

After nearly 18 years on the federal bench, United States District Judge Sharion Aycock has elected to take senior status effective April 15, 2025. In a letter to the White House dated March 27, 2025, Judge Aycock thanked President George W. Bush and the United States Senate for allowing her the opportunity to serve.

Judge Aycock is a lifelong resident of the Northern District of Mississippi. She is a 1973 graduate of Tremont High School. She graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics, and a minor in Political Science, in 1977, where she was inducted into the Hall of Fame. She received a Juris Doctor degree from the Mississippi College School of Law in 1980, where she graduated second in her class and served as co-editor-in-chief of the initial publication of the *Mississippi College Law Review*.

Judge Aycock's legal career has been remarkable. Prior to her federal judicial appointment, Judge Aycock maintained a record of public service. She served as chairman of the Mississippi State Personnel Board and received gubernatorial appointments to the Mississippi Home Corporation Board and the Governor's Commission on Youth and Children. She was the first female president of the Mississippi Bar Foundation and was honored as Mississippi State University's 2008 Woman of the Year.

After a successful career as a practitioner in Fulton, Mississippi, Judge Aycock was elected as a Circuit Judge for the State's First Judicial District in 2002. She was the first woman to hold that position in the First Judicial District. She held that position until her federal confirmation.

On March 19, 2007, President George W. Bush nominated Judge Aycock to be a District Judge for the District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi. Judge Aycock was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate on October 4, and received her

commission on October 22, making her the thirty-second U.S. District Judge to serve Mississippi. She had the privilege of being the first woman confirmed to serve as a United States District Judge in Mississippi.

Judge Aycock has a storied career as a District Judge. She has presided over high profile civil and criminal cases throughout her tenure and has attempted to approach each and every case with equity and fairness. In 2007, when Judge Aycock's nomination for the position was being considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee, Judge Aycock told the Committee how she viewed the importance of the job: "Every litigant deserves my attention. They deserve all the listening power I can put behind listening to the testimony, hearing what they have to say, knowing what the law is, because I need to get it right at that stage, and just being fair to that litigant, making them feel that they are welcomed in that courtroom, that I have not pre-judged their case, that I am there to listen and to make a fair decision based upon the law." Almost two decades later, Judge Aycock continues to hold true to those principles. Litigators from across the State frequently recognize Judge Aycock's sincerity and genuine care for the litigants in her courtroom. In recent years, Judge Aycock has led the Northern District of Mississippi's re-entry court program aimed at assisting individuals reintegrating into the community after incarceration. This is a mission she holds near and dear to her heart.

She also served as the Chief Judge for the Northern District of Mississippi from 2014 through 2021. During that time, the District faced many obstacles, which Judge Aycock addressed head on. She led the charge in obtaining Congressional funding for renovations of the Thomas G. Abernethy Federal Courthouse in Aberdeen, Mississippi after District Court employees were displaced due to mold in the building. Because of Judge Aycock's leadership, District Court employees were able to move back into the Aberdeen Courthouse in September

2024 after being displaced for over six years. Judge Aycock also worked closely with Senator Thad Cochran, then Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to secure much needed funding for the construction of a new courthouse in Greenville.

Reflecting on her legal career, Judge Aycock remarked, “I have been so fortunate during my entire legal career. As one of only a few women graduating in my law school class, I had the chance to break ground for the female practitioner. Practicing in Fulton with the very best individual, corporate, and governmental clients, I learned a lot about people. Being elected in 2002 to the state court bench was indeed a highlight of my career. So many friends, family, and clients helped me win a highly contested judicial race. That experience in campaigning and serving on the bench remains very close to my heart. The volume of cases and the nature of the circuit court cases better prepared me for the federal bench. In candor, the time was right for a female district judge to be appointed in Mississippi and I had 27 years of experience at that time. I will always cherish my unanimous confirmation in the Senate—by Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. These 17 years on the federal bench have flown by. I continue to tell jurors that it is like starting a new and exciting novel every Monday morning. I have been so fortunate.”

Judge Aycock commonly speaks fondly of her former and current law clerks. Mentoring these young lawyers has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of the job. She enjoys it and takes it quite seriously.

Although Judge Aycock will be taking senior status, she intends to continue to render substantial judicial service as a senior judge. In essence, her case load will be reduced, but she continues to have a heart for public service and her mission will be unchanged. She will continue to preside over both civil and criminal cases in the Northern District of Mississippi.