

MAR 16 2020

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF MITCHELL COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

Judge of Probate Court

ORDER CONCERNING OPERATIONS AT THE MITCHELL COUNTY PROBATE
COURT DURING THE STATEWIDE JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, THE Governor has determined that a Public Health State of Emergency exists in the State of Georgia due to the spread of Covid-19, and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Harold E. Melton, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia did on March 14, 2020 Order and Declare a Statewide Judicial Emergency in the State of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, such Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency, as subsequently amended, severely curtails the operation of the judicial branch of our state in order to attempt to slow the spread of Covid-19, consistent with recommendations of the World Health Organization and the Center from Disease Control. The Order further provides: "to the extent feasible, courts should remain open to address essential functions, and in particular courts should give priority to matters necessary to protect [the] health, safety, and liberty of individuals. Essential functions are subject to interpretation; however, some matters that fall into the essential function category are: (1) where an immediate liberty or safety concern is presented requiring the attention of the court as soon as the court is available....(5) mental health commitment hearings."; and

WHEREAS, such Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency, as subsequently amended, further suspends, tolls, extends, and otherwise grants relief from any deadlines, as provided therein; and

WHEREAS, the Probate Court of Mitchell County is further the Local Vital Records Custodian and Registrar, responsible for the issuance of birth and death certificates and is further charged with the approval of Permits for the Disposition of Human Remains; and

WHEREAS, this Court finds it will severely hamper its ability to conform to the Order of the Supreme Court of Georgia unless it takes steps to reduce or delay the transmission of the Covid-19 virus to the public and to its staff.

NOW THEREFORE, and in accordance with the said Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency, as subsequently amended, and in order to give effect to said Order's terms, the Court HEREBY ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) The Court shall continue to hear and address as provided by law all:
 - (A) Orders to Apprehend (a/k/a "1013s");
 - (B) Petitions for Involuntary Treatment and similar Petitions regarding Mental Health;
 - (C) Emergency Petitions for the Appointment of a Guardian and/or Conservator;
- (2) With regard to all other Petitions or Motions, they may be filed in person by appointment only, but may continue to be filed by mail; no hearings are expected to be scheduled concerning same during the Judicial Emergency;
- (3) The Court will continue issuing marriage licenses, but by appointment only; only the parties to the marriage will be allowed in the Probate Court Office; until further order of the Court, the Court will continue to conduct wedding

ceremonies for those purchasing licenses from the court, and such wedding shall be conducted outside of the Probate Court office on the Courthouse grounds; only the parties to the marriage and no more than one other person should attend;

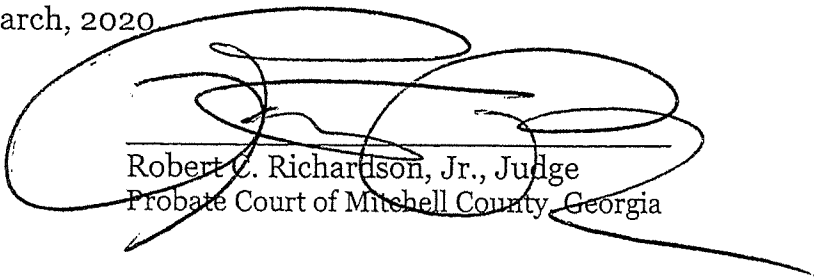
- (4) Birth Certificates shall be available in person by appointment only, and will continue to be available via mail;
- (5) Except for requests from funeral homes or morticians, who should follow the procedures previously in effect, Death Certificates shall be available in person by appointment only, and will continue to be available via mail;
- (6) Permits for the Disposition of Human Remains shall continue to be issued under procedures previously in effect.
- (7) No Georgia Weapons Carry Licenses shall be processed or renewed during the said Judicial Emergency, it appearing that the expiration of same is tolled by the said order of the Supreme Court of Georgia;
- (8) Only two (2) persons or transactions are permitted in the Probate Court office at the time (two persons applying for a marriage license is ok, two persons requesting a death certificate is not), for transactions requiring more than two persons, such may be held, after notice to the Court, on the Mitchell County Courthouse grounds but outside of the Probate Court offices;
- (9) No one coughing or sneezing or displaying signs of an upper respiratory tract infection will be permitted to remain in the Probate Court office, but if such person's presence is necessary for the Court to carry out its essential functions, as defined in the Georgia Supreme Court's Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency, as subsequently amended, in which case they contact the court via telephone to provide for a meeting elsewhere on the Mitchell County Courthouse grounds;

FURTHER ORDERED that this Order shall remain in effect for so long as the Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency, as subsequently amended, remains in effect; and

FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this Order shall be posted, together with a copy of the Supreme Court of Georgia's Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency, as subsequently amended, at the entry of the office of the Probate.

So ORDERED this 6th day of March, 2020




Robert C. Richardson, Jr., Judge
Probate Court of Mitchell County, Georgia