


**GEORGIA**

**ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY**

**It is ordered that the foregoing presentments of the Grand Jury empanelled for the 2024 October Term of the Superior Court of Athens-Clarke County be entered on the minutes of the Court and published at the expense of the County in the official organ of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. Exhibits are not to be published, but shall be available for inspection and reproduction in the Office of Clerk of Superior Court Athens-Clarke County,**

**This 7th day of January, 2025.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**H. Patrick Haggard, Judge  
Superior Court Athens-Clarke County  
Western Judicial Circuit**

Filed in Open Court this 7th day of January, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elisa Zarate, Clerk of Superior Court

**General Presentation and Reports**  
**Athens-Clarke County Grand Jury**  
**October Term 2024**  
**Tuesday Sessions**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of October 2024, the Honorable Judge Patrick Haggard selected a jury of 25 people including two alternates to the Grand Jury. Judge Patrick Haggard then administered the oath and charged them with their responsibilities.

The jurors then selected Patrick Ian Todd as Foreperson, James Ryan Carroll as Assistant Foreperson, Kathleen Brannan Maddox as Secretary, and David Andrew Brownlee as Assistant Secretary.

The remaining jurors were: Letitia B. Anderson, Nancy Ann Atkinson, Stephen Christopher Barber, Robert Kevin Bell, Kathy Ann Brunson, Taylor Moore Chicoine, Susan Moore Gibbs, Adam Wesley Goodrum, Charles W. Hawkins, III, Jeremiah Caleb Hobbs, Ann Rhoades Hotchkiss, James L. Hudgins, Jr., Conner Kevin Isham, Cassie Milam Jackson, Jonathan Hall Owen, Jazmin Prieto Valladares, April A. Rains, Matthew J. Ritchie, Ashley Nichole Skinner, Michael Winship, and Christine Mileski Young.

**Criminal Functions**

The Grand Jury was presented with a total of 115 cases. Of the 115 cases heard, 111 were True Bills, 0 were No Bills, 3 were returned as Split Bills, and 1 case was tabled for future action pending further charges. This activity took place on October 15th, October 22nd, October 29th, November 5th, November 12th, November 19th, November 26th, December 3rd, December 10th, and December 17th of 2024 and January 7th of 2025.

**Civil Functions**

A team of jurors visited the Athens-Clarke County Facilities Department, meeting with Mr. James Alexander, the Interim Director. Mr. Alexander answered all the questions posed to him, explaining the number of facilities staff and their various duties and responsibilities, the process for naming the future Director of Facilities, as well as the funding for this department. He also shared details regarding the severe maintenance issues within the current Athens-Clarke County Courthouse facility, particularly the issues with the four elevators. Only one of the four courthouse elevators was operable at the onset of this Grand Jury term. During the months of November and December, NONE of the elevators worked, forcing everyone utilizing the courthouse to use the stairs. This put the courthouse out of ADA compliance due to issues of inaccessibility for the public, the courthouse staff, and the members of the Grand Jury. One of the elevators was operational for the final Grand Jury meeting on January 7th of 2025. The members of the Grand Jury who visited the Facilities Department were April Rains and Christine Young.

Members of the Grand Jury also visited the Athens-Clarke County Clerk's Office, meeting with Elisa Zarate, Clerk of Superior and State Court. Ms. Zarate shared details and responsibilities of the clerk's office including the maintenance of the website and public records, the number of staff members, and the management of the budget. Visiting members of the Grand Jury pointed out a few links that are broken on the website, and Ms. Zarate promised the links would be corrected in a timely manner. The members of the Grand Jury who visited the Clerk's Office were Kathy Brunson, Kevin Bell, Nancy Atkinson, and Christine Young.

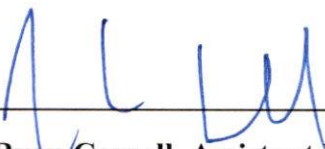
### **General Observations**

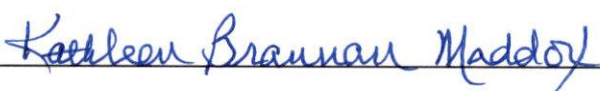
In general, the courthouse staff is friendly and professional. Assistant District Attorney, Mr. Charles Rettiger, was well organized and presented the cases thoroughly. Those police officers and District Attorney staff who presented testimony to the Grand Jury were well-prepared and answered all questions thoroughly and to the best of their knowledge. Bailiff Jackie Lunsford acted professionally in maintaining records and attending to the needs of the members of the Grand Jury.

### **Closing Remarks**

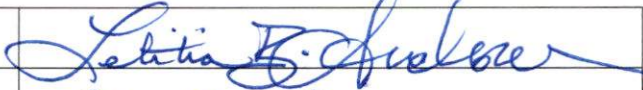


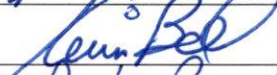




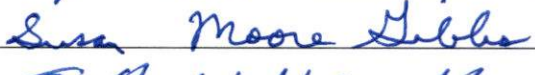






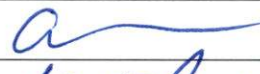


As jurors, we urgently recommend the repair and service of the elevators within the Athens-Clarke County Courthouse immediately, staggering the repairs so that at least one if not two of the elevators are operational at any given time. We further recommend timely and thorough oversight by the Athens-Clarke County Facilities Department in the repair and maintenance of the courthouse facility with particular attention to the elevators. Increased communication between the Facilities Department and the courthouse staff regarding the process and timeline for this maintenance and repair work will certainly aid in boosting the morale of those who work in this building every day and the general climate of the proceedings held therein for the citizens of Athens-Clarke County.

We also recommend a more thorough training in the duties and responsibilities of the members of the Grand Jury during the first session. While the distribution of the Grand Jury Handbook seems helpful, a discussion of these duties and responsibilities along with clarification of the voting process and methods of proper documentation prior to hearing cases would be most beneficial.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**James Ryan Carroll, Assistant Foreperson**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Kathleen Brannan Maddox, Secretary**

**October 2024 Jurors (Tuesday Sessions)**

Letitia B Anderson	
Nancy Ann Atkinson	
Stephen Christopher Barber	
Robert Kevin Bell	
David Andrew Brownlee (Assistant Secretary)	
Kathy Ann Brunson	
James Ryan Carroll (Assistant Foreperson)	
Taylor Moore Chicoine	
Susan Moore Gibbs	
Charles W. Hawkins, III	
Jeremiah Caleb Hobbs	
Ann Rhoades Hotchkiss	
James L Hudgins	
Connor Kenneth Isham	
Cassie Milam Jackson	
Kathleen Brannan Maddox (Secretary)	
Jazmin Prieto Valladares	
April A Rains	
Matthew J. Ritchie	
Ashley <sup>Nicole</sup> Skinner	
Patrick Ian Todd (Foreperson)	
Michael Winship	
Christine Mileski Young	
Jonathan Hall Owen (Alternate)	
Adam Wesley Goodrum (Alternate)	