

Foreword

This book had its origin as a chapter in the 1996 publication *County Government in Mississippi: A Handbook for Supervisors*. From this not so humble beginning (Ben Griffith's chapter was long and thorough.) was born the first edition of *A Handbook for Board Attorneys in Mississippi* published in 2000. The success of this publication demanded a revision and expansion in 2004. This new Second Edition continues the tradition of the original—scholarly research blended with extensive practical experience to provide very useful information to county officials in general and county board attorneys in particular.

For some twenty years, Benjamin E. Griffith served as board attorney for the Bolivar County Board of Supervisors, contributing to good government in the county and, through his work with the Mississippi Association of County Board Attorneys and the Mississippi Bar, in the state at large. Ben taught seminars, advised fellow attorneys (young and old), traveled throughout the United States to professional meetings to continue to learn, wrote papers and publications such as this book, and gave of himself in a number of different ways to help improve government and his profession. Although no longer called to serve as the Bolivar County board attorney, Ben will, I'm sure, continue his efforts to advance these causes. I am privileged to know him and to work with him.

Like the counties of our state, the Mississippi State University Extension Service exists to provide services which improve the lives of Mississippians. In addition to the programs we provide in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer education, 4-H youth development, and enterprise and community resource development, the Extension Service, through the Center for Governmental Training & Technology (CGT), provides three major types of services to local governments—education and certification programs for elected and appointed officials, specialized publications, and technical assistance.

The CGT currently serves the educational needs of a number of associations of local government officials, including: the Mississippi Association of Supervisors, Mississippi Municipal League, Mississippi Association of County Board Attorneys, Municipal Clerks and Tax Collectors Association of Mississippi, Mississippi Chancery Clerks Association, Mississippi Association of County Administrators/Comptrollers, Building Officials Association of Mississippi, Mississippi Assessors and Collectors Association, Mississippi Chapter of International Association of Assessing Officers, the Mississippi Association of County Engineers, the Mississippi 911 Coordinators Association, and the Mississippi Civil Defense Emergency Management Association. The Center works with these associations to plan and implement a variety of educational programs, seminars, and workshops.

In cooperation with the State Department of Audit and the State Tax Commission, the CGT manages legislatively-mandated certification programs for county purchase clerks, receiving clerks, inventory control clerks, and tax assessors and manages professional education programs for county supervisors and county administrators. The Center's Certification Program for Municipal Clerks-Tax Collectors and Certified Appraiser School are nationally-recognized. The CGT assists the Office of the Secretary of State in implementing a training program for municipal election officials and works with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency to provide seminars and workshops for local government and emergency management officials in the areas of emergency preparedness, emergency management, and homeland security.

The Center also works in the area of leadership development to provide leadership training programs for citizens and local government officials. More than 200 individuals have received intensive training in principles of leadership, communications, community development, and state and local government through CGT leadership programs.

Technical assistance is provided by the Center to counties and municipalities in such areas as general management, financial administration, personnel administration, leadership development, economic development, community facilities and services, and solid waste management. Technical assistance is provided on a “time available” basis.

Through these activities, the CGT assists local government officials, local units of government, and associations of local government in their efforts to improve governance at the grassroots and delivery of services to the citizens of Mississippi. The Center does not take an advocacy role in the business, legislative, or political affairs of the local governments or local government associations with which it works.

Our commitment to do whatever we can to improve service delivery by local government is as strong as ever. This book is testament to that end.

I want to thank Mr. Joseph N. Fratesi, one of my colleagues in the CGT, for his contributions to the book. He helped with the editorial work and layout and offered useful suggestions that improved the final product.

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Readers of this publication who discover errors or who have suggestions for improvement are asked to communicate with the editor. Changes can be made during subsequent printings or revisions.

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