



Alabama Secretary of State John H. Merrill Quarterly Report April 2015

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Office Locations:

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State Capitol
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Legal
State Capitol
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Finance
State Capitol
Second Floor

Personnel
State Capitol
Second Floor

Alabama State House
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Montgomery, AL 36130

Business Services
State House
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Government Support
State House
Room 226

Information Systems
State House
Room 125

Authentications, Trademarks, & Lands
State House
Room 224

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Inauguration Day 2015



Photographs:
 Left Page, LH Side: Secretary & Mrs. Merrill in parade
 Left Page, RH Side: Merrills in front of State Capitol
 Right Page, LH Side: Merrill family on Capitol steps
 Right Page, RH Side: Secretary Merrill takes oath
 Right Page, Middle & Bottom LH Side: Secretary Merrill & his parents

Photos courtesy of Michael Moore

January 19, 2015 proved an important and festive day in Montgomery, Alabama, as several elected officials were sworn into office. Robert Bentley, Kay Ivey, Luther Strange, Young Boozer, and John McMillan took their oaths, respectively, as Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, State Treasurer, and Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries for their second terms of office. Jim Ziegler became the State Auditor, and John H. Merrill began service as Alabama's 53rd Secretary of State.

The inauguration ceremony commenced at 9:00 a.m. upon a clear, sunny morning, on the front steps of the Alabama State Capitol, and after the Governor's inspirational speech, each elected official took the constitutionally required oath, promising a productive term of public service before an audience of hundreds. "This really is a dream come true," Secretary Merrill stated. "It's the greatest honor of my life to serve as Alabama's 53rd Secretary of State, and I will work each and every day to help and serve the people of Alabama."

A parade followed the ceremony, and a reception was organized at the Alabama Archives and History Museum, where the public congregated to meet the newly elected Secretary.

Inauguration Day 2015 came to a close with the traditional Governor's Ball, and the next morning on January 20, 2015, Secretary Merrill began his first official day as Secretary of State with a friendly smile and detailed plan to develop a brighter future for Alabama.



Quarterly Accomplishments

Quite a lot has happened since Inauguration Day. Here's a quick look at a few of Secretary Merrill's many accomplishments.

~In April 2015, four of the nine Divisions of the Secretary of State's Office relocated to the Alabama State House, which will save taxpayers nearly \$270,000 over a four-year period.

~Fair Campaign Finance Reports are under constant review.

~The Alabama Election Fairness Project was established to ensure fairer elections in Alabama.

~The Probate Judges Advisory Council was created to ensure that elections and corporate filings are efficiently administered.

~Secretary Merrill's first letter in office was written to the Chief Examiner of the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts' Office to request a formal audit in regards to the current benchmarks of the office.

First Alabama International Adoption Day Celebration

On January 29, 2015, Secretary John H. Merrill organized Alabama's very first International Adoption Day Ceremony. Over twenty families and agencies attended the event and received well-deserved recognition for their kind and selfless endeavors.

Secretary Merrill explained that he was deeply inspired by the relationship he established with the Allen family. Residents of Northport, Alabama, the Allens experienced a number of difficulties when adopting their second international child, but despite their troublesome circumstances, they were determined to provide a new home for their newest, precious addition. "I was very impressed and motivated by their perseverance," Secretary Merrill stated. "As a result, I want to remove all obstacles from the international adoptions process, as well as honor those who adopt these wonderful children into their families." The Secretary of State's Authentications, Trademarks, and Lands Division is working diligently to make the process easier.

The International Adoption Day Ceremony began at 2:00 p.m. in the Alabama State Capitol's Old House Chamber. Before the ceremony, Secretary Merrill greeted the incoming families and children, who were just as excited about the event as their parents. Governor Robert Bentley and the Secretary delivered heart-warming speeches before bestowing each family with a certificate of recognition, and after taking photographs with the state officials, everyone was invited to the reception held in the Capitol's Old Archives Room. "I was more than happy to honor these magnificent families," Secretary Merrill explained, "and I'm looking forward to honoring more families in next year's ceremony."

Secretary Merrill plans to make International Adoption Day an ongoing, annual event.



Courtesy of Piel Photography



Courtesy of Piel Photography

Have you adopted an international child? Interested in participating in next year's International Adoption Day Celebration? Contact us at 334-242-7200, and we'll add your name to our list!

Have any questions for our Authentications, Trademarks, & Lands Division? Call 334-242-5325.



Did You Know???

On average, nearly 20,000 international adoptions are processed in the United States each year.

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NEXT ISSUE:

*~Secretary Merrill's promotion of
Alabama overseas*

*~Review of Secretary Merrill's
2015 Legislative Agenda*

**Don't miss Volume 1 Issue 2, coming
July 2015!**

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