

Jeffery L. Arnold



Jeff Arnold's commitment to excellence in Georgia began in Airborne School at Ft. Benning, and permanently when as a young Army Captain just out of law school he requested assignment to the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii where he was primarily raised and selected as the outstanding graduate of the University of Hawaii. He was selected among all ROTC cadets in the nation as one of twenty to attend law school. Upon graduation from law school the Army said that they could not send him back to paradise in Hawaii, but that he would be assigned to a place just like it—the 24th Infantry Division at Ft. Stewart, Georgia. He never left Georgia.

Besides Georgia, Jeff has taken and passed the bar exams in Iowa, California, Hawaii and Florida. Due in part to an extensive military presence, the communities on the coast of Georgia are a culturally, ethnically and racially diverse composition of citizens from all 50 states who reside there for varying lengths of time. Jeff has served that diversity well and maintained an active license and general practice in all of those states for over forty-five years. Jeff and the law firm have achieved The Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers designation, Martindale-Hubbell's highest rating. He also holds that distinction as a judge. Jeff is also designated as a Super Lawyer and has held such title for many years.

Jeff is actively engaged in the general practice of law with a concentration on litigation representing the plaintiff or defendant, real estate (both commercial and residential), domestic, criminal, corporate and municipal law. Indeed, Jeff epitomizes the attorney who specializes and engages on a daily basis in the general practice of law. He has been involved, appeared, and/or conducted trials or appeals at every level in the state and federal judicial systems from the Municipal Court of Hinesville to the Supreme Court of the United States. He has been responsible for and successful in representing clients involved in a myriad of cases, including but not limited to minor traffic cases, domestic issues, complex multi-million-dollar product liability lawsuits, personal injury, medical malpractice, and the defense of indigent death penalty cases. Before the Atlantic Judicial Circuit had a public defender system, Jeff was one of the lawyers the court looked to for indigent death penalty defense work, which at that time more often than not was performed on a pro bono basis. Some clients were acquitted, some are still serving time, but the death penalty was never imposed against anyone represented by him.

Jeff has been the Municipal Court Judge in the City of Hinesville and the City of Pembroke. Jeff currently sits as the Judge of State Court for Long County, Georgia. All military judges for the Uniformed Services are trained and certified at The Judge Advocate General's School (TJAGSA), University of Virginia. During his military service, Jeff was trained and certified to conduct military trials at all levels. After 38 years, 29 days and a wake-up of active and reserve service in the United States Army, he retired as a Major General.

Jeff has been the City Attorney for the City of Walthourville and presently is the Attorney for Long County and Liberty County School Boards.

Jeff has served as an instructor and chairperson for continuing legal education courses and seminars. Noteworthy is the course the Bar requested he present after the Liberty County courtroom shooting in 1989. Prior to that time, courtroom security was scant and weapons searches almost nonexistent. Jeff was in court for a pro-bono child support collection case representing a mother who was taking food out the back of the Burger King where she worked to feed her three children because the father would not pay child support. The children's father was retired military working at the post office and angry with the mother for divorcing him. The father was calm throughout the day waiting for the case to be called and even appreciated Jeff trying to settle the matter, talking to him and sharing with him photographs of his children. However, after the evidence was presented, the judge ruled and even commented that Jeff was reasonable and would be willing to work things out. The father refused and the judge ordered incarceration for contempt until some support was paid. The father took a .32 caliber pistol from beneath his sweater and belt. He aimed and fired almost point blank to the back of Jeff's head. Jeff was seated, gathering his file and moving away from counsel's table when the first shot was fired. Jeff stood up, was facing the father about three feet away when the father pointed the pistol at Jeff's face and fired a second shot just as Jeff defensively put his hands up across his face. The father then fired a third shot into the mouth of his ex-wife who fell to the ground and remained motionless. The father then turned the pistol again on the unarmed, twice wounded Jeff, who, as the fourth shot discharged, was diving for the jury box. After the four shots were fired, the father retreated outside the courtroom, reloaded his pistol from a pocket full of bullets and discharged a shot into his mouth thus terminating further legal action to include child support collection. Jeff, perhaps as penance, prepared and presented a state-wide CLE paper and presentation shortly thereafter concerning various methods of enforcing and collecting child support with specific emphasis on methods to eliminate personal contact with the opposing side.

Additionally, Jeff prepared and presented three CLE presentations for the State Bar in the areas of family law and legal protections for residents in the military. He co-authored and presented two additional presentations for the Real Property CLE regarding timber leases and for the SOLO Practice CLE. Jeff was Chairman for the CLE seminar regarding military issues that parachute into your practice. Jeff has twice served as Chairperson of the Military Law Section of the State Bar of Georgia.

Jeff has a distinguished record of community service and he continues to serve. The Hinesville Rotary Club was founded in the mid-70s, and Jeff has served twice as its President. He lives daily Rotary's ethos of selfless service. Serving in the various offices for the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce, he is remembered as bringing noted author Lewis Grizzard to Hinesville during the year he was President. The Paralegals Association of Hinesville has recognized him as the "Boss of the Year". Jeff served two terms as President of the Coastal Empire Chapter of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) after serving on the board and holding other AUSA offices. He served two terms as a director for the YMCA. During his service as President of Cherokee Rose County Club, a community golf course, he led the organization to a sound and profitable financial position. He has served as a national director of the Judge Advocates Association (JAA). Twice he has volunteered and served as Campaign Chairman for the Liberty County United Way engineering successful record-breaking fundraising and award winning community programs. He has taught Sunday school and served on both the Administrative Board and Board of Trustees for the First United Methodist Church of Hinesville. When he served, he

helped bring industry and development to Liberty County while serving on the Liberty County Development Authority (LCDA). Jeff has served on the bank board as the Chairman for The Heritage Bank which has since merged to a larger bank for which he serves as the board director.

Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage are the hallmark and essence of Jeff Arnold's character, and the values by which he practices law and lives his daily life.