



# Be Neutral February 2018

*A publication of the Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution*



Pictured (L-R): Bob Berlin, Esq., President, Dispute Resolution Section of the State Bar of Georgia; R. Wayne Thorpe, Esq.; and Tracy Johnson, Executive Director, Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution

## 2017 ADR Institute Highlights

*December 8, 2017*

Despite the snowy weather, the 24th Annual Alternative Dispute Resolution Institute and 2017 Neutrals' Conference in Atlanta saw a record turnout in attendance. In total, 288 neutrals enjoyed the program, including remote streaming locations in Savannah, Tifton, and live webstream. Diverse presenters, panelist, and moderators covered a range of topics, offering unique perspective on issues relevant to ADR practice and application. Click [here](#) for a copy of the agenda.

In addition to offering engaging sessions, the Georgia Supreme Court Commission on Dispute Resolution and the Dispute Resolution Section of the State Bar of Georgia awarded the 2017 Chief Justice Harold G. Clarke Award to R. Wayne Thorpe, Esq., in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field of alternative dispute resolution in Georgia. Click [here](#) to learn more.

The 25th Annual Institute and 2018 Neutrals' Conference is scheduled for December 8th. Save the date!

## CODR 25th Anniversary

**The Commission on Dispute Resolution is celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2018.**

The Supreme Court Order adopting the ADR Rules, including the creation of CODR and GODR, was filed on January 27, 1993. This order established a new precedent for handling conflict in Georgia, "providing for the speedy, efficient, and inexpensive

resolution of disputes and prosecutions."

These founding principles are upheld through the hard work and service of the Commission, the Office, ADR Programs, and registered neutrals statewide.

Please join us in celebrating this momentous occasion, and stay posted for upcoming announcements in the weeks to come.



## Commission on Dispute Resolution Updates

The Supreme Court of Georgia has appointed Judge Cindy Morris, Superior Courts, Conasauga Judicial Circuit, and Mr. Hal Gray, Esq. Managing Partner of Ragsdale Beals Seigler Patterson & Gray, LLP, as new members to the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution. Judge Jane C. Barwick, Superior Court, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, was appointed as Chair-Elect and Justice Britt C. Grant administered the oath to all three at the January 31 meeting.



Pictured (L-R): Judge Jane C. Barwick; Judge M. Cindy Morris; Justice Britt C. Grant; and Hal Gray, III, Esq.

The next meeting is May 9, at the State Bar of Georgia. Commission meeting minutes and additional information can be found [here](#).

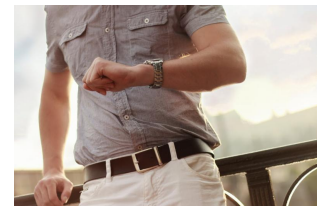
## ADR Program Updates

### Carroll County ADR Program

Ms. Rita Carroll has been working as Program Director for the Carroll County Mediation Center since October 2017. Rita worked as a Child Support Agent from 1987 to 1993 in the Coweta Judicial Circuit. In 1993, she became the Supervisor of the Douglasville Child Support Office. After graduation from GSU College of Law in 2001, she became a Special Assistant Attorney General, serving Paulding, Polk, and Haralson Counties. Since 2006, she has maintained a private practice focusing primarily on Family Law and Bankruptcy. Welcome Ms. Carroll!

## Late Registration Renewal Ends April 30

If you have not yet renewed your neutral registration, please be sure to do so as soon as possible. All neutrals who do not complete all steps of renewal prior to April 30 will be placed in inactive status. To renew your registration or for more information on the inactive status, please visit the [Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution](#).



## Did you know?

*Auraria, a ghost town near the city of Dahlonega, is considered the site of the first Gold Rush in America.*



You can obtain CE credits for **FREE** by watching videos posted on the [GODR website](#).

You can view and request job postings for ADR careers on the [GODR website](#).

All advisory and ethics opinions can be viewed on our [GODR website](#).

## ***Helping Our Clients Prepare for Mediation***

by Tracy Gould Sheinin

How many times have we neutrals heard a party say, "I've got it at home!" ("It" being an important document that could make a big difference in the outcome of their case) And then we have to break it to them that the judge and the other party are unlikely to wait a couple of hours while they go home and get it. In addition to forgetting important documents, sometimes folks show up late or having skipped breakfast and we end up mediating through lunch. [Read More](#)



## ***Read the Fine Print...***

***Kansas Court of Appeals Case***

***Wasinger v. Roman Catholic Diocese of Salina in Kansas, 2017***

In November 2017, the Kansas Court of Appeals examined a contract clause regarding "binding mediation". The court found that said clause is inconsistent with both Kansas law and the spirit of mediation, and established that parties are only obligated to attempt mediation.

[Click here](#) to read the full court decision.

## **Calendar of Events**

- **April 4-7** - [ABA Dispute Resolution Section Annual Conference, Washington D.C.](#)
- **May 9** - [Commission on Dispute Resolution Meeting, State Bar of Georgia](#)
- **October 3-6** - [ACR Annual Conference, Pittsburgh](#)
- **December 7** - 25th ADR Institute, State Bar of Georgia

Ongoing CE Opportunities are listed on our [webpage](#).



## **Got News?**

We want to hear from you. Please send any news items for future newsletters to **Tracy Johnson**.

**Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution**  
404-656-3808

*"Providing for the Speedy, Efficient, and Inexpensive Resolution of Disputes and Prosecutions."*



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