

## **Ethics in Magistrate Court**

The Honorable Michael Davis

Michael Davis is a recently retired Magistrate. He served 45 years as the Lykesland Magistrate in Richland County. His presentation on Ethics in the Magistrate Court begins with an overview of the Magistrate court system and its history. This includes several personal anecdotes. By going through the history of the Magistrate courts in Richland County, Judge Davis illustrated how ethics have become a larger concern in these courts. For example, Magistrates used to be publicly elected. Because of the inherent ethical issues tied to elections, Magistrates are now appointed. Magistrates also supplemented their salaries by keeping the fees and court costs. This is no longer the case. Judge Davis moves his presentation to present day issues in Magistrate court: courtesy between parties, candor with the court and avoiding the appearance of impropriety. Judge Davis ends his presentation by looking at the future of the Magistrate courts - highlighted by photos of the new Richland County Magistrate Central Court on Decker Boulevard.