

Judicially Hosted Settlement Conference



A **Judicially Hosted Settlement Conference (JHSC)** is a confidential, non-binding process in which a settlement judge acts as a neutral mediator/evaluator of the case. Each side has the opportunity to present a brief summary of its evidence, legal theories and settlement desires. The settlement judge will assist the parties in settlement negotiations by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each side's case. The settlement judge has no decision making authority and is in no way acting in lieu of the assigned judge.

In a settlement conference the settlement judge facilitates the parties' efforts to negotiate a settlement. Some settlement judges use mediation techniques in the settlement conference to improve communication among the parties, probe barriers to settlement, and assist in formulating resolutions. The parties are under no obligation to settle any matters at the settlement conference.

A case may be referred to a JHSC by the assigned judge or a Party/Parties can request directly from the Ninth Judicial Administrative Office or the Office of Dispute Resolution (ADR).

- ✧ The JHSC combines traditional alternative dispute resolution methods with the influence and experience of the judiciary.
- ✧ JHSC's are responsive to the mandate of the Georgia Constitution for speedy, efficient, and inexpensive resolution of disputes.
- ✧ The settlement judge shall notify the parties of the time and date of the settlement conference within 60 days of assignment.
- ✧ The settlement judge, counsel and parties attending the settlement conference, shall treat as *confidential information* anything that happened during the conference with exceptions as noted in the JHSC Rules.
- ✧ All settlement judges must be registered with the State Office of Dispute Resolution Office as a general civil mediator, have successfully completed the JHSC training offered by ICJE or the Judicial Administrative Districts and have been appointed as a Senior Superior Court Judge.

Senior Superior Court Judges

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- **Hugh W. Stone**
706-781-8792
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Office of Dispute Resolution

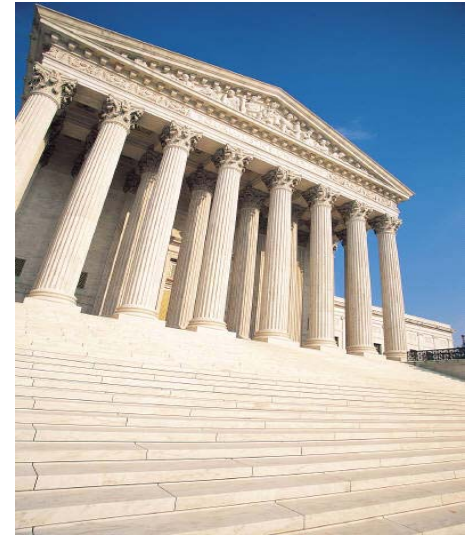
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