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BRANDON MEN TO PROSECUTE, PRESIDE OVER GEISS CASE

*GREG LACOUR
THE SUN HERALD*

Out-of-town lawyers will prosecute and preside over the city's drunken-driving case against former Municipal Judge Eric Geiss. No trial date has been set.

City judges and prosecutors in Gulfport didn't want to be involved in the Geiss case; all know him, many are friends of his, and they wanted to avoid accusations of favoritism. So Municipal Judge Walter W. Teel, acting Wednesday on their behalf, appointed Mark Baker prosecutor and Richard Wilson judge. Both are from Brandon.

“We didn't think it would be appropriate to pick somebody from the Coast or south of Hattiesburg, since they might have come down here for some proceeding,” Teel said. “And north Mississippi is so far to drive, and the city will have to pay for them to come.” Brandon is near Jackson.

Police arrested Geiss, 47, after his car and an ambulance collided Jan. 3 near the Copa Casino. Geiss, who suffered minor injuries, told the arresting officer that he'd had four drinks. A blood test registered his blood-alcohol level at .19; under state law, you're drunk at .10.

Geiss resigned two days after the accident. He now practices law with **Wayne Woodall** of Gulfport, his attorney in the DUI case and a noted DUI defense lawyer.

Wilson, 50, began practicing law in Mississippi in 1986. He's a partner in the law firm of Craft, Breneman and Wilson and is also a city court judge in Flowood.

Baker, 35, began practicing in Mississippi in 1987. He opened his own law firm last year and is a city prosecutor in Brandon.