

J.H. Corpening, II
Chief District Court Judge
Fifth Judicial District

J. Corpening began practicing law in Wilmington in 1979 after graduating from Wake Forest University Undergraduate and Law Schools. He has served as a judge in New Hanover and Pender Counties since 1991, and as Chief District Court Judge for more than 10 years. He has served as one of the full time judges in Family Court in New Hanover County since 2000, and in December 2014 transitioned to Juvenile Court full time, hearing all delinquency, abuse/neglect/dependency, and termination of parental rights issues in New Hanover County. He has recently completed Juvenile Judge Certification for the second time in his career.

Judge Corpening has served as an instructor at the UNC School of Government on a variety of court related topics for many years. He also has extensive experience in motivational speaking and in developing and delivering leadership development programs, particularly for the Boy Scouts of America at the state, region, and national levels.

Judge Corpening currently chairs the N.C. Child Custody Mediation Advisory Committee, the New Hanover County Child Protection Team, the New Hanover County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, and serves on the N.C. Court Improvement Program Advisory Committee, the Dropout Prevention Coalition of UNCW, the JCPC for Pender County, the Tri-County Community Collaborative, the New Hanover County Partnership for Fatherhood, the Southeast Area Health Education Center Health Leadership Council on the opioid crisis, the New Hanover County Criminal Justice Advisory Group, the Juvenile Jurisdiction Advisory Committee and the Chief Justice's Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative. As part of his work with the Chief Justice, Judge Corpening is responsible for planning training for the entire Judicial Branch on the opioid crisis.

Judge Corpening served as a lecturer at the 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 Georgetown University Certificate Program on School Justice Partnerships, the 2018 National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges School Justice Partnership Institute and presented at the 2014 National Summit on School Justice Partnerships. He has also presented at the 2014, 2015, and 2016 ERICSA Annual Conference, the 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 National At-Risk Youth Forum, the 2016, 2017, and 2018 MAINE Event: Positive School Climate Conference, and the 2017 Southern Region Juvenile Justice Reform Summit. In October 2017 Judge Corpening served as a presenter at a forum entitled "Rethinking Drug Policy: Seeking Solutions Based on Law, Science and Public Health" sponsored by the Wake Forest School of Medicine and Wake Forest School of Law. He recently authored an article entitled "Courts and the Opioid Crisis" which was published in the North Carolina State Bar Journal.

For the last 24 years Judge Corpening has volunteered on a daily basis in the New Hanover County Schools, greeting students, opening car doors, and directing traffic. He has also formed several school-justice partnerships designed to improve outcomes for youth in school and in court. Most recently he facilitated the development of an Interagency Governance Agreement on the Handling of School Offenses to address issues related to the School-to-Prison Pipeline in New Hanover County. The agreement was signed on November 2, 2015 and is being implemented system wide. This agreement is the model for part of the "Raise the Age" legislation which became law in North Carolina this year, and will result in statewide application of this model. In 2017 Judge Corpening led 3 days of training at the UNC School of Government for all Chief District Court Judges in North Carolina on School-Justice Partnerships, and is

currently working with judicial districts across North Carolina to develop their own agreements to keep kids in school, out of court, and off the streets. As part of this effort Judge Corpening has worked with a team from the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts to develop a toolkit and a model agreement for developing and implementing these partnerships.

In 2007 Judge Corpening was recognized as a Citizen Lawyer by the North Carolina Bar Association. In 2013 he was presented the NC Guardian ad Litem Lifetime Advocacy Award. In 2014 he was presented the Razor Walker Award by UNCW, Watson College of Education, in recognition of service to children and youth of North Carolina. In 2015 he was presented the Children's Champion Award by New Hanover County Smart Start. In 2017 he was presented the Tin Man Biggest Heart Award by the New Hanover County Carousel Center for his service to children. In 2018 Judge Corpening was recognized by the National Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardian ad Litem Association as Judge of the Year at their national conference in Boston. He was also recognized in 2018 by the North Carolina Attorney General with the Dogwood Award for his work in pre-trial release reform.