

A native of Fort Valley, Georgia, Judge Dent received a B.S. in political science and public administration from Georgia College in 1988 and his J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law in 1991.

Judge Dent has served the citizens of Dougherty County, Georgia, as Judge of the Superior Court of the Dougherty Judicial Circuit, since being appointed by Governor Brian Kemp on January 11, 2024. Prior to being appointed to the bench, Judge Dent practiced with Watson Spence, LLP for thirty years, and in 2002, he had a solo practice, Joseph W. Dent, P.C. Judge Dent was a registered mediator and mediated cases throughout Georgia. During his thirty-plus-year career, Judge Dent practiced in the areas of insurance defense/personal injury, collections/bankruptcy, zoning and land use, and real estate and business litigation. Judge Dent has represented individuals, insurance companies, common carriers, developers, property management companies, property owners, contractors, subcontractors, materialmen, homeowner's associations, banks and lending institutions, and various other businesses. He has handled the prosecution and defense of tort cases involving catastrophic injury or death, as well as argued appeals before the Court of Appeals of the State of Georgia and the Supreme Court of Georgia.

An active participant in legal organizations, Judge Dent currently serves on the Board of Governors. He has served on the Executive Committee of the State Bar of Georgia and is a past president of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar. He served on the Investigative Panel of the State Bar of Georgia Disciplinary Board and was chair from 2009-2010. He has also held leadership positions in the Section of Litigation and in the Torts Trial and Insurance Practice Section of the American Bar Association, and Judge Dent is also a member of the Dougherty Circuit Bar Association.

Judge Dent is active in the community as a past Trustee on the Board of Girls Incorporated of Albany, as a senior member of the Artesian Sertoma Club, as a member of Porterfield Memorial United Methodist Church, and as a member of the Albany Rotary Club.