



History of the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office

Jefferson County operated under an elected coroner system since the county's inception in 1819 until 1931. In a coroner system the County Coroner was elected to office by the citizens of Jefferson County and was typically a lay person with no formal training in medicolegal death investigation.

On May 27, 1931, the office of County Coroner was abolished by Act of State Legislature. The office was subsequently reestablished with the position of County Coroner being an appointed position by the Jefferson County Commission and not an elected position by the citizens of the county. The Act referred to the coroner as the "Agent, County Commission, as Coroner".

In January 1977, by Act of State Legislature, the office of County Coroner and the coroner system in Jefferson County was abolished and the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) was established. This was the end of the coroner system and the beginning of the medical examiner system in Jefferson County. The new law required the Coroner/Medical Examiner of Jefferson County to be a board certified forensic pathologist.

On July 26, 1979, pursuant to State of Alabama Act 79-454, the office of County Coroner in Jefferson County was once again abolished and the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) as it is known today was established. As with the previous Act, the new Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner Act set forth that the Coroner/Medical Examiner shall be an appointed position by the Jefferson County Commission and that the Coroner/Medical Examiner shall be a board certified forensic pathologist. The act also established a new regulatory commission, the "Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Commission", to promulgate rules and regulations governing the reviews and investigations of the Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office and the conditions upon which such investigations shall be conducted. The act also retained in the office all the authority vested in coroners by the state laws of Alabama.

The Coroner retained a physical office on the second floor of the [Jefferson County Courthouse](#) and at the [Bessemer Courthouse](#) until 1977, when at that time both offices were consolidated and moved to its current location at [Cooper Green Mercy Health Services](#).