

## **Mason L. Byrd to Serve as Director of the Department of Magistrate Services**

Karl R. Hade, Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, is pleased to announce that Mason L. Byrd will now serve as Director of the Department of Magistrate Services, effective September 15, 2016. Prior to its creation as a Department within the Office of the Executive Secretary, magistrates operated under the Magistrate Services Division of the Department of Judicial Services, where Mason served as the Magistrate System Coordinator.

Mason joined the Office of the Executive Secretary in September 2008 as a Magistrate Advisor in the Department of Judicial Services. He later served as the Chief Magistrate for the 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District and has served as the Magistrate System Coordinator, responsible for overall management of the Magistrate System, since June 2015.

Mason has served as a law enforcement officer in Florida and in Virginia, most recently as a captain for the Fluvanna County Sheriff's Office. In addition to his work at the Office of the Executive Secretary, Mason serves as an adjunct instructor at Virginia Commonwealth University teaching courses focusing on forensic science and criminal procedure.

Mason is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, and earned a Master of Public Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Juris Doctor from the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond.

The Office of the Executive Secretary, through the Department of Magistrate Services, provides administrative supervision and training to magistrates. A principal function of the magistrate is to provide an independent, unbiased review of complaints of criminal conduct brought to the office by law enforcement or the general public. Magistrate duties include issuing various types of processes such as arrest warrants, search warrants, mental health orders, and certain civil orders. Magistrates also conduct bail hearings when a person is arrested on a warrant charging a criminal offense. Virginia's Magistrate System is divided into eight geographic regions, each comprised of between three to five judicial districts. Magistrate offices are located throughout Virginia, including at least one in each of Virginia's 32 judicial districts. Magistrates provide services on an around-the-clock basis, conducting hearings in person or through the use of videoconferencing systems.