

Quarterly Report

April 2019



Meetings in Washington



**International Adoption
Day 2019**



**Dr. John Mascia Receives the
NASS Medallion Award**

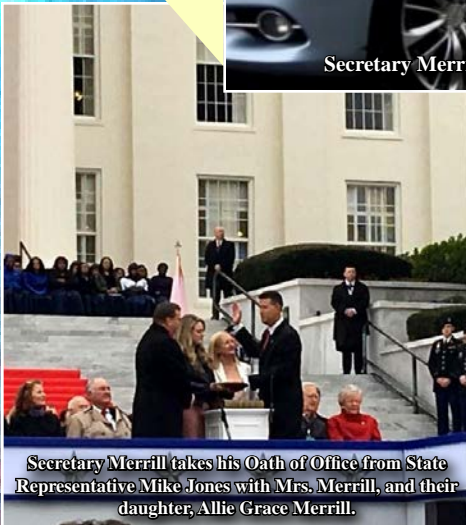


**NASS Winter
Conference 2019**

Inauguration Day 2019



Secretary Merrill & Mrs. Cindy Merrill wave to the crowd during the Inaugural Parade.



Secretary Merrill takes his Oath of Office from State Representative Mike Jones with Mrs. Merrill, and their daughter, Allie Grace Merrill.



Left to Right: Secretary Merrill, Mrs. Merrill, Mrs. Betsy Brewer, and SOS Chief of Staff David Brewer at Governor Ivey's Inaugural Ball.



Secretary Merrill & Mrs. Merrill at Lieutenant Governor Will Ainsworth's Inaugural Luncheon.

Alabama's historic, inaugural weekend kicked off at the beach with Governor Kay Ivey's Gulf Coast Inaugural Celebration at The Lodge in Gulf State Park on January 12th. After a brief welcome from Governor Ivey, Secretary John Merrill, and the other Constitutional Officers, the festivities commenced with a concert performed by platinum recording artist Neal McCoy. The inaugural celebration continued on Monday morning, January 14th, with an 8:15 a.m. prayer service at First Baptist Church in Montgomery, followed by the 10 a.m. swearing-in ceremony on the State Capitol's steps. Each Constitutional Officer had the opportunity to participate in the inaugural parade down Dexter Avenue, and the remainder of the afternoon was filled with various luncheons and photography sessions that were open to the public. Almost 1,000 guests attended Secretary Merrill's luncheon and photo session, which were held in the Archives & History Museum, and guests were also invited to stop by the Secretary of State's Executive Division in the Capitol for refreshments and souvenirs afterwards. Governor Ivey then hosted her *invitation-only* Inaugural Gala at the Montgomery Civic Center later that evening.



Secretary Merrill shares a few words with the audience at the Governor's Inaugural kick-off celebration in Gulf Shores.

"On January 19, 2015, I became Alabama's 53rd Secretary of State," Secretary Merrill stated. "For the last four years, it has been my honor to serve our people in this role! I was inaugurated for my second term, and I look forward to the next four years with the same energy and enthusiasm as before!"

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International Adoption Day 2019

The 5th annual International Adoption Day celebration took place on Friday, January 25, 2019 at the State Capitol's Old House Chamber. The ceremony began with opening remarks from Secretary Merrill, which were followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Representative Allen Farley, who represents Jefferson and Shelby Counties. Pastor Chris Erwin from the Church of the Highlands in Montgomery returned again this year to lead the guests in prayer, and Josh Caldwell, another returning, honorary guest, who serves as the International Director of Lifeline Children's Services, shared information regarding his agency. Secretary Merrill was then pleased to introduce the Foti Family from Montgomery, who attended as special guests to share their beautiful testimony and adoption story. At the conclusion of the event, all in attendance were invited to the Secretary of State's conference room for a delectable variety of refreshments provided by Cecil McKinney, Cecilia Teel, and Jared McCrory of Children's Hope. The guests were also invited to attend a tour of the State Capitol Building or the Archives & History Museum.

"We had an outstanding fifth annual International Adoption Celebration!" Secretary Merrill stated. "We are always excited to recognize those families that have participated in international adoptions in order to make their families whole!"

The 6th annual International Adoption Day ceremony will be held in 2020.

Photography courtesy of Dionne Whetstone.



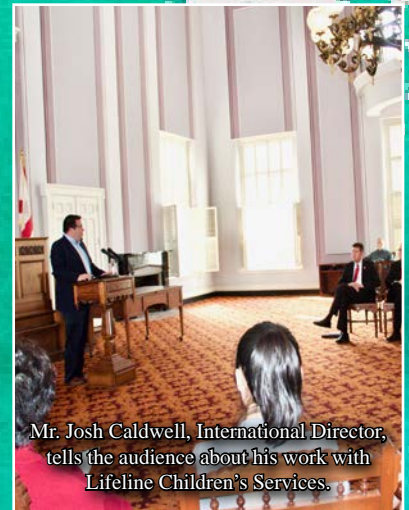
Mr. & Mrs. Garner from Etowah County are in the process of adopting a child from Africa.



The Foti Family & friend Jia, Shi Ping from Montgomery share their families' heartwarming adoption story.



Representative Allen Farley & Mrs. Muriel Farley show their support of the families.



Mr. Josh Caldwell, International Director, tells the audience about his work with Lifeline Children's Services.



Beautiful spread of refreshments provided by Cecil McKinney, Cecilia Teel, and Jared McCrory of Children's Hope.

Dr. John Mascia Receives the NASS Medallion Award



Photo courtesy of the AIDB FaceBook page.



AIDB staff members demonstrate the use of a pair of glasses with facial and word recognition technology.



Secretary Merrill prepares to present the NASS Medallion to Dr. Mascia.

On January 28, 2019, Secretary Merrill awarded his 22nd National Association of Secretary of State (NASS) Medallion Award to honor the recipient's remarkable contributions to our great state. The honoree was none other than the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind's outstanding President, Dr. John Mascia.

A graduate of Hofstra University in New York and the Pennsylvania College of Optometry's School of Audiology, Dr. Mascia has served as AIDB's 17th President for the last six years and oversees the various programs offered through the organization. In previous years, Dr. Mascia served as a supervising and chief audiologist, an assistant professor in New York, a coordinator of Audiological Services, supervisor of the Speech and Hearing Department, and as a National Director of Field Services, amongst many other noteworthy accomplishments.

Prior to the award ceremony, which took place at AIDB in Talladega, Alabama, Secretary Merrill was taken on a guided tour of the facility to learn more about the innovative technology that aids the hearing and vision impaired, such as a pair of glasses with facial recognition technology that can also audibly read lines of text to the wearers. AIDB was originally established by Dr. Joseph Henry Johnson in 1858 and serves almost 25,000 individuals with hearing and vision loss each year.

"I was honored to present Dr. Mascia with the NASS Medallion Award," Secretary Merrill stated. "He and the AIDB team are doing a remarkable job, and they've positively impacted the lives of so many people. They have my full support."

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Secretary Merrill & Dr. Mascia take a photo with guest speakers Justin Louis & Jerry McKee.

To learn more about the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind and how you can contribute to their cause, visit their website at

<https://www.aidb.org/>

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NASS Winter Conference 2019



The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) held their annual Winter Conference in Washington D.C. from February 1st through February 4th. This year, the organization provided yet another variety of informative meetings and events designed to assist Secretaries of State and Lieutenant Governors in the management of their respective offices. A few of these meetings included an opening breakfast event, where election officials shared information regarding assumptions and election official responsibilities, a luncheon program led by Jim Doumas and his team at the National Archives Foundation, which focused on the Women's Suffrage Movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment of the Constitution, and an inaugural meeting of the NASS Cyber Security Committee to discuss Elections, Business Services, record management, and the identification of any vulnerabilities. Secretary Merrill also attended an elections committee meeting to discuss the various legislative initiatives from around the nation, a business services committee to discuss Congress' direct impact on the state and the citizens, the International Relations Committee to discuss keeping in touch with federal partners, and a classified security briefing concerning election administration and campaign communication from Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Counter Intelligence, and other federal agencies.

Secretary Merrill plans to attend the 2019 NASS Summer Conference, which will be held in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Secretary Merrill's Testimony to Homeland Security



Photo courtesy of YellowHammerNews.com.

Secretary John Merrill testified before the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security during an election security hearing in Washington D.C. on Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The committee meeting was held in room 210 in the United States Capitol Building.

Secretary Merrill was invited to speak to the committee by U.S. Representative Mike Rogers, who represents Alabama's third congressional district.

"I was excited to share with our nation's leaders the ways in which we have helped to make Alabama a national leader in election administration and election security. In Alabama, we have broken every record in the history of the state for voter registration and voter participation!" said Secretary Merrill.

The hearing is available online on the House Committee on Homeland Security's YouTube page:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-qSYZRU8xM&t=3s>.

Secretary Merrill's written testimony is also publicly available on the Secretary of State's website at:

<https://www.sos.alabama.gov/sites/default/files/HomelandSecurityCommittee.pdf>.



Training Session for County Finance Personnel



In order to assist county finance personnel staff members throughout Alabama's 67 counties, the Secretary of State's Office and the State Comptroller's Office worked collaboratively to organize a free, hour and half training session that would cover a myriad of topics concerning how to calculate election expense claims, filling out the Claim for Reimbursement of Election Expense forms, and many other topics. The training session was held in the Alabama State Capitol Building's Auditorium on Thursday, February 14th from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., and those in attendance were given copies of the reviewed materials for future reference. Once Secretary Merrill and State Comptroller Kathleen Baxter delivered the opening remarks, Kim Butterbaugh, Senior Accountant in the Finance Department of the Comptroller's Office, led the training and Power Point presentation that she and Accounting Manager Randy Head helped the SOS Office to construct.

"I was pleased to welcome county and municipal financial officers about election reimbursement in their state finance training session!" Secretary Merrill stated. "I am honored to work alongside State Comptroller Kathleen Baxter, as we find more efficient and effective ways to help our people!"

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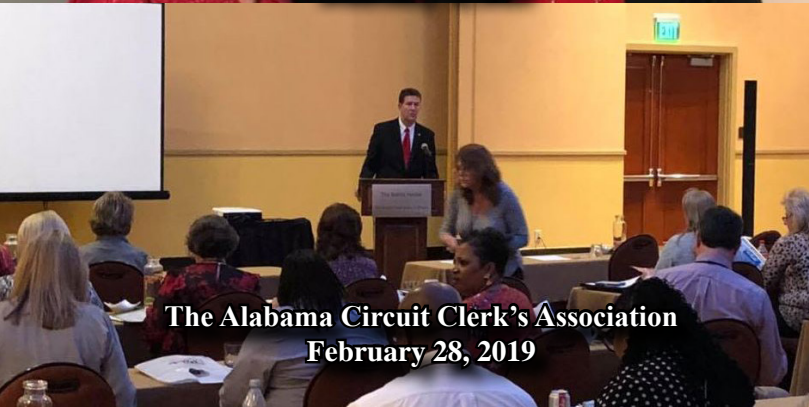
Secretary Merrill's Quarterly Travels



Meeting with Mr. Tao, the senior tourism official from China
January 30, 2019



Visit with Representative Martha Roby in Washington
February 5, 2019



The Alabama Circuit Clerk's Association
February 28, 2019



The Chilton County Chamber of Commerce Luncheon
March 12, 2019

As a means to increase transparency and extend the services of the Secretary of State's Office to all Alabamians, Secretary Merrill's annual goal is to travel to each of Alabama's 67 counties at least once a year to speak to various groups of all ages, which includes but is not limited to fourth grade classes, graduation ceremonies, dinners, award presentations, and more.

The following list contains a select few of Secretary Merrill's visits from around and outside the state for the **January through March 2019** quarter.

- Met with Hawaii Lieutenant Governor Josh Green in Honolulu. January 4, 2019
- Spoke with the Maxwell-Gunter AFB Senior Non-commissioned Officers assigned as instructors for The Air Force Senior Non-commissioned Officer Academy during their tour of the State Capitol Building. January 10, 2019
- Attended the dedication ceremony and open house of the new W. Hardy McCollum Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agency Facility. January 10, 2019
- Met with the legislative committee of the Alabama Circuit Clerks Association at the State Capitol. January 17, 2019
- Attended Georgia's first inaugural celebration for newly elected Governor Brian Kemp at the State Farm Arena in Atlanta. January 18, 2019
- Visited with Mr. Tao, senior tourism official from China, at the Renaissance in Montgomery during the International Tourism Bazaar coordinated by the Alabama Department of Tourism. January 30, 2019
- Served as the keynote speaker for the Champions for Kids luncheon for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Lee County in The Southern Room at Southern Union State Community College in Opelika. January 31, 2019
- Visited with Congressman Robert Aderholt, Congressman Bradley Byrne, Representative Martha Roby, and Senator Mitch McConnell in Washington D.C. February 5, 2019
- Visited with Congressman Mo Brooks, Congressman Mike Rogers, Congresswoman Terri Sewell, and Congressman Gary Palmer in Washington D.C. February 6, 2019
- Attended the Southeast Region Dinner for the 67th Annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C. February 6, 2019
- Spoke to the members of the Brushy Pond Community Center in Cullman County. February 9, 2019
- Visited the Veterans Administration Hospital in Tuscaloosa with several veterans in honor of National Salute to Veterans Patients Week. February 11, 2019
- Spoke to more than 50 residents at the Kirkwood by the River Retirement Center in Birmingham. February 15, 2019
- Spoke to nearly 150 attendees at the Election Center at the Hyatt Regency in Birmingham. February 25, 2019
- Visited with students participating in the Teen PACT program during their visit to the Capitol. February 27, 2019
- Spoke to the Alabama Circuit Clerk's Association at the Battle House Hotel in Mobile. February 28, 2019
- Attended the annual Faith and Politics Dinner in Montgomery. March 3, 2019
- Spoke to the members of Langdale United Methodist Church from Chambers County during their visit to the Capitol. March 3, 2019
- Held a meeting with the Probate Judges Advisory Council in Prattville. March 4, 2019
- Attended the Probate Judges' winter meeting at the Marriott RSA Hotel in Prattville. March 4, 2019
- Attended the Ronald Reagan Dinner at the Double Springs Community Center. March 8, 2019
- Spoke at the Alabama Association of Nutrition and Food Service Professionals at their spring conference in Montgomery. March 9, 2019
- Spoke to the students of Saint Pius the 10th School in Mobile during their visit to the Capitol. March 11, 2019
- Spoke at the Chilton County Chamber of Commerce Luncheon at Jemison City Hall. March 12, 2019
- Spoke to almost 300 members of the Alabama Rural Water Association at their annual meeting in Mobile at the Arthur Outlaw Convention Center. March 19, 2019
- Attended the Elmore County Republican Dinner at the Millbrook Community Center. March 19, 2019
- Interviewed by the Associated Press concerning election readiness for the 2020 cycle. March 25, 2019

Quarterly Accomplishments

- Each year, the Secretary of State's Office participates in the **United Way's State Combined Campaign**. In **2018**, the office achieved 100% participation and raised **\$1,872.04**, which is **212.73%** of the set goal.
- As of **March 29, 2019**, **1,229,399** people have registered to vote since Secretary Merrill took office on **January 19, 2015**, which sets the record total to **3,470,811** registered voters.
- **Trademarks, service marks, and trade names** can now be registered and renewed online.
- **Elmore County** officially became the fourth county to provide online formation and dissolution of **domestic LLCs** and **domestic for-profit corporations**.
- **Foreign for-profit** and **non-profit corporations** can now be registered online.
- The Secretary of State's Office and State Comptroller's Office constructed the first **training** session for **county finance staff** to learn more about requesting reimbursement for their **post election expenses**. (See page 6 for more information).
- The SOS Office redesigned the public officer commissions for the first time in **40 years**.
- All **gubernatorial proclamations**, which require the Secretary of State's attestation, are available to the public online.
- The SOS Office held its **annual ethics training** session for staff members.
- Guidelines have been issued to assist the **State Board of Appointment** in determining the qualifications of members to county **Boards of Registrars**.

In the Spotlight:



Secretary Merrill wishes to acknowledge an exemplary employee of the Elections Division for her outstanding contributions to society. **Rachel Jarrett**, Assistant to the Director of Elections, has been appointed to the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, which observes the centennial of the passage and ratification of the Constitution's 19th Amendment regarding women's suffrage. Rachel joined the Secretary of State's Office in 2017 and helps manage the photo voter ID mobile unit that travels across the state, amongst other responsibilities. **Congratulations!!**

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Coming July 2019!