



W. NEIL THOMAS, III
JUDGE

CIRCUIT COURT - FOURTH DIVISION
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF TENNESSEE

HAMILTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE 37402-1911
423-209-6755

May 11, 2017

The Honorable Bill Haslam
Governor of the State of Tennessee
Via E-Mail Bill.Haslam@Tn.gov

Dear Governor Haslam:

After twenty years of service as a Circuit Court Judge of the State of Tennessee, I hereby tender my resignation, effective October 5, 2017. It has been a pleasure to serve the Judicial Branch of the State, and I look back with satisfaction, having presided over more than two hundred jury trials and thousands of non-jury trials. I remember my appointment by Governor Don Sundquist as if it were only recently, and I will never forget the first words from him when I answered his call: "Good morning, Judge Thomas."

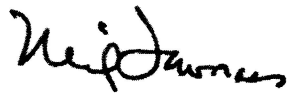
In presiding over cases, I have often looked at a portrait hanging in my courtroom. It is that of my great grandfather who served from 1903 to 1912, and I have often wondered whether he would have approved of my rulings.

Although my political persuasion has been that of a Republican, I have attempted to craft my decisions apolitically, with impartiality and in accordance with the Constitution of the United States and the State of Tennessee. My greatest pleasure has been presiding over juries who have worked with extreme diligence to discharge their solemn obligations as triers of the facts under the instructions of the law which I have given them.

The Honorable Bill Haslam
May 11, 2017
Page 2

Although I am resigning, I am not retiring. I am returning to the practice of law to complete my career as a member of the Bar of the State of Tennessee. Having practiced in a number of states, I can honestly say that we in Tennessee have the best lawyers anywhere. I have often said to my brothers and sisters in other states that I will put two Tennessee lawyers against their two best, and we will win every time.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

W. Neil Thomas, III

/ldw

cc: Ms. Deborah Taylor Tate
Administrative Director
Administrative Office of the Courts
Via E-Mail Deborah.Taylor.Tate@tncourts.gov

cc: Dwight Tarwater
General Counsel to Governor Haslam
Via E-Mail Dwight.Tarwater@TN.gov