



***Eliminating Barriers to Justice:
Addressing Ethical Obligations, Cultural
Competency, and Best Practices for
Ensuring Meaningful Language Access in
Georgia Courts***



Thursday, February 20, 2014

1:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Atlanta's John Marshall Law School ~ Blackburn Conference Center

Atlanta, GA

Agenda

1:30 - Welcome & Occasion

Hon. Keith Blackwell, Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia / Chair, Supreme Court of Georgia Commission on Interpreters (COI)

1:35 - Video ~ “Voices from the Field: Moving to be Heard”

1:55 - Introduction of Keynote Speaker

Ms. Marla S. Moore, Director, Administrative Office of the Courts of Georgia

2:00 - Keynote ~ “Our Unique Challenge”

Hon. Harold Melton, Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia / Immediate Past Chair, COI

2:20 - “Legal Underpinnings for Language Access” ~ A Stakeholders Panel Discussion

Moderator

Hon. Christopher J. McFadden, Judge, Georgia Court of Appeals/Member, COI

Panelists

- *Ms. Yolanda Lewis, District Court Administrator, Fulton County Superior Court / Member, COI*
- *Hon. Dax Lopez, Judge, DeKalb County State Court*
- *Ms. Lisa J. Krisher, Director of Litigation, Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP)*
- *Ms. Marla S. Moore, Director, Administrative Office of the Courts of Georgia*
- *Hon. Tilman E. Self, III, Chief Judge, Bibb County Superior Court*
- *Hon. Gail S. Tusan, Chief Judge, Fulton County Superior Court*

3:05 - 5 minute break

3:10 - Cultural Competency 101

- *Leng Leng Chancey, Vice President of Operations, Culture Connect*

3:55 - Best Practices for Working with Interpreters: From Client Intake to the Bench

- *A. Bernadette Olmos, Managing Attorney, A.B. Olmos & Associates, P.C.*
- *Jana J. Edmondson-Cooper, Bilingual Staff Attorney, GLSP / Member, COI*

4:25 - 5 minute break

4:30 - Ethical Considerations When Representing Limited English Proficient and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Clients

- *Alpa S. Amin, Lead Attorney, Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network*

5:30 - Concluding Thoughts/Remarks

- *Jana J. Edmondson-Cooper, Bilingual Staff Attorney, GLSP / Member, COI*

Keynote Speaker



Hon. Harold Melton, Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia

Immediate Past Chair, COI

On July 1, 2005, Harold Melton was appointed to the Georgia Supreme Court by Governor Sonny Perdue. Prior to joining the Court, Justice Melton served as the Executive Counsel to Governor Perdue, representing the Governor on legal issues covering the entire scope of state government. Justice Melton helped safeguard Georgia's interests in water rights disputes with Alabama and Florida, and actively participated in administration efforts to advance the delivery of criminal justice services in the State.

Before serving as Executive Counsel, Justice Melton spent eleven years in the Georgia Department of Law under two Attorneys General where he dealt with issues ranging from the creation of the Georgia Lottery Corporation to the administration of Georgia's tobacco settlement. Prior to leaving to join the Governor's Office, Justice Melton served as Section Leader over the Consumer Interests Division.

Justice Melton received a Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn University and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Georgia in 1991. He previously served as a Volunteer Leader of Young Life Ministries for 11 years. He is currently a Board Member of the Atlanta Youth Academies and the Director of Teen Ministry at Southwest Christian Fellowship Church. A native of Washington, D.C., Justice Melton grew up in East Point and Marietta. He currently resides in Atlanta with his wife, Kimberly, and their three children.

Presenters

Hon. Keith R. Blackwell, Justice Supreme Court of Georgia / Chair, COI

Justice Keith R. Blackwell was appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia on June 25, 2012 by Governor Nathan Deal. Before that, he served as a judge on the Court of Appeals of Georgia, to which he was appointed by Governor Sonny Perdue on November 1, 2010. Justice Blackwell is a native of Cherokee County and now lives in Cobb County with his wife, Angela, and their three daughters.

Justice Blackwell completed his undergraduate and law studies at the University of Georgia. Following his graduation from law school, Justice Blackwell served as a law clerk to Judge J.L. Edmondson of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Justice Blackwell then practiced law as an associate at Alston & Bird LLP, where he represented clients in criminal and regulatory investigations, consumer class actions and other complex commercial litigation. Beginning in early 2003, Justice Blackwell served as an Assistant District Attorney in Cobb County, where he represented the State of Georgia in several hundred felony prosecutions, including prosecutions for murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, carjacking, drug trafficking and financial crimes. In late 2005, Justice Blackwell joined Parker, Hudson, Rainer & Dobbs LLP, in Atlanta as an associate and three years later, he was elected as a partner of the firm. At Parker, Hudson, Justice Blackwell focused his practice on complex commercial litigation, including contract, real estate, insurance and business-tort cases. His practice also included the representation of crime victims in connection with criminal investigations and prosecutions, the representation of brokerage firms in securities arbitration and litigation and the representation of businesses and non-profit organizations in connection with issues concerning trade secrets, computer crimes, the privacy of nonpublic personal information and other data security matters.

Justice Blackwell has been active in a number of professional and legal policy organizations. He is a member of the Board of Advisors for the Atlanta Chapter of the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies, and he previously served as the Chapter president for three years and as a member of its Executive Board. He also is a member of the Cobb Bar Association and the State Bar of Georgia. Justice Blackwell presently serves as an advisor to the State Bar Committee on Business Courts, and he has been active in the Appellate Practice Section of the State Bar as well, having served on its Committee on State Practice and Legislation. In addition, Justice Blackwell is a master of the Joseph Henry Lumpkin American Inn of Court and the Columbus American Inn of Court, and he chairs the Georgia Commission on Interpreters. Prior to his service as a judge, Justice Blackwell served as a member of the Governor's Judicial Nominating Commission and as an advisor to the House Judiciary Committee with respect to the revision of the state evidence code.

Ms. Marla S. Moore, Director, Administrative Office of the Courts of Georgia

Marla S. Moore was appointed by the Judicial Council of Georgia to serve as the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts beginning August 1, 2009. She served as revenue manager in the Kansas Department of Revenue before moving to Georgia and joining the Administrative Office of the Courts as Assistant to the Director. Since that time, Ms. Moore held various positions within the AOC, leaving in 2006 to work in the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council over-seeing DOJ and state funded grants.

During her time at the Administrative Office of the Courts, Ms. Moore served as chair of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence for two years. She chaired the committee of the Sexual Assault Task Force that developed the first state-wide protocol for handling sexual assault cases. She served as Project Director for the Georgia Commission on Gender Bias and Executive Director of the Supreme Court Committee for Gender Equality.

She currently serves on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Board of Trustees of the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education, Bench and Bar Committee, and is a past president of the Georgia Council of Court Administrators, a former member of the Board of Visitors of Emory University and the Next Generation Courts Commission. As a member of the Conference of State Court Administrators, Ms. Moore serves on multiple committees, contributing to the work being done nationally to improve court administration. In addition, she is a member of both the National Association of Court Management and of the National Association of Women Judges. Ms. Moore has received numerous awards and honors for her service to the court system and the state of Georgia. She is a recipient of the 2012 National Center for State Courts Distinguished Service Award.

Ms. Moore holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in history and a Master of Science Degree in political science from Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas. She is a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management and a graduate of the Judicial Education Leadership Institute, Memphis University. She is married with 2 daughters and 1 grandson.

Hon. Christopher J. McFadden, Judge, Georgia Court of Appeals / Member, COI

Christopher J. McFadden was elected to the Georgia Court of Appeals in November 2010 for a term beginning January 1, 2011. He is the son of the late Isabel McFadden and the late Judge Donald B. McFadden, who served for twenty years as a trial court judge in Akron, Ohio.

Judge McFadden graduated from Oglethorpe University in 1980 and from the University of Georgia School Of Law in 1985. He opened his own law office in 1988 and remained a sole practitioner until he joined the Court of Appeals. For most of that time, he practiced in Decatur and focused on appellate litigation. Before joining the Court of Appeals as its 74th judge, he appeared as appellate counsel before 26 of the judges who preceded him.

In 1996, along with the late Professor Edward C. Brewer and attorney Charles R. Sheppard, he published Georgia Appellate Practice through the Harrison Company of Norcross, Georgia. With Mr. Sheppard and attorneys Charles M. Cork, III, George W.K. Snyder, Jr. and David A. Webster, Judge McFadden continues to update it for West, which now publishes it in annual editions. With attorney Laurie Webb Daniel, he is a founding past Chair of the Appellate Practice Section of the State Bar of Georgia. For twelve years, Judge McFadden served as an officer or director of the Atlanta Bar Association. Earlier, he chaired its Sole Practitioner/Small Firm Section. He is a recipient of the Atlanta Bar's Distinguished Service Award and Charles E. Watkins, Jr. Award.

Judge McFadden has served as a volunteer attorney for the Innocence Project and the Election Protection Project. He is a member of the Atlanta Bar Association, DeKalb Bar Association, Fayette County Bar Association, Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (honorary), Lawyers Club of Atlanta, the Old Warhorse Lawyers Club, the Federalist Society, American Constitution Society, Saint Thomas More Society and Oglethorpe University's Stormy Petrel Bar Association. He served for more than six years on the State Bar of Georgia's Committee on the Judiciary. He is a member of the appellate practice committees of the Litigation and Tort and Insurance Practice

Sections of the American Bar Association. He presently serves on the Appellate Judges Education Institute's Summit Planning Committee and represents the Court of Appeals on the Georgia Commission on Interpreters and on the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education of Georgia.

He is a parishioner at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Griffin, Georgia and has served as a lector since 1988. Judge McFadden is married to Dr. Linda Hyde, Professor of Biology at Gordon State College in Barnesville, Georgia. They have a son.

Ms. Yolanda Lewis, District Court Administrator, Fulton County Superior Court / Member, COI

Yolanda Lewis is the District Court Administrator and the Court Administrator for the Superior Court of Fulton County, the largest court system in the State of Georgia. Ms. Lewis has served in her capacity in Fulton County since October 2010. Prior to joining the Atlanta Judicial Circuit, she served as the Court Administrator for Clayton County's Superior and State Court, and the Assistant Director of Judicial Liaison with the Administrative Office of the Courts. During her fourteen (14) year career with the judiciary, she has provided broad-scale executive level recommendations, strategic direction, training, financial management, alternative sentencing development and legislative support to more than 1,700 judges and more than 1,100 courts.

Ms. Lewis is a self-starter with a focus on performance management and innovation. She began her professional career as probation officer in Mobile Alabama and quickly worked her way up to Assistant Chief of the Community Service Division for the Mobile County Communication Corrections Program. Lewis is credited for planning the first Georgia Victims Assistance Academy, developing the Judicial Stratification Project to identify the needs of Georgia law enforcement communities, created the first Regional Justice Technology Expo and has managed multiple committees commissioned by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. She has created two award winning court programs, one of which received national recognition as a benchmark for access to justice. Ms. Lewis is also the host and executive producer of the television program "Fulton Justice", a court related show dedicated to providing resources, information and a closer look at how the Atlanta court system operates.

Ms. Lewis is a native of Alabama and a graduate of the University of South Alabama where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and a Master in Public Administration and Intergovernmental Affairs. She is also a graduate of Leadership Clayton and the Institute for Diversity Management. She is an instructor for Michigan State University where she teaches court managers and judges across the country principles of Judicial Administration. She is a certified court manager by the National Center for State Courts. She has always taken interest in her community and has earned a National Service Award during the presidency of William "Bill" Clinton for her work with displaced Americans affected by HIV and Aids. Ms. Lewis was elected to the Board of Directors for the National Association for Court Management in 2012, serves on the Board of the Georgia Council of Court Administrators, and serves as a member of the National Association of Public Administrators and a host of other state and national organizations. She is the Co-Founder Sisters with Purpose, a nonprofit organization which supports the needs of abused women and children and is noted for her development of a one day mentoring and empowerment program called "Girl's Day In".

Ms. Lisa J. Krisher, Director of Litigation, Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP)

Lisa J. Krisher is the Director of Litigation with Georgia Legal Services Program, the statewide nonprofit law firm whose attorneys represent people with low incomes in civil cases. She has spent her legal career at GLSP advocating for marginalized people. She also is responsible for GLSP's language access advocacy and for GLSP's provision of legal services to limited English proficient clients. She is a member of the National Language Access Advocates Network, a national organization focusing on advocacy to eradicate language discrimination and promote language rights. Lisa has spoken at national legal conferences on language access and co-authored "*Seen But Often Unheard: Limited-English-Proficiency Advocacy in Georgia*," *Clearinghouse Review: Journal of Poverty Law and Policy*, 46 *Clearinghouse Rev.* 343 (Nov.-Dec. 2012). Lisa is a member of the Appellate Practice Section of the State Bar of Georgia, and is the former chair of the Individual Rights Section of the State Bar of Georgia. Lisa received the 1997 State Bar of Georgia's Access to Justice Committee's Dan Bradley Legal Services Award and the 2013 Civil Kutak-Dodds Prize for contributions to equal justice.

Hon. Dax Lopez, Judge, DeKalb County State Court

Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, Dax Lopez moved to Georgia at the age of six. Constantly on the move, Dax lived in six states, mostly in the South, throughout his childhood. Dax attended Vanderbilt University where he obtained a Bachelor of Science in Political Science. He obtained his law degree from Vanderbilt Law School, where he served as the president of the Vanderbilt Bar Association and as an editor on the Vanderbilt Journal Transnational Law.

After graduation, Dax served as the law clerk for the Hon. Hector M. Laffitte in the Federal District Court for the District of Puerto Rico. Dax returned to Atlanta in 2002 to commence his career as an attorney at Holland & Knight, LLP, where he practiced in the complex civil litigation group for three years. In 2005, Dax joined the litigation group at Ashe, Rafuse & Hill where he handled class actions, employment matters, and product liability cases. In 2008, Dax furthered his commercial litigation experience by joining the litigation group of Foltz & Martin LLC.

Dax is the past president of the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials. Dax remains active in and committed to several other civil and community organizations. Dax is married to attorney Zulma Lopez. Together they are the proud parents of three children: Roberto Carolos, Sebastian, and Elisa. Dax and his family are members of The Temple in midtown.

Hon. Tilman E. Self, III, Chief Judge, Bibb County Superior Court

Judge Self has served on the bench as a Superior Court Judge in the Macon Judicial Circuit since 2007. Prior to that, he worked for twelve years at the Law Offices of Sell & Melton LLP where he rose through the ranks from a law clerk to an equity partner focusing on the areas of employment discrimination litigation, condemnation litigation, general civil litigation, corporate litigation, and probate matters. Prior to law school, Judge Self served four years in the United States Army where he was a Field Artillery officer serving in various units in Georgia, Oklahoma, and the Republic of Korea. Judge Self received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina in Charleston, South Carolina where he graduated *magna cum laude*. He received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Georgia School of Law where he graduated *cum laude*.

Judge Self has served in many distinguished professional associations including as a Co-Vice Chair for the State Bar of Georgia Bench and Bar Committee, Fellow in the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia, President of Macon Bar Association, member of the Domestic Violence Committee for the Judicial Council of the State of Georgia, and as a member of the William Augustus Bootle American Inn of Court.

Judge Self is a member of Piedmont Church and the Macon Rotary Club. Additionally, he is a member of The Shield Club which provides scholarships to children of slain law enforcement officers. Judge Self also serves on the Executive Board for both the Central Georgia Council for the Boy Scouts of America and the Museum of Aviation Foundation. Judge Self is married to Amy Darnell Self and is the father of one daughter.

Hon. Gail S. Tusan, Chief Judge, Fulton County Superior Court

Judge Gail S. Tusan grew up in Southern California, attending high school in Pasadena. She received her BA in Psychology from the University of California at Los Angeles and her Juris Doctorate from George Washington University School of Law. She has served on the bench for twenty-nine years. Ambassador Andrew Young first appointed her as an administrative law judge for the City of Atlanta in 1984. In 1990, the late Mayor Maynard H. Jackson, appointed her to serve on the City Court of Atlanta. Then Governor Zell Miller appointed her to the State Court of Fulton County in 1992, and after she was elected to retain said seat, he elevated her to the Superior Court of Fulton County in 1995. Judge Tusan is serving her fifth elected term of office as a Superior Court Judge. She was appointed as the first Deputy Chief Judge of her court in May 2013, and as of February 1st 2014, she will be the first African-American Chief Judge of Superior Court of Fulton County.

Judge Tusan is a National Judicial College faculty member and presently serves as an Adjunct Emory Law School Faculty member team teaching a Civil Trial Practice – Family Law course. She has served as Chair of the Judicial Sections of the Gate City Bar Association and Atlanta Bar Association, President of the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (“GABWA”), Camp Fire USA, Georgia Council, Vice President of the Legal Clinic for the Homeless and Chair, Georgia Supreme Court’s Commission on Continuing Lawyer Competency. In 2009, GABWA bestowed upon her its Leah Ward Sears Distinction in Profession Legacy Award. Among many other awards, Judge Tusan is a past recipient of the MLK Center for Nonviolent Social Change’s Peace and Justice Award and a member of the YWCA of Greater Atlanta’s Academy of Women Achievers and a Charter Inductee into her alma mater, John Muir High School’s Hall of Fame. She also proudly serves as President of Buckhead/Cascade City Chapter of Links, Incorporated. Judge Tusan and her husband, Dr. Carl V. Washington, Jr., are members of the historic First Congregational Church, UCC, where they serve as members of the Diaconate Board.

Judge Tusan’s publications include a feature article in the December 2009 issue of the Georgia Bar Journal entitled *Cultural Competence in the Courtroom*. Her debut novel entitled *Misjudged* was published in 2007.

Ms. Leng Leng Chancey, Vice President of Operations, Culture Connect

Leng Leng Chancey is currently serving as the VP, Operations for Culture Connect, Inc., a non-profit organization based in Decatur, GA whose mission is to foster cultural fluency between immigrants and the community at large through language services, mentoring and education. Prior to this role, she was the VP, Business Development for Culture Connect, Inc. Throughout the years, Leng Leng

has worked at several local non-profits including the Center for Pan Asian Community Services, and United Way of Greater Atlanta.

Born and raised in Singapore, Leng Leng first came to the United States in 1993 to attend college at Washington State University in Pullman, WA. She earned a Bachelor's of Arts degree in History before enrolling in graduate school at the University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ, where she focused on East Asian Studies. While living in Tucson, she served as the Vice Principal of the Tucson Chinese School for three years. In that role, she managed the daily operations of the school and worked with the local community to promote traditional Chinese culture and Chinese language.

Leng Leng is also a founding and current member of an all women, multi-generational, multi-culturally advocacy Korean drumming group that performs at rallies and marches throughout the eastern seaboard. She currently lives in Tucker, GA, with her husband and two children, ages 11 and 8.

Ms. A. Bernadette Olmos, Managing Attorney, A.B. Olmos & Associates, P.C.

Ms. Olmos founded A.B. Olmos & Associates, P.C., with the intent of ensuring that her clients have access to the highest quality legal representation. As the practice has grown, Ms. Olmos has built her expertise to cater to the full spectrum of family law and personal injury cases. She is a registered mediator and arbitrator.

The daughter of civil rights activists, Bernadette Olmos dedicates her practice to fierce advocacy on behalf of her clients. Ms. Olmos has extensive experience in handling family law matters for clients across the spectrum of economic and cultural backgrounds. Ms. Olmos is fluent in Spanish.

Ms. Olmos is heavily involved in her Alma Mater community and the local Atlanta community at large. She is currently serving a 3-year appointment to Atlanta's John Marshall Law School Alumnae Board. Beginning in Fall 2014, she will be the Adjunct Professor for John Marshall Law School's Family Law Clinic, which will provide family law assistance to litigants in Fulton County.

She is a member of the American Bar Association Committee on Task Force on Mental Health Care in Immigration Detention as well as a member of Georgia Legal Services Program's Board of Directors. She is also an active member of the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association, and was a member of the Hispanic National Bar Association's Community Service Committee for the 2013 Mid-year Corporate Counsel Conference.

Bernadette is admitted to practice with the State of Georgia, the Georgia Court of Appeals, the Georgia Supreme Court, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, and the Supreme Court of the United States.

Ms. Jana J. Edmondson-Cooper, Bilingual Staff Attorney, GLSP / Member, COI

Jana J. Edmondson-Cooper, Bilingual Staff Attorney at Georgia Legal Services Program, provides bilingual legal counsel and representation to individuals in federal and state administrative forums as well as courts of law. Her areas of practice include family law, housing law, public benefits, health law, wills and estates, consumer law and education law with a focus on limited English proficiency (LEP)/language access issues. Ms. Edmondson-Cooper engages in strategic LEP/ language access advocacy on local, state and national levels, including but not limited to contributing to the

development of statewide and national curriculums for training attorneys and judges on language access as an access to justice issue as well as the development of local, state and national language access policies. Ms. Edmondson-Cooper has been invited to speak about language access in a variety of legal contexts at national conferences.

Previously recognized as a “Trailblazing Lawyer for Justice” and an active member of the National Language Access Advocates Network (N-LAAN), Ms. Edmondson-Cooper has authored and co-authored several articles - available at www.linkedin.com/in/jjecesq/ - on language access in connection with several legal practice areas. In 2013, Ms. Edmondson-Cooper was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court of Georgia Commission on Interpreters. The Commission, which sets the rules, policies and procedures for regulating the quality of court interpreters in the state, is comprised of legislators, judges, lawyers and court interpreters. Each year members rotate off the Commission and recommendations are received for new appointments which must be approved by the Court. Licensed to practice law in Georgia and the District of Columbia (inactive), Ms. Edmondson-Cooper is a graduate of Spelman College and Mississippi College School of Law. Prior to practicing law, Ms. Edmondson-Cooper was professionally trained as a legal interpreter.

Ms. Edmondson-Cooper is a member of several professional organizations including the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA) where she currently serves as Regional Vice President. She also serves on the State Bar of Georgia (SBG) Access to Justice Committee, SBG YLD Executive Council and the Leadership and Diversity Committee of the National Legal Aid and Defender Assoc. (NLADA) Civil Policy Group.

Ms. Alpa S. Amin, Lead Attorney, Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network

Alpa S. Amin is the Lead Attorney with the Victims of Violence Program at the Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network (GAIN). Ms. Amin began her work with GAIN in 2008 as a Law and Policy Assistant and in 2010 was awarded an Equal Justice Works Fellowship sponsored by Greenberg Traurig and King & Spalding to continue her work at the organization. In her current position, Ms. Amin manages the Victims of Violence Program and provides free legal representation to immigrant victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault through direct services and pro bono referrals. In addition to filing VAWA-based petitions with USCIS, namely T-visa, U-visa and VAWA self-petitions, she recruits, trains, and mentors pro bono attorneys. Ms. Amin works closely with federal/local law enforcement and is an active member of the Metro Atlanta Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force and the Human Trafficking and State Courts Collaborative. Ms. Amin received her B.A. from Virginia Tech and her J.D. from Atlanta's John Marshall Law School.

We express our deepest gratitude to our sponsors:

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A. Bernadette Olmos • Lisa J. Krisher • Jana J. Edmondson-Cooper



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