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**CHRISTOPHER THOMAS, DIRECTOR OF
THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS PASSES AWAY**

Christopher Thomas, 63, died this morning after complications from surgery. He had been the director of the Supreme Court's Office of Professional Programs since July 1988. Before that he was director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

"We are so sorry to hear of Chris's untimely death," said Supreme Court Chief Justice Jim Hannah. "He was a good friend and I appreciate everything he's done for the Judicial Branch. He has been an important part of what we do to regulate the practice of law in Arkansas. Our deepest condolences go out to his family."

In November, Thomas received the 2012 Justice Robert L. Brown Community Support Award for his support of the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program and its mission to help judges, lawyers, their families, and law students throughout the state. He had planned to retire in March, after he administered the next bar examination.

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