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Chief Justice Appoints Visiting Judge Under Speedy Trial Act in Sheriff John Williams Murder Case

(**Montgomery, Ala**) – Chief Justice Sarah H. Stewart has appointed retired Circuit Judge Allen T. Jolley as a visiting judge to preside over *State of Alabama v. William Chase Johnson* in Macon County Circuit Court, marking the implementation of the Speedy Trial Act which was passed by the Alabama Legislature last year.

Johnson is charged with capital murder in the November 2019 shooting death of Lowndes County Sheriff John "Big John" Williams at a Hayneville gas station.

Attorney General Marshall's Office requested the visiting judge appointment to ensure the case moves forward expeditiously, after the previous judge assigned to the case withdrew. The appointment was issued under the Speedy Trial Act, which allows the chief justice to appoint sitting or retired judges to handle violent criminal cases and reduce court backlogs at the request of the attorney general or a district attorney.

Gov. Kay Ivey signed House Bill 307 into law in May 2025, the legislation is swiftly achieving its goal of tackling court backlogs and delivering swift justice for victims. The law enables the chief justice to appoint visiting judges at the request of the attorney general or a district attorney.

In her order, Stewart stated that "the interests of the public require the expeditious resolution of this case to prevent undue delay and ensure the prompt administration of justice."

The Macon County Circuit Clerk has been directed to provide Judge Jolley with full access to the case file and notify all attorneys of record of the appointment.

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