

The Honorable Dennis J. Smith has informed us of pending changes to the 9:00 a.m. uncontested docket beginning October 1, 2009. We expect to hear more about these changes at the luncheon on September 16, 2009. Here is a brief overview:

- Guardianship petitions are to be filed with at least 3 weeks prior to the anticipated hearing date. The praecipe shall only be filed after the GAL Report and the medical report have been filed. It was noted that the GAL usually serves the petition, notice and praecipe in the same visit, and that under the new procedures, a second visit the week before the hearing will be needed. It is no longer acceptable to file a guardianship petition on a Friday for the following Friday's docket.
- The case should be placed on the 9 am uncontested docket unless it appears the matter is contested when the praecipe is filed to set the hearing.
- Orders appointing GALs shall take no more than 3 days from filing to entry.
- Attorneys are urged to take indigent cases as GAL.
- If the case necessitates a shorter time frame than 3 weeks, the Court will provide shortly approved guidelines for clarifying what necessitates an emergency, then the attorney may meet with the calendar control judge at 8:30 a.m. to get the case on the docket and the GAL Order entered.
- When filing a guardianship petition, the Court will allow the filing attorney to recommend the GAL since it cuts in half the amount of phone calls for the GAL Clerk.
- If you have more than one case on the docket for Friday, you may contact the motion's clerk to ask if all your cases can all be placed in the same courtroom.
- If you have been assigned to more than one courtroom, please let the Judge's law clerks know what courtrooms you will be ahead of the hearing. The Judge's law clerks are usually in the courtrooms prior to the start of the dockets.
- Attorneys may now email the GAL report to the assigned Judge and/or the law clerk. Under the new procedures, please remember that the guardianship case may not be placed on the Friday docket until the GAL report and medical reports are filed.