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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Effective January 15, 2009, Governor Mike Beebe appointed **A. Watson Bell** as Chairman of the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission, replacing Olan W. Reeves who has served this Commission since January 2003, appointed by then, Governor Mike Huckabee.

Chairman Bell is from Searcy, Arkansas, and has been a practicing attorney in White County for over thirty years. Before being named Chairman of the Commission, he was a partner in the Lightle Law Firm, and has represented both claimants and employer/respondents before the Commission.

He has spent thirty years hearing cases as a City Court Judge, ten years as a Juvenile Court Judge, and ten months as a District Court Judge. He is licensed to practice before the U.S. District Courts and the 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. Chairman Bell has been appointed to serve as Special Justice on the Arkansas Supreme Court on three occasions by Governors Clinton, Tucker and Huckabee. He is currently a member of the Arkansas Bar Association and past President of the White County Bar Association.

Chairman Bell's many other accomplishments include serving as Chairman of the State Board of Law Examiners, the Searcy Planning Commission, the White County Election Commission, the White County Democratic Party, the Searcy Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services. He has also served on the Board of the United Network for Organ Sharing, the Searcy Kiwanis Club and the Executive Committee of the State Democratic Committee.

Currently he is serving on the Board of Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation, Memphis, Tennessee, and the Board of Trustees for the First Baptist Church in Searcy where he teaches Sunday school.

His wife of 39 ½ years is Jean Ann Bell, a retired educator, and his children Betsy Bailey of Searcy and Art Bell of Little Rock.