

GERALD BLESSEY
Solo Practitioner dba *Gerald Blessey Law Firm*
2577 Chatham Ct.
Biloxi, MS 39531

RESUME

- Born in Biloxi, 1942.
- Lawyer practicing in Biloxi for 49 years, with intervals for public service
- Education:
 - Biloxi Public Schools
 - University of Mississippi, B. A., 1964, J.D., 1966
 - Harvard Law School, LL.M., 1970
- Vietnam Veteran, Bronze Star, 1st Lt., U.S. Army, 1967-1968
- Graduate Instructor in State and Local Government, University of Mississippi, 1965-66
- Asst. Professor of Law, University of Mississippi Law School, 1968-69
- Professional Skills and Recognition:
 - Experienced litigator in jury and bench trials for cases involving:
 - Business contracts
 - Eminent domain
 - Federal and state environmental permits
 - Commercial leases
 - Commercial real property
 - Tax appraisals and assessments
 - Tidelands leases and boundary disputes
 - Zoning and other municipal ordinances
 - Civil service hearings
 - Employer-employee disputes
 - EEOC
 - Lender liability
 - Unjust enrichment
 - Class actions involving insurance coverage and product liability
 - Experienced transactional attorney for negotiating, drafting and/or closing:
 - Legislation for business incentives
 - Complex commercial and governmental real estate transactions
 - Commercial and municipal leases
 - Business and government contracts
 - Zoning and other governmental permits and approvals for new businesses
 - Suitability licenses for gaming companies and personnel in Mississippi
 - Corporate and municipal debt obligations
 - Creation of for-profit and non-profit corporations and other business entities
 - Grant writing and successful applications for state and federal grants
 - Admitted to practice: U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, U.S. District Ct. for Southern District of Mississippi, and all Mississippi state courts
 - Counsel for Federal Programs, City of Biloxi, 1972-1981
 - Former Biloxi School Board Attorney
 - Fellow, Mississippi Bar Foundation
 - Founding Member and Past Chair, Gaming Law Section, Mississippi Bar Association
 - Certified Mediator
 - Past-President, Biloxi Bar Association

- Appointed by Miss. Supreme Ct. to Miss. Commission on Continuing Legal Education
 - Faculty, Summer School for Lawyers, Mississippi Bar Convention
- Member, Mississippi House of Representatives, 1972-1981
 - Selected Outstanding Freshman Legislator, 1972
 - Chair, House Municipalities Committee
 - Authored complete re-writing and update of Community Development laws in Miss. Code of 1972
 - Co-authored law to make Gulf Park a USM degree-granting branch
 - Co-authored law to create Coast Coliseum and Convention Center
 - Authored law to create Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport
 - Authored Coastal Wetlands Protection Law of 1972
 - Co-authored Coastal Program
 - Co-authored Open Meetings Law
 - Legislative Member of Mississippi Central Data Processing Authority that managed procurement and operation of all state computer systems in the 1970s
- Mayor of Biloxi from 1981-1989
 - Reorganized Biloxi government from Commission Form to Mayor-Council Form, reducing over twenty departments to six
 - Led the award-winning 1985 Biloxi Waterfront Master Plan that created Point Cadet Marina and landside development parcels, as well as mixed-use Waterfront Zones in Central and West Biloxi; brought first legal gaming to Biloxi and Mississippi on cruise ship docked at Point Cadet Marina
 - Wrote Mississippi's Tax Increment Financing Law and worked with Coast Legislators for passage; completed first TIF project in the State
 - President, Mississippi Municipal League – 1988-89
 - Established Biloxi Regional Medical Center
 - Built Town Green and Biloxi Natatorium
 - Led bond issue to air condition Biloxi Public Schools
 - Founded Greater Biloxi Economic Development Foundation
 - Founded Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum
 - Founded Biloxi Schooner Project
 - Started Business Incubator with County (now named, "The Innovation Center")
 - Contracted with Biloxi company to digitize City financial management system and computerize all departments
 - Elected by local Mayors and Supervisors to serve eight years as the first Chairperson of Harrison County Utility Authority, 1982-1989
 - Established the Fire Station-Library-Recreation complex on Popp's Ferry Road
 - Completed four lanes for Pass Road and rezoned it for commercial use
- Gulf Coast Housing Director ("Housing Czar") appointed by Governor Haley Barbour, 2008
 - Created \$50 Million MyHome MyCoast workforce housing mortgage program under the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation that has financed over 800 mortgages for low-moderate income working families, 2008
 - Completed over \$2 Billion in Katrina Housing Recovery Programs, 2012
- Co-founded Biloxi First Foundation for grants to classroom teachers
- Co-founded Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation and served as initial Vice-Chair
- Member, Governor's Katrina Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding & Renewal
- NAACP Distinguished Service Award 1984
- Mississippi Coast Chamber of Commerce "Spirit of the Coast Award" 2010
- Gulf Coast YMCA "Humanitarian of the Year" 2011
- National Service to Youth Award from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Gulf Coast