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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **JUDGE EMMETT TAPS TOP MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT, FORMER JUDGE TO TAKE ON FUTURE CHALLENGES**

*New Hires Show Commitment To Finding Solutions  
To Growing Mental Health And Justice Issues*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett recently hired a top regional mental health expert and a former district court judge as part of an overall staff restructuring designed to focus on what Emmett believes will be some of the key issues facing Harris County over the next several years.

Emmett hired Dr. William B. Schnapp, 63, to serve as his mental health policy advisor, a newly created position. Schnapp is a past member of the Texas Board of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and past chairman of the Texas Council on Offenders with Mental Impairments, both gubernatorial appointments. He also served as chairman of the Mental Health Needs Council from 1994 to 2008 and has faculty appointments at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, the University of Texas School of Public Health, Baylor College of Medicine and the University of Houston. Schnapp joined Emmett's staff this summer and will play a key role in Emmett's mental health initiatives.

"I have said over and over again in my public appearances that mental health issues will be a top priority for me and the county in coming years," Emmett said. "Many of our mentally ill neighbors end up in the Harris County Jail because of public misunderstanding of their illness and because of a shortage of viable treatment options. I've asked Bill Schnapp to help me work on finding better ways for the county to invest in treatment that will lower our law-enforcement and jail costs and ensure more humane treatment for many of our friends and neighbors."

Emmett also recently hired former District Judge Bill Henderson to serve as the office's legal counsel. Henderson, a former Harris County District Court judge and private attorney advises Emmett on a myriad of legal issues, including those involving federal and state law and county policy.

Henderson, 61, is a graduate of The Johns Hopkins University and the University of Texas School of Law.