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Associate judge overseeing eviction docket tapped to preside over newly created Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 5

Associate Judge Jermaine Thomas has been appointed by Harris County Commissioners to serve as the first presiding judge for the newly created Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 5.

Judge Thomas previously served as the first associate judge for the Harris County Civil Courts at Law, overseeing a dedicated eviction docket created in late 2023 to tackle the county's surge in eviction appeals.

He was tapped for the new role in November and formally took the bench when the new court opened its doors for the first time on Dec. 4, 2025. It is the first new county civil court to be created in Harris County in nearly 50 years.

"This is a moment I'll never forget. First and foremost, I want to thank the Harris County Commissioners Court for your confidence in me and the trust you've placed in my ability to serve the people of Harris County," the judge said upon the announcement of his selection during commissioners court.

"This appointment is not just a personal milestone. It represents an opportunity to expand access to justice and strengthen the foundation of fairness that Harris County courts are built upon."

Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 5 is among several new courts across the state created by Texas House Bill 16, which was passed by the Texas Legislature in August and signed by the governor in September.

The five county civil courts handle a wide range of civil matters, including personal injury, breach of contract, property disputes, eminent domain proceedings, and eviction appeals.

Creation of the new court will help the courts keep up with the growing population and surging caseloads, ensure more timely resolution of cases, and improve access to justice.

Judge Thomas served as the associate judge for the Harris County Civil Courts at Law eviction docket for the past two years. Prior to that appointment, he spent more than two decades working as a litigation attorney for a Houston-based civil law firm.

He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Texas Southern University and a law degree from South Texas College of Law.



“I pledge to serve with fairness, respect and humility. Every person who comes before this court deserves to be heard, to be treated with dignity, and to know that justice is being done,” Judge Thomas said. “That will be the guiding principle of this court, and it will be my personal promise to Harris County.”

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