

Commissioner Larry Weaver
By: Thomas Hoadley
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Miles southwest of Atlanta are the Georgia cotton fields. Tenant farmers have lived on these isolated farms since the Civil War. The New Deal focused on this area in the 1930's. To relieve the poverty, they built dams, electrified farmhouses, and taught farmers to rotate crops. They provided funds for local libraries. Because of these libraries, Ruby Weaver started to checkout books. She was determined to read one book a week, even though she had little education. Ruby's husband had left her with six children, and a tenant farm to manage. Ruby read mostly at night, when the chores were done, and the six children were in bed. She wisely decided that working the tenant fields would lead her children nowhere. She was determined that education for her children would be the means of escape. She made them read books and made them study. Then she moved her family from their isolated tenant farm to West Palm Beach.

Larry Weaver was six years old when his family moved; he was the youngest. How did Ruby Weaver support her family? By day she worked in the laundry at Good Samaritan Hospital; by night she cleaned the Guaranty Building. Larry worked eight hours a day during his school years. He cleaned the kitchen, and provided room service at the Ramada Inn. He graduated from all black Roosevelt High School in 1970. Larry Weaver must have been a brilliant student. (He claims he was only a good test-taker.) Larry took the National Merit Scholarship Test and his grades were so high he was recruited by a small elitist Jewish college in Boston, Brandeis. And, there he went, on a scholarship, this sharecropper's son, encouraged by his mother to read books and study. He graduated from Brandeis in 1974, and immediately enrolled in the University of Florida Law School. After graduation in 1976, he returned to West Palm Beach. He held a series of jobs: deputy Public Defender worked with T.J. Cunningham, and he was a partner of Rendell Brown until 1984. When Richard Wennett was evaluated to Circuit Judge, Larry applied for the position of Commissioner/General Master, and was selected by the circuit Judges.

He met his wife, Cecilia, when she was a secretary and he was a legal intern in the State Attorney's office. They dated for five years before deciding to marry. He has two stepchildren, ages 20 and 21, and an adopted young boy, now 16 months old, named Aaron. Larry took off five weeks from work when Aaron arrived.

There have been previous articles on the work of the Domestic Commissioners. That ground will not be re-plowed. I did ask Commissioner Weaver what advice or message he would like to send to attorneys who appear before him. He stated that the most important thing in support cases was to talk with your client ahead of time about the "numbers." In certain cases, clients have been confused as to what money was paid or owed. They have been unable to produce written evidence and documents to back up their testimony. He suggested that lawyers "drill" their clients on the numbers, and assemble documents to prove every point to which the witness testifies. That would make the hearing go more quickly and smoothly. Commissioner Weaver is a sensitive listener and experiences a lot of frustration, because he is asked to solve problems that can't be solved, mostly for lack of family money to divide among the family.

Commissioner Weaver does not have a lot of spare time because of his new baby, and having to review 60 to 100 files a week. When he does have time, he is very interested in woodworking. He has taken courses at South Tech to build furniture.

His mother, Ruby died last August. She died a proud woman. She was very proud of her six children, and proud of their accomplishments. Larry and several of his brothers and sisters went to college, one is working on a Ph.D., and they all have responsible jobs. God had given her the drive and stamina to pick cotton, clean, and scrub for her children's education. There surely must be some special place in Heaven to honor a mother who made such sacrifices for her family, and instilled such values in her children.