted in a conspicuous place at each Courthouse.

SO ORDERED AND DECREED this the 20th of March, 2020.

Carter Bise

Carter Bise, Senior Chancellor