

## **NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT COURT JUDGE ROY ARNOLD DAWSON DISTRICT 9 (R)**

### **KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:**

- **Professional Background:** Private practice attorney with experience in criminal defense, family law, and personal injury, including handling numerous bench trials in the 9th Judicial District.
- **Judicial Interest:** Received the highest vote from local attorneys for a 2025 judicial appointment but was not selected by the Governor.
- **Campaign Profile:** Campaign messaging emphasizes personal background, legal experience, and courtroom fairness, with limited policy or ideological positioning.
- **Political Affiliation:** Running as a Republican in a contested race against a Democratic incumbent.
- **Campaign Infrastructure:** Operates a relatively small-scale campaign, raising under \$20,000 with no support from party committees or PACs.
- **Self-Funding:** Campaign relies in part on personal contributions and in-kind support.
- **Donor Profile:** Contributions primarily come from local individuals, including legal and court-affiliated professionals; no partisan or extremist funding identified.
- **Legal & Ethics:** No record of disciplinary actions, or ethics violations.
- **Casework Profile:** Practice appears limited to routine district-level matters, with no high-profile or controversial cases identified.
- **Financial Profile:** No publicly accessible financial disclosure identified; primary asset appears to be his private law practice.

### **JURISDICTION SUMMARY**

North Carolina’s 9th Judicial District covers Greene, Lenoir, and Wayne counties. District Court judges serve four-year terms and have jurisdiction over misdemeanors, traffic, juvenile, mental health, domestic relations and small civil cases. (Note: a 2024 law renamed “District Court 8” to District Court 9.) Judicial elections in NC are now *partisan* (changed from nonpartisan in 2018). In early 2025 the longtime Chief Judge, Elizabeth “Beth” Heath, retired. Governor Stein (D) appointed Kinston attorney Sonya Davis (Democrat) in May 2025 to fill that vacancy. Dawson, a Republican, had been one of seven local attorneys recommended to the Governor – he won the local bar vote but was not appointed.

### **BACKGROUND**

## PERSONAL LIFE

**Dawson Is A Trial Attorney In Lenoir County North Carolina.** “I am ready to serve from day one. My background as a trial attorney, my experience on both sides of the courtroom, and my connection to the people of Lenoir, Wayne, and Greene counties have prepared me to lead with fairness and compassion. I will work every day to make sure our courts remain accessible, consistent, and worthy of the trust our communities place in them.” [[Roy for Judge](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson Lives In Lenoir County, North Carolina.** “Dawson remains active in the legal community. He serves on the North Carolina Bar Association’s Family Law Section as Co-Chair of the Equitable Distribution Subcommittee and is a past president of the Lenoir County Bar Association. He also participates in legal education and community outreach efforts. He lives in Lenoir County with his wife, Dayla, and their seven-year-old son. He coaches youth soccer in Kinston and remains actively involved in the community he calls home.” [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson Raised In Alamance County And “Dropped Out” Of High School And Worked Various Blue-Collar Jobs.** “Dawson’s path to the legal profession was far from traditional. Raised in Alamance County, he began working at age fourteen and dropped out of high school at sixteen. He later earned his diploma through night classes and started working various full-time jobs including manufacturing, restaurant kitchens, die casting, and a local oil change shop.” [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

- **Dawson “Later Earned His Diploma.”** “Dawson’s path to the legal profession was far from traditional. Raised in Alamance County, he began working at age fourteen and dropped out of high school at sixteen. He later earned his diploma through night classes and started working various full-time jobs including manufacturing, restaurant kitchens, die casting, and a local oil change shop.” [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson Earned An Associates Degree From Alamance Community College And Transferred To UNC- Chapel Hill Through The C-Step Program.** “Years later, after helping care for his mother during a serious health condition, Dawson continued his education at Alamance Community College before transferring to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill through the Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program (C-STEP). He earned his law degree from UNC School of Law, where he volunteered with the Innocence Project and completed a year-long internship with the Orange County District Attorney’s Office. That experience gave him insight into both prosecution and defense.” [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson Graduated From University Of North Carolina School Of Law In 2014, After Interning In Both The District Attorney’s And Innocence Project Offices.** “Years later, after helping care for his mother during a serious health condition, Dawson continued his education at Alamance Community College before transferring to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill through the Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program (C-STEP). He earned his law degree from UNC School of Law, where he volunteered with the Innocence Project and

completed a year-long internship with the Orange County District Attorney's Office. That experience gave him insight into both prosecution and defense." [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Following Law School Dawson Practiced Law In The 9th District.** "Since 2014, Dawson has practiced law throughout the 9th Judicial District, and surrounding counties, handling hundreds of bench trials in both criminal and family court. His practice is evenly balanced between criminal and domestic cases. In 2021, he opened the Law Offices of Roy A. Dawson, P.A., in Kinston. His practice is built on preparation, honesty, and trust." [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**2014-2020: Dawson Handled Hundreds Of Bench Trials In Both Criminal And Family Cases.** "Since 2014, Dawson has practiced law throughout the 9th Judicial District, and surrounding counties, handling hundreds of bench trials in both criminal and family court. His practice is evenly balanced between criminal and domestic cases. In 2021, he opened the Law Offices of Roy A. Dawson, P.A., in Kinston. His practice is built on preparation, honesty, and trust." [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**2021: Dawson Opened His Own Firm, "The Law Offices Of Roy A. Dawson, P.A.," In Kinston, North Carolina.** "Since 2014, Dawson has practiced law throughout the 9th Judicial District, and surrounding counties, handling hundreds of bench trials in both criminal and family court. His practice is evenly balanced between criminal and domestic cases. In 2021, he opened the Law Offices of Roy A. Dawson, P.A., in Kinston. His practice is built on preparation, honesty, and trust." [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson Co-Chairs The Equitable Distribution Subcommittee Of The North Carolina Bar Family Law Section.** "Dawson remains active in the legal community. He serves on the North Carolina Bar Association's Family Law Section as Co-Chair of the Equitable Distribution Subcommittee and is a past president of the Lenoir County Bar Association. He also participates in legal education and community outreach efforts. He lives in Lenoir County with his wife, Dayla, and their seven-year-old son. He coaches youth soccer in Kinston and remains actively involved in the community he calls home." [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson Was President Of The Lenoir County Bar Association.** "Dawson remains active in the legal community. He serves on the North Carolina Bar Association's Family Law Section as Co-Chair of the Equitable Distribution Subcommittee and is a past president of the Lenoir County Bar Association. He also participates in legal education and community outreach efforts. He lives in Lenoir County with his wife, Dayla, and their seven-year-old son. He coaches youth soccer in Kinston and remains actively involved in the community he calls home." [[Neuse News](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson Said "The Courtroom Should Be A Place Where People Are Heard And Treated With Dignity That Responsibility Must Be Met With Preparation, Fairness, And Humility."** "I am running for District Court Judge because I believe the courtroom should be a place where people are heard and treated with dignity. Every case that comes before a judge

affects someone's life. That responsibility must be met with preparation, fairness, and humility.” [\[Roy for Judge\]](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

## **FAMILY BACKGROUND**

**Dawson Is Married To “Dayla” And Together They Have One Son.** “Dawson remains active in the legal community. He serves on the North Carolina Bar Association’s Family Law Section as Co-Chair of the Equitable Distribution Subcommittee and is a past president of the Lenoir County Bar Association. He also participates in legal education and community outreach efforts. He lives in Lenoir County with his wife, Dayla, and their seven-year-old son. He coaches youth soccer in Kinston and remains actively involved in the community he calls home.” [\[Neuse News\]](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson’s Wife, Dayla Dawson Is Vice President Of A Lending Contact Center At State Employee’s Credit Union.** [\[LinkedIn\]](#), accessed, 4/9/2026]

**Dayla Dawson Has Been Employed At State Employee’s Credit Union For 15 Years.** [\[LinkedIn\]](#), accessed, 4/9/2026]

## **PROFESSIONAL, CIVIC, LITIGATION, & PUBLIC SECTOR BACKGROUND**

**2021: Dawson Opened His Own Firm, “The Law Offices Of Roy A. Dawson, P.A.,” In Kinston, North Carolina.** “Since 2014, Dawson has practiced law throughout the 9th Judicial District, and surrounding counties, handling hundreds of bench trials in both criminal and family court. His practice is evenly balanced between criminal and domestic cases. In 2021, he opened the Law Offices of Roy A. Dawson, P.A., in Kinston. His practice is built on preparation, honesty, and trust.” [\[Neuse News\]](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Dawson Practices Primarily In Criminal Defense, Family Law, And Personal Injury Cases.** [\[Law Offices of Roy Dawson\]](#), accessed, 4/9/2026]

## **POLITICAL AFFILIATION & ACTIVITY:**

### *Ideology & Politics*

**Dawson Is Running As A Republican Candidate.** “District 9 North Carolina District Court Judge Seat 1 The race will be between Republican Roy Dawson and the current District Court Judge, Democrat Sonya Davis.” [\[ABC News 12\]](#), 3/5/2025]

### *Campaign Background & Infrastructure*

**2025: Dawson Sought Appointment To The District Court Bench Following The Retirement Of Chief District Court Judge Elizabeth Heath.** “In 2025, Roy, along with six other candidates, put his name forward for appointment to the District Court bench following the retirement of Chief District Court Judge Elizabeth A. Heath. The attorneys of the 9th Judicial District held a vote to recommend candidates, and Roy received the most votes. Although he was

not ultimately appointed by the Governor, the support of his peers was incredibly humbling and strengthened his resolve to serve the community as a judge.” [Roy for Judge, accessed, 4/8/2026]

- **Dawson Received The Most Votes From Attorneys In The 9th Judicial District And Was Not Appointed By The Governor.** “In 2025, Roy, along with six other candidates, put his name forward for appointment to the District Court bench following the retirement of Chief District Court Judge Elizabeth A. Heath. The attorneys of the 9th Judicial District held a vote to recommend candidates, and Roy received the most votes. Although he was not ultimately appointed by the Governor, the support of his peers was incredibly humbling and strengthened his resolve to serve the community as a judge.” [Roy for Judge, accessed, 4/8/2026]

**March 2025: Governor Stein Appointed Sonya Davis As District Court Judge in Judicial District 9.** “Governor Josh Stein has appointed two district court judges: Tia Hudgins Taylor as district court judge in Judicial District 8 (Edgecombe, Nash, and Wilson counties). She will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge William Solomon. Taylor most recently worked as an associate attorney at Lassiter and Sperati, PLLC. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Queens University of Charlotte and her Juris Doctorate from Elon University School of Law. Sonya Davis as district court judge in Judicial District 9 (Greene, Lenoir, and Wayne counties). She will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Beth Heath. Davis most recently worked as a solo practitioner in Kinston. She received her Bachelor of Arts from North Carolina Central University and her Juris Doctorate from North Carolina Central University School of Law.” [[North Carolina Judicial Branch](#), Press Release, 3/31/2025]

**December 2025: Dawson Announced His Candidacy For District Court Judge In North Carolina’s 9th Judicial District.** “Attorney Roy A. Dawson has officially filed to run for District Court Judge in North Carolina’s 9th Judicial District, which serves Lenoir, Wayne, and Greene counties. Dawson, a practicing attorney with more than a decade of courtroom experience, says he is running to ensure that local courtrooms remain fair, accessible, and grounded in dignity and respect.” [[Wnct 9](#), 12/5/2025]

**Dawson Said “The Courtroom Should Be A Place Where People Are Heard And Treated With Dignity That Responsibility Must Be Met With Preparation, Fairness, And Humility.”** “I am running for District Court Judge because I believe the courtroom should be a place where people are heard and treated with dignity. Every case that comes before a judge affects someone’s life. That responsibility must be met with preparation, fairness, and humility.” [[Roy for Judge](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE

**2026: Dawson Raised \$19,492.61 For The Cycle.** [[North Carolina State Board of Elections](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

**Self-Funding: Dawson Contributed \$10,100 To His Campaign.** [[North Carolina State Board of Elections](#), accessed, 4/6/2026]

| Contributor                       | Employer                                           | Date       | Amount     | Type     |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Walker Allen                      | Attorney Colombo Kitchin, Attorneys                | 1/2/2026   | \$100.00   | Monetary |
| Roy A. Dawson                     | Attorney Law Offices of Roy Dawson P.A             |            | \$1,357.69 | In-kind  |
| Leigh Franklin                    | Retired                                            | 1/11/2026  | \$150      | In-kind  |
| Stephen Ledford                   | Not Employed                                       | 1/9/2026   | \$1,041.98 | Refunded |
| Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce |                                                    | 1/27/2026  | \$65.00    | Monetary |
| Omni Strategic Solutions          |                                                    | 01/12/202  | \$1,000.00 | Monetary |
| On the Hill                       |                                                    | 01/12/2026 | \$176.55   | Monetary |
| Zeffy                             |                                                    | 2/9/2026   | \$60.00    | Monetary |
| Steven Brewster                   | NewWork Engineer Senior                            | 12/08/2025 | \$1,000.00 | Monetary |
| Alexander Gerrans                 | Assistant Clerk of Court NC Admin Office of Courts | 12/9/2025  | \$260.73   | Monetary |
| Katlyn Stroud                     | Court Manager                                      | 12/9/2025  | \$52.40    | Monetary |

### *Real Property Holdings & Transactions*

**2021: Dawson Purchased A Residential Property In Dover, North Carolina For \$265,000 With A \$225,000 Loan.** [[Lenoir County Register of Deeds](#), 12/3/2021]

### **SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS**

[Campaign Site](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[LinkedIn](#)