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## **Duggan named judge of new Blount court**

Darren Dunlap

Blount County commissioners have appointed attorney David Duggan as judge for the county's new General Sessions Court section.

County General Sessions Judges told commissioners in February their workload had doubled since 1994 and the county needed a fourth judge for a new section of the court to give them some relief.

A county private act for a fourth section of General Sessions Court got the approval of the Tennessee General Assembly in May.

Duggan received commissioners' unanimous support Thursday. Commissioner Bob Kidd, who nominated Duggan for the appointment, called the attorney a "very honest" man.

"I think he deserves this position," said Kidd.

Duggan has practiced law in Blount County for 17 years. He attended the University of Tennessee for his undergraduate and graduate work and lives in Alcoa.

Duggan, who has a private practice in Maryville, serves as attorney for the city of Alcoa and the Alcoa Board of Education, and has been legal counsel for Blount County government and the county Board of Education.

Some of his community activities include Alcoa Youth Baseball, Blount County Child and Family Services, Boys and Girls Clubs, and past chairman and current treasurer of the Blount County Republican Party.

There are three Blount County General Sessions judges: Judge William Brewer, Judge Hugh E. DeLozier and Judge Terry Denton, who serves the court's juvenile division.

Cost of the new section, including salaries for a judge and secretary, comes to \$180,000 and could be funded through new revenue generated in court costs and fines, according to Brewer.

In 1994, there were 8,930 cases filed in Blount County General Sessions Court. In 2003,

there were 17,349 cases filed.

Total case filings, including Probate cases and Clerk and Master General Sessions totaled 10,195 in 1994 and 18,931 in 2003.

Duggan's appointment will last from January 2005 to August 2006. He will have to resign his duties as attorney to the city of Alcoa and Alcoa school board when he takes office.

In 2006, county residents will elect a new General Sessions Judge for the fourth section. The term will last eight years. He said he plans to run for the office in 2006.

Duggan has always wanted to be a judge. He called commissioners about the office this summer to express interest, then followed up with a letter to each.

As an attorney he's familiar with the increased load the county's General Sessions Judges face.

"I don't think there's any question there needs to be another section," Duggan said.

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