

The Sixth Judicial Circuit Court

Oakland County Probate Court

2004 ANNUAL REPORT



WE THE PEOPLE OF
THE UNITED STATES
IN ORDER TO FORM
A MORE PERFECT
UNION, ESTABLISH
JUSTICE, INSURE
DOMESTIC TRANQU



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Message from Chief Circuit Judge



The Honorable Wendy Potts
Chief Circuit Judge

*“The grandest of all laws
is the law of progressive
development. Under it,
in the wide sweep of
things, men grow wiser
as they grow older, and
societies better.”*

Christian Nevell Bovee
American Author Lawyer

Elected Officials, Staff, and the Citizens of Oakland County:

Progress was our hallmark in 2004. The implementation of a facilitator-led early intervention conference program for civil cases, creation of an alcohol treatment program aimed at OUIL 3rd offenders, and development of new mediation services for parents involved in parenting time disputes marked just a few of the innovations introduced by the Circuit Court.

Our Civil Early Intervention Conference program was developed to encourage communication between litigants in civil disputes. Guided by a neutral and experienced facilitator, the parties talk about the dispute, narrow and define the issues, and discuss possible alternative dispute resolution programs that might be appropriate for the case. In some instances the facilitators are able to achieve a settlement. After six months of operation, the docket loss attributable to this program stands at 45%. This program could not have been implemented, and would not be successful, without the invaluable assistance of the Oakland County Bar Association and nearly 200 volunteer facilitators.

The Circuit Court launched a Structured Sentencing and Accountability program aimed at OUIL 3rd offenders. Several judges have agreed, in exchange for reduced sentences, to allow eligible offenders to participate in a program involving frequent testing, treatment tailored to the nature and seriousness of their addiction, judicial supervision, and alcohol-sensing tether. The hope is that a treatment-oriented approach will enable offenders to overcome their addiction before it becomes chronic and leads to further criminal behavior.

Despite cuts in federal funding for parenting time enforcement, the Friend of the Court continued to place equal emphasis on enforcement of parenting time orders and child support orders. Friend of the Court employees responded to more than 23,000 parenting time complaints - a 3% increase from the year before. The Friend of the Court also implemented a new mediation program, in collaboration with the Oakland Mediation Center, to provide mediation services for parents with parenting time disputes.

These are but three initiatives that led to a progressive and successful 2004. The information contained in this Annual Report will provide many more examples of our accomplishments. I hope you enjoy this Report and discover that the progress we experienced last year is attributable to judges and employees who serve the citizens of Oakland County with enthusiasm, skill, and a commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendy Potts".

Wendy Potts
Chief Circuit Judge

Message from Chief Probate Judge

Elected Officials, Staff and the Citizens of Oakland County:

It is with extreme pleasure that we present the 2004 Annual Report for the Oakland County Probate and Circuit Courts. Our focus this year was on providing a higher level of service to the more than 39,000 citizens who come to the Probate Estates counter yearly. The Court undertook several initiatives this year to help better serve citizens as well as to more efficiently conduct our daily business.

The Probate Court launched a wills storage project that sought to improve our current retention and storage of the more than 80,000 wills currently held. The wills are stored in the county's Records Retention Division, which is off-site to our court operations. Upon request, it takes at least 24 hours for a will to be retrieved. The end result will be the relocation of more than 80,000 wills that will be immediately available upon request, providing greater convenience for the public.

The Court also undertook a project to create case specific divisions to better serve customers at the Probate Estates counter. Beginning in 2004, a Guardianship and Conservatorship Unit and Decedent Estates/Trusts Unit were established. The goal of these units is to provide consistency in training staff, allowing staff to become more familiar with individual files, and providing staff specialization in assisting persons at the counter. The results have already been recognized, including shorter waiting times at the counter, a higher level of specialization in answering questions, and a shortened training period for new staff.

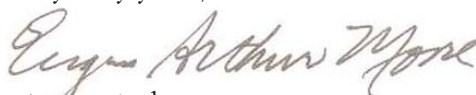
In 2004, the Court focused on changes to its website to provide greater access to court information, links to necessary sites for its users, and to make the website more user friendly overall. All local forms can now be accessed through the website. The Court also updated its computer system, which allow our staff to access information more quickly and will eventually allow us to be linked with the state and to a larger data warehouse.

Finally, a pilot program was developed to provide much needed casework service support for our minor guardianship files. The ultimate goal is to provide services and support to guardians of minors ranging from basic information on what is expected for guardians to parenting and counseling for children and families. We hope to expand this pilot into a full-time program for our Court.

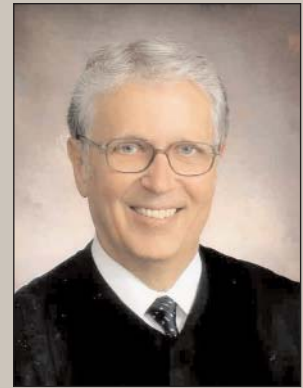
As Chief Judge of the Probate Court, I continue to recognize that our success is based upon the continuing efforts of our excellent staff in working to provide these services. We appreciate the continued support from our County Executive, L. Brooks Patterson, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, the Citizens Alliance group, the Oakland County Bar Association, and many other county departments which we rely on for our day-to-day operations.

I thank you for your continued support and interest in the Oakland County Probate Court and services to the public.

Very truly yours,



Eugene Arthur Moore
Chief Probate Judge



The Honorable Eugene Arthur Moore
Chief Probate Judge

"Justice consists not in being neutral between right and wrong, but in finding out the right and upholding it wherever found against the wrong."

Theodore Roosevelt
Twenty-sixth President of the
United States

Judges of the Circuit Court



(Front row, left to right): Judges Denise Langford Morris, Deborah G. Turner, Fred M. Mester, Steven N. Andrews, Richard D. Kuhn, Gene Schnelz, Edward Sosnick, Rudy J. Nichols, and John J. McDonald. (Back row, left to right): Judges Martha D. Anderson, Colleen A. O'Brien, Joan E. Young, Michael Warren, James M. Alexander, Patrick J. Brennan (deceased), Daniel Patrick O'Brien, Wendy L. Potts, Nanci J. Grant, and Rae Lee Chabot.

Judges of the Probate Court



(Front row, left to right): Judges Elizabeth Pezzetti and Eugene Arthur Moore. (Back row, left to right): Judges Barry M. Grant and Linda S. Hallmark.

Circuit Court Judicial Administration

Elected Officials, Court Employees and the Citizens of Oakland County:

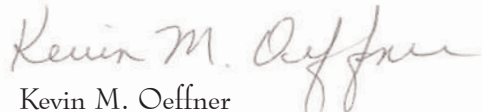
It is a pleasure to present you with the Circuit and Probate Courts' Annual Report for 2004. Contained within this Report are overviews of each division and the offices within them. You will learn about programs and projects upon which we worked, services we offered, challenges we encountered, and accomplishments that we achieved. You will meet the judges and become acquainted with our administrative staff. Most importantly, your review of this Report will culminate with the realization that these Courts are blessed with gifted and knowledgeable employees who were the catalyst for our accomplishments.

There are two events that deserve our attention. One helped to shape our legacy, the other will undoubtedly define our legacy in the years to come. On January 1, 2005, the Honorable Richard Kuhn retired after so ably serving the citizens of Oakland County for 32 years. During his tenure, Judge Kuhn had the distinction of being selected by his colleagues to serve three terms as Chief Judge. Gifted as a jurist, devoted as a public servant, and second-to-none as a gentleman, Judge Kuhn set high standards for his colleagues and court employees to emulate. He leaves the bench highly respected and appreciated by his colleagues and employees. We will be keenly aware of Judge Kuhn's positive and enduring influence for many years to come. The judges and employees of the Courts wish Judge Kuhn well as he embarks upon his retirement. He has certainly earned our admiration.

Judge Kuhn's retirement paved the way for the addition of our newest judge, the Honorable Cheryl A. Matthews. Judge Matthews was elected last November and began her service to the citizens of Oakland County on January 1, 2005. Judge Matthews was assigned to the Family Division where she will oversee a docket consisting of domestic relations, juvenile delinquency, neglect, adoptions, parenting time and child support matters, along with various other family-related cases. Prior to her election, Judge Matthews served with distinction as Chief of the Child Sexual Assault Unit where she prosecuted sexual assault, neglect and juvenile delinquency cases. Her qualifications and experience are impressive and she will be a tremendous addition to the bench.

These important events having been noted, I invite you to review the Annual Report and the other information contained on our website. The information will be helpful, informative, accurate and current, and will enhance your understanding of the Circuit and Probate Courts and the functions we perform. I trust that the information will provide evidence of our commitment to the citizens of Oakland County in the furtherance of the administration of justice for all who come in contact with our Courts.

Very truly yours,



Kevin M. Oeffner
Circuit Court Administrator



Kevin M. Oeffner
Circuit Court Administrator

*"Laws and institutions
are constantly tending to
gravitate. Like clocks,
they must be occasionally
cleansed, and wound up,
and set to true time."*

Henry Ward Beecher
Nineteenth Century writer,
lecturer, and theologian

Circuit Court - Civil/Criminal Division



Elizabeth A. Smith
Civil/Criminal Division Administrator

*“The world is so fast
that there are the days
when the person who
says it can’t be done is
interrupted by the person
who is doing it. “*

Anon
Greek Philosopher

Civil/Criminal Division Overview

The Civil/Criminal Division of the Circuit Court, formerly known as the General Jurisdiction Division, manages civil cases over \$25,000 and criminal cases involving felonies and high misdemeanors. In addition, Civil/ Criminal judges are assigned appeals from courts of lesser jurisdiction and administrative agencies. There are 14 judges within the Civil/Criminal Division who are elected for six-year terms in non-partisan elections.

Supporting the judges within this division are 60 judicial staff, including staff attorneys, judicial secretaries, law clerks, and court reporters, as well as the following departments:

Administrative Support Staff – Under the direction of the Civil/Criminal Division Administrator Elizabeth Smith, Richard Lynch serves as the Chief-Court Operations/Judicial Assistant. In this capacity, he manages the division’s legal support and criminal support staff and advises the Court on legal matters. Rich also oversees case management and jury operations for the Court.

Case Management Office – This office schedules and tracks cases through disposition and coordinates alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for the Circuit and Probate Courts. Diane Castle-Kratz serves as the Caseload/ADR Supervisor and is assisted by Andrea Bayer, Caseload Coordinator, Lisa Czyn, ADR Coordinator, as well as nine additional full-time staff.

Jury Office – The Jury Office is responsible for coordinating jury operations and obtaining jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts. Becky Young serves as the Supervisor and is assisted by Deborah Fahr, Office Leader, and three additional full-time staff.

Adult Treatment Court – This court offers alternative sentencing for non-violent adult felony offenders who have a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse or dependence. Judge Joan Young presides over the male participants of the Adult Treatment Court and Judge Colleen O’Brien presides over the female participants of the program. Elizabeth Smith serves as the program manager and Ellen Zehnder is the court coordinator.



An average of 100 to 180 citizens are summoned to the Jury Office per day to serve as possible jurors. With the advanced technology, jurors can quickly be checked in each morning and monitored through the computer system.

Circuit Court - Civil/Criminal Division

Jury Office

The [Jury Office](#) is responsible for obtaining jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts in Oakland County. Jurors are mailed a summons/questionnaire scheduling them for jury selection. In accordance with the one day/one trial jury system, jurors must be available for selection for one day. If selected to serve as a juror, their jury service is finished when the trial is completed.

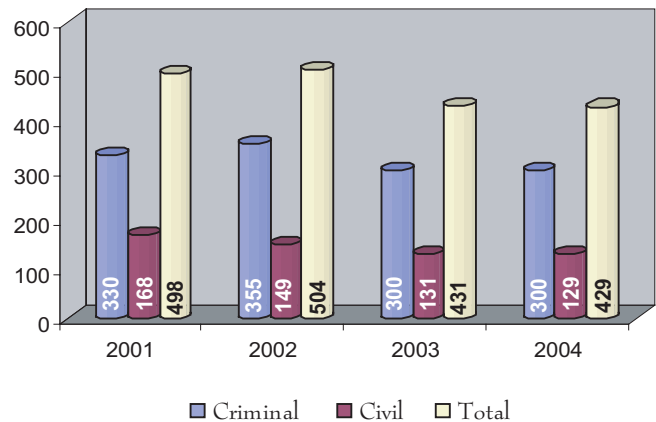
Except for persons exempted from jury service by statute, the courts expect all persons, regardless of status or occupation, to serve when summoned. The only persons legally exempt from jury service are those who do not reside in Oakland County, are not a citizen of the U.S., have served as a juror within the past 12 months, are not physically able to serve, have been convicted of a felony, or are not conversant in the English language. Persons over the age of 70 are exempt upon request.

An orientation is conducted each morning for new jurors explaining what to expect throughout their stay. Several of the judges participate in juror orientation by welcoming the jurors and explaining courtroom procedures.

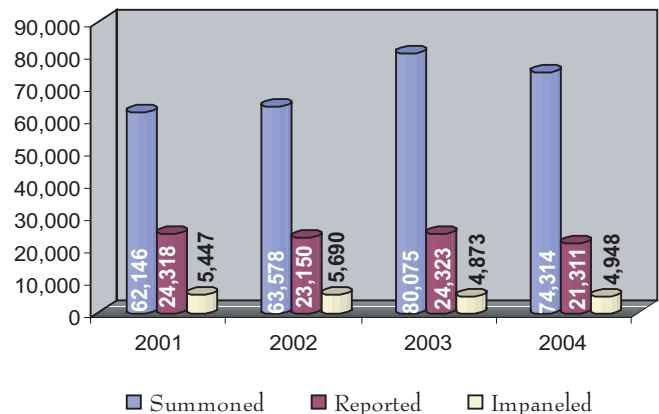
Accomplishments

- ◆ Processed all jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 129 civil trials, with an average trial duration of 2.8 days.
- ◆ Processed all jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 300 criminal trials with an average trial duration of 2.5 days. Of those trials, 81 were capital offenses.
- ◆ Summoned 74,314 citizens for jury duty. That number was reduced after excusals for legal exemptions. After determining the number needed to accommodate the daily requirements of the courts, 21,311 jurors were required to report for jury service.
- ◆ Assisted in the coordination of five highly publicized cases tried in the Circuit Court.
- ◆ Increased the efficiency of juror utilization by 8% due to modifications made in the number of jurors called in for jury duty compared to those impaneled.

JURIES SELECTED



CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT



Circuit Court - Civil/Criminal Division

Case Management Office

The [Case Management Office](#) is comprised of the Caseload unit and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) unit. This office is responsible for scheduling court dates, monitoring cases, and analyzing trends of civil and criminal court dockets. It also reviews and distributes weekly docket sheets and monthly pending caseload reports for the Circuit Court judges.

The [Caseload office](#) tracks cases from the initial filing of the lawsuit through final disposition of the case. Within that function cases are scheduled for pretrial hearings, motion calls, Civil Early Intervention Conferences, settlement conferences, trials, and sentencings.

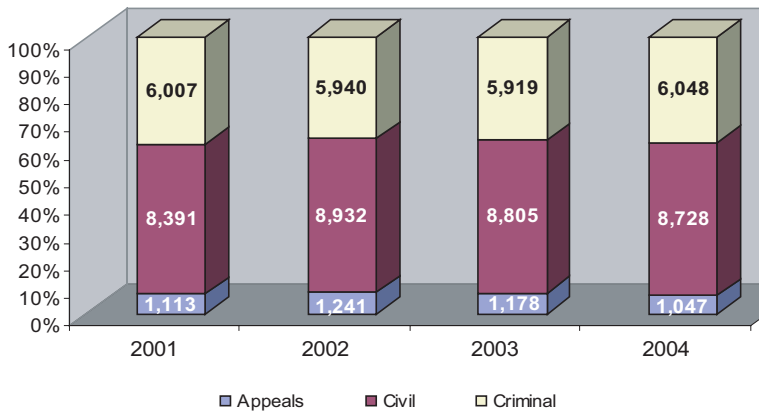
Civil Early Intervention Conferences were introduced by the Caseload office in late 2004 as a way to encourage early communication among the parties. Specific civil cases that were at least 120 days post-filing were selected for the program. Volunteer facilitators work with the parties and discuss different types of ADR processes in an effort to resolve the dispute early in the process.

The ADR unit is responsible for case evaluations and mediations, both of which are methods used to settle disputes at different time periods prior to the case proceeding to trial.

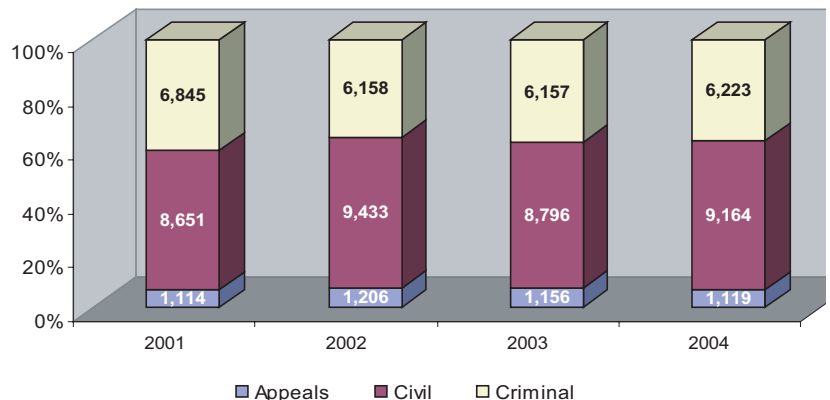
[Case evaluation](#) is used as a method of settling disputes shortly before trial. During case evaluation, a panel of three attorneys is selected to review case summaries, discuss the merits of the case with the attorneys, and place a dollar value on the case. The parties have 28 days to accept the case evaluation award. If the award is not accepted by all parties, the case proceeds to trial.

Another form of settling cases is through the [mediation](#) process. Upon a case being selected for mediation, the parties and their attorneys meet with independent mediators to discuss their conflicts. With the assistance of the mediator and the attorneys, the parties work to fashion a possible settlement to the dispute.

NEW FILINGS



DISPOSITIONS



Circuit Court - Civil/Criminal Division

Civil Early Intervention Conference

In October 2004, the Civil Early Intervention Conference (Civil EIC) pilot program was introduced in which volunteer attorneys served as facilitators for the court. This program, coordinated in cooperation with the Oakland County Bar Association, was designed to define and narrow issues in a case and to facilitate face-to-face meetings with litigants in an effort to explore settlement opportunities. Real estate, contracts, and other civil cases that were approximately 100 days old were included in the pilot program.

The seven judges participating in the program selected one week during the fourth quarter of 2004 to schedule their cases for Civil EICs. The facilitators worked with the respective attorneys and clients to engage in meaningful settlement discussions.

Of the 253 cases that were scheduled for an Early Intervention Conference during this pilot period, 45.5% of the cases were either settled prior to the EIC, by the facilitator, or within 60 days after the EIC.

This program benefits the court and the litigants on a number of fronts. It fosters communication between the parties early in a dispute and also gives facilitators an opportunity to introduce alternative dispute resolution programs. Further, the program encourages early settlement, which in turn reduces litigation costs. If a Civil EIC does not generate a settlement, at the very least it enables the parties to more clearly define and narrow the issues in the dispute, which may lead to a settlement later in the case. Ultimately, the successful EIC program will reduce the pending civil docket.



Civil Early Intervention Conferences were introduced as a pilot program in 2004 as a means of narrowing the issues in cases and exploring possible settlement options. Attorneys, along with their clients, met with a facilitator and reviewed different types of ADR processes to help resolve the dispute.

Accomplishments

- ◆ Processed 13,118 scheduling orders on civil cases.
- ◆ Settled 56% of the 559 cases that were submitted to the civil mediation program.
- ◆ Distributed \$163,875 to the Law Library from late fees assessed to case evaluation.
- ◆ Scheduled approximately 42,400 praecipes to be heard on Wednesday motion calls.
- ◆ Implemented a Civil Early Intervention Conference (EIC) pilot program, which began in October.

Circuit Court - Family Division



Lisa Langton
Family Division Administrator
Probate/Juvenile Register

“My own experience and development deepen everyday my conviction that our moral progress may be measured by the degree in which we sympathize with individual suffering and individual joy.”

George Eliot
British Novelist

Family Division Overview

The [Circuit Court Family Division](#), under the direction of Lisa Langton, includes the Judicial Support unit, Court Services unit, Friend of the Court operation, and the administration of the Probate Court.

[Friend of the Court](#) – Administered by the Friend of the Court, Suzanne Hollyer, this operation provides case management and enforcement services on domestic relations matters. Referees, family counselors, investigators, and mediators work in teams to assist the litigants in the management and enforcement of complex family law matters.

[Court Services](#) – The Court Services unit, which is headed by Pamela Davis, Deputy Court Administrator, provides casework and intensive casework services, clinical services through the Psychological Clinic, and community diversion efforts through the Youth Assistance unit.

[Judicial Support](#) – This unit is headed by William Bartlam, Deputy Court Administrator and Judicial Assistant, and consists of Juvenile Referees, Juvenile Intake, and Juvenile Adoption areas. In Mr. Bartlam's role as Judicial Assistant, he is also the lead legal advisor for the Probate and Family Division areas.

[Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court](#) – Also known as OPTIONS (Owning the Problem - Trusting In Our New Skills), this court integrates drug treatment services with the justice system case processing by including treatment providers on the drug court team. Prosecution and defense counsel work together using a non-adversarial approach. The drug court was awarded approximately \$469,000 in renewed grant funding, which was used to serve a total of 169 youth and family members.



Judge Sosnick congratulates a juvenile drug court graduate and presents her with a motivational plaque, certificate of achievement, and a gift certificate upon completion of the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court program.

Circuit Court - Family Division

Friend of the Court

The [Friend of the Court](#) is responsible for assisting in domestic relations cases by investigating and enforcing issues involving custody, support, and parenting time.

The Friend of the Court completed its first full year in the statewide child support computer system. The conversion resulted in a transfer of authority for receipting and disbursing support payments from the Friend of the Court to the Michigan State Disbursement Unit.

As a result of working within a statewide child support program, Oakland County Friend of the Court has a close partnership with state-level participants in the child support program. This partnership has allowed the concerns of Oakland County citizens to be addressed in the development of new programs and enhancements to the computer system.

Friend of the Court referees hold hearings to enforce Family Division orders regarding child support, custody, and parenting time. Friend of the Court staff members review requests for enforcement from parties and attorneys and initiate legal action to enforce court orders as appropriate. The Friend of the Court referees conduct hearings on orders to show cause for violations of child support, custody, and parenting time orders. They assist

Family Division judges by making recommendations for resolution of sensitive family law disputes.

On Order of Reference from the Family Division, referees, domestic support specialists, and family counselors investigate complex legal, financial, and emotional issues arising in custody, parenting time, support, and interstate proceedings in pending and post-judgment actions. They refer hundreds of unemployed clients to the Job Placement program.

Newly divorcing parents receive services unique to the county. The award-winning [SMILE](#) program provides information to parents on creating a conflict-free space for their children during and after a divorce. Additionally, Early Intervention Conferences offer divorcing clients an opportunity to meet with the referee assigned to their case early in the divorce process.

The Friend of the Court continues to work closely with the Citizen Advisory Committee, which was created by the Board of Commissioners. The committee meets monthly with the director of the Friend of the Court to review concerns and suggestions submitted by members of the public.

Accomplishments

- ◆ Resolved 461 medical support issues, including 77 through the referee hearing process. Enforcement of the medical provisions in domestic relations orders has become a highly-automated process.
- ◆ Reviewed 941 support obligations for modification of the support obligation and enforced 210 support obligations through the use of the license suspension remedy.
- ◆ Resolved 18,607 requests for the enforcement of support, custody, and parenting time, of which 17,235 were resolved with referee hearings.
- ◆ Held 5,145 evidentiary hearings before Friend of the Court referees.
- ◆ Held 2,532 Early Intervention Conferences with parties who filed for divorce in 2004.
- ◆ Interviewed 1,226 non-custodial parents for Job Placement/Work First referrals.
- ◆ Addressed 23,151 custody and parenting time concerns by Friend of the Court Family Counselors who provided information and services to parents involved in a domestic relations case through mediation, negotiation of make-up parenting time agreements, scheduling contempt-of-court hearings, and preparation of consent orders to modify parenting time.

Circuit Court - Family Division

Court Services

The [Court Services](#) operation is comprised of the Casework Services Unit (Juvenile Probation), Psychological Clinic, Youth Assistance, and the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court Program. Over 100 employees are responsible for providing direct services to clients, performing case management, conducting research and program development, providing education, developing community resources through volunteer coordination, and promoting public awareness.

[Casework Services](#) - The Casework Services Unit is responsible for all delinquency cases authorized for the court by the Intake Department and assists cases through the adjudication process when necessary. Upon adjudication, the Casework Unit is responsible for preparation of the social history report (including any corroborative information), which takes into account both the special needs of the child/family and the protection of the community. From this report, recommendations regarding disposition are generated and forwarded to the Court. During post-disposition, the Casework Unit assists in implementing court orders, including the monitoring of probation, restitution, community service, restorative justice, parent education, and counseling.

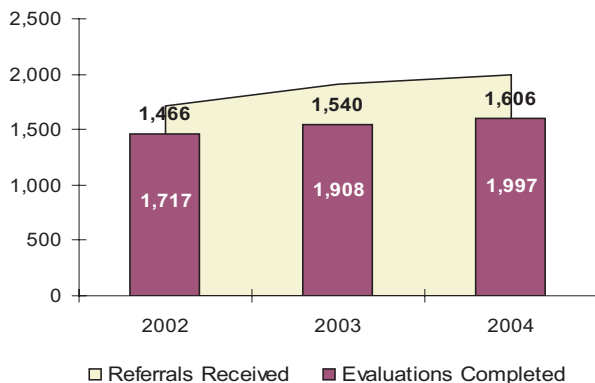
[Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court Program](#) - The Juvenile Drug Court program, also known as Options, is a joint effort between the justice and public health treatment systems in an effort to address the problem of substance abuse for eligible youth within the community. The mission of the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court program is to promote public safety by reducing juvenile criminal recidivism, assisting substance abusing juvenile offenders and their families achieve drug-free lifestyles, and supporting families as they formulate healthy relationships. The focus of Juvenile Drug Court is to intervene in substance use and eliminate criminal

behavior through intensive court supervision and the utilization of various treatment tools. The program is comprised of three phases, each in duration of at least twelve weeks, followed by aftercare of six to twelve weeks. Movement to higher phases is dependent upon performance and points earned in the previous phase. Various incentives and sanctions (penalties) are utilized to ensure compliance with program guidelines.

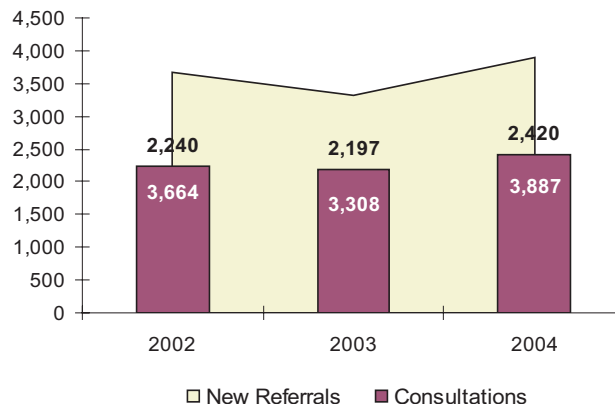
[Psychological Clinic](#) - The Clinical Services Unit, or Psychological Clinic, is responsible for aiding Jurists in making informed decisions by providing forensic evaluations of many children and families who are involved with the Court. In addition, the clinic offers specialized treatment services to clients, and clinicians are available for case consultation with hearing officers, caseworkers, attorneys, the Department of Human Services (formerly Family Independence Agency), school personnel, and others. The clinic also conducts and coordinates training and research, including but not limited to program evaluations and staff development programs.

[Youth Assistance](#) - As the primary prevention segment of the Court's continuum of services, the mission of Youth Assistance is to strengthen youth and families and to prevent and reduce delinquency, abuse, and neglect through community involvement. Using a decentralized approach, staff work with a board of volunteers to identify and address each community's needs. Community-based programs include parenting and family education, skill and self-esteem building, mentoring, recreation programs, and youth recognition. Staff also provide family-focused, need-based casework services. Each of the 26 local Youth Assistance programs is co-sponsored by the school districts and municipalities therein, and the Court.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC



YOUTH ASSISTANCE



Circuit Court - Family Division

The Psychological Clinic

The [Psychological Clinic](#), under the supervision of Bernard Gaulier, Ph.D., plays an important role in the operations of the Family Division. The clinic provides psychological assessments and evaluations to assist Family Division judges in making dispositions concerning children and their families.

In 2004, over 1,900 cases were evaluated by court psychologists and contractual psychologists. The psychologists evaluate individual family members and provide a written snapshot of the psychological functioning of the individual and family as a unit.

Psychologists are frequently called on to appear in court as expert witnesses to testify, especially when dealing with issues concerning parental rights.

In addition to psychological assessments in delinquency, abuse, neglect, and domestic relation cases (child custody and parenting time disputes), the clinic provides treatment and education services. Programs offered by the Psychological Clinic include STAR, run by James Windell, providing group treatment for adolescents on probation; ADEPT, co-founded by Mary Seyuin and James Windell, for high conflict, post-divorce couples; and CHOICE, run by Mary Seyuin, providing parents of teens on probation strategies to help modify adolescent behavior.



The Psychological Clinic consists of (front row, left to right): Lori Hale, Kristin Meekhof, Julie Kwon, Sylvie Bourget, Dr. Bernard Gaulier (Chief), Deborah Mocerri, Victoria Rupert, and Mary Seyuin. Back row, left to right: Paul Van Heulen, James Windell, Rodney Yeaker, Wayne MacIntosh, Scott Allen, and Kati Conti. Not present: Joanna Papiez and Stephanie Pyrras.

Accomplishments

- ◆ Casework Unit successfully collaborated with Crossroads for Youth to create additional treatment bed space for female clients. In addition, the unit developed and implemented a plan to monitor, track, and potentially reduce caseworker recommendations and court orders for commitments to FIA, which will create major savings per year.
- ◆ Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court has successfully graduated 31 participants to date. The Drug Court also partnered with Easter Seals of Oakland County to provide in-home services to families in need of mental health services.
- ◆ Psychological Clinic developed, with the assistance of the Training Council, training for Court staff in the following areas: "Cultural Sensitivity Training" (presented by the Arab-American and Chaldean Council); "Early Detection of Mental Health Disorders" (for caseworkers and Youth Assistance staff); "An Extraordinary Ordinary Day" (a stress management seminar); and "Pepper Spray Training" (for new field staff).
- ◆ Psychological Clinic, with the assistance of the IT staff, completed modifications to the clinic's free-standing database.
- ◆ Youth Assistance reached an all-time high of 3,887 referrals from police, schools, and parents for Youth Assistance casework services. Through a grant awarded to the Youth Assistance Coordinating Council, a program to promote resiliency skills was provided for adolescent girls from both Youth Assistance and Probation Department caseloads.

Circuit Court - Family Division

Judicial Support Services

The Judicial Support staff assists the judges of the Family Division in the following areas:

- ◆ [Adoptions](#) and [confidential intermediary services](#);
- ◆ Child abuse and neglect cases;
- ◆ Juvenile delinquency and juvenile traffic cases;
- ◆ Juvenile Court intake;
- ◆ [Personal Protection Orders](#);
- ◆ Safe delivery of newborns;
- ◆ Waiver of parental consent to abortion.

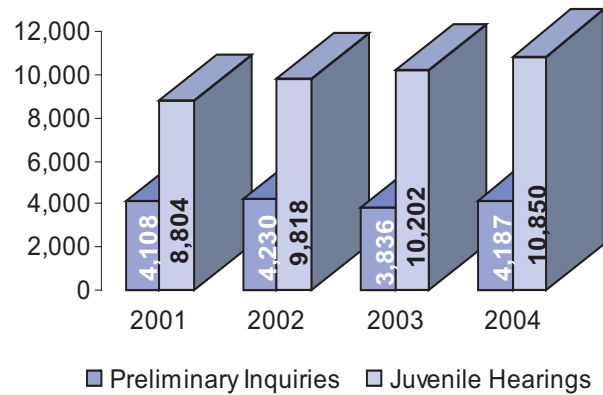
In these areas, support staff schedule cases, prepare files, create documents, maintain both public and confidential records, serve summons and other process, and distribute court orders and other materials.

Juvenile referees assist the judges by conducting many of the hearings and recommending decisions to the judges in these actions. Personal Protection Order attorney-interviewers have face-to-face meetings with petitioners and then make confidential recommendations to judges.

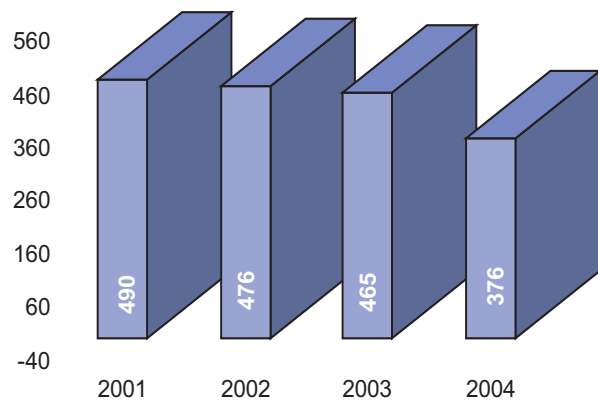
Juvenile court referees represent the court 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. They authorize the detention of juveniles and removal of children due to risk of harm. Referees review all complaints and petitions referred to the Court. They evaluate each matter and make decisions involving diversions or authorizations of petitions. Referees act as the trier of fact in cases involving delinquency and those involving abuse and neglect of children. They recommend treatment plans for children and parents and monitor delinquents and children in foster care, which may include recommendations for the termination of parental rights.

The attorney appointment specialist maintains a database of attorneys qualified by education and experience for representing indigent parties. Upon request, this person matches eligible attorneys to requests for appointed counsel in Family Division and Probate cases, then processes all pertinent documents relating to the appointment.

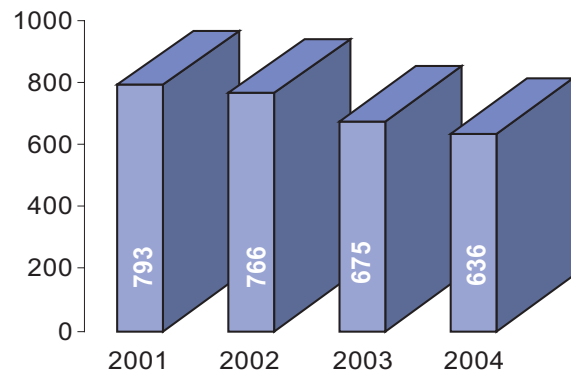
JUVENILE HEARINGS vs PRELIMINARY INQUIRIES HELD



TRAFFIC HEARINGS HELD



ADOPTION HEARINGS HELD



Circuit Court - Family Division

Accomplishments

- ♦ Selected Nicole Bennett to fill the newly created Attorney Appointment Specialist position, which includes processing over 4,000 requests per year for court appointed attorneys as well as reviewing applications from attorneys interested in representing indigent parties.
- ♦ Trained, in conjunction with the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, over 70 police officers at the 7th annual police orientation to the Oakland County Juvenile Justice system, which included representatives from the Prosecutor's Office, the Court, Oakland Schools, Family Independence Agency, Common Ground Sanctuary, and Children's Village.
- ♦ In conjunction with the Family Independence Agency and the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, developed a program entitled, "The Foster Care Worker's Guide to the Court System." In four sessions, successfully trained 150 private agency and FIA foster care staff.
- ♦ Celebrated "Michigan Adoption Day 2004" on November 24, 2004. Family division judges finalized 37 adoptions that day. This was the single-largest group of adoptions in Michigan. The day's events were highlighted by remarks from Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura Corrigan.
- ♦ Assisted in processing 4,263 juvenile delinquency, 517 child abuse and neglect cases, and 3,752 petitions for Personal Protection Orders. More than 13,500 hearings were heard and over 3,600 petitioners asking for a Personal Protection Order were seen.
- ♦ Provided specialized in-service training to family division judges on Child Protective Proceedings and Juvenile Justice, together with key updates on new laws and rules of procedure, and court forms. The training included the very specific requirements judges must meet to ensure federal financial participation for children's foster care payments, which amounts to several million dollars each year in Oakland County.

SUMMARY OF FAMILY DIVISION ACTIVITY

New Filing Activity

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Juvenile/Adoptions				
Delinquency	3,881	3,465	3,526	3,891
Child Protective Proceedings	345	268	527	517
Juvenile Traffic Tickets	539	482	409	394
Adoption Petitions	477	504	436	424
Subtotal	5,242	4,719	4,898	5,226
Domestic Relations				
No Children	2,772	2,646	2,651	2,595
With Children	2,792	2,732	2,584	2,520
Paternity	851	830	531	825
URESAs	411	275	272	379
Support	863	843	604	1,056
Other	187	274	273	272
Subtotal	7,876	7,600	6,915	7,647
Personal Protection Orders				
Domestic	2,753	2,599	2,561	2,366
Non Domestic	1,125	1,094	1,162	1,279
Juvenile	116	97	85	107
Subtotal	3,994	3,790	3,808	3,752
Miscellaneous Family				
Name Change	430	481	464	452
Other	N/A	153	140	78
Subtotal	430	634	604	530
Total New Filings	17,542	16,743	16,225	17,155

Probate Court - Estates and Mental Health

Estates and Mental Health Overview

Probate Court maintains jurisdiction over estates, trusts, guardianships, conservatorships, and mental health proceedings. In 2004, the Honorable Eugene Arthur Moore presided as Chief Probate Judge and the Honorable Barry M. Grant was Presiding Probate Judge - Estates. The Probate bench also included the Honorable Linda Hallmark and the Honorable Elizabeth Pezzetti.

The Oakland County Probate Court [Estates Division](#) has jurisdiction over decedent estates, which includes probating wills and the administration of testate estates (with a will) and intestate estates (without a will) by personal representatives. The Court also interprets wills and trusts in the event of uncertainty or conflict and to determine the heirs in intestate estates.

The Estates counter is a bustling center of activity as staff process the necessary paperwork, set court hearings as necessary, and direct files into court for motion call. There were 38,336 individuals served at the Probate Court

in 2004. Besides decedent estate and trust matters, this unit also handles the paperwork and oversight of guardianships and conservatorships of adults and minors, manages the guardianship review process, and files wills for safekeeping. All legal records of the department are a matter of public record and are available for review by the general public.

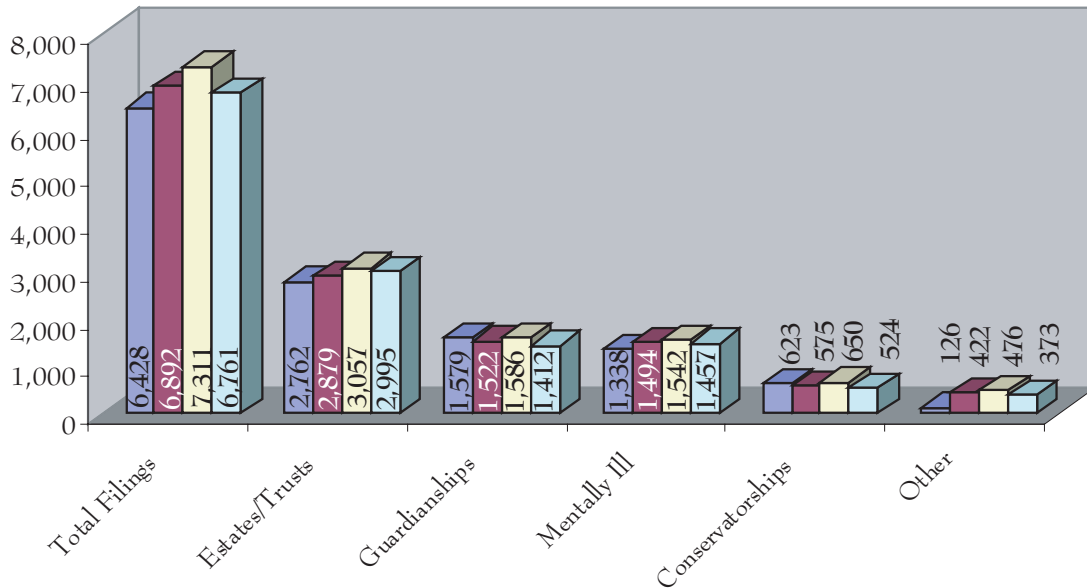
Another important function performed by the Probate Court is the handling of proceedings under the [Mental Health Code](#), including involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill persons and the judicial admissions and guardianships of developmentally disabled persons. The Mental Health Division also handles cases involving minors in need of substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services. Staff are called upon frequently to assist petitioners who are requesting emergency court orders for immediate transport of an individual to a preadmission screening unit for examination and possible hospitalization for mental health treatment.



An average of 750 people per week were assisted at the Probate Estates counter in 2004. The counter includes ten work stations, and a cashier, where paperwork is processed on new and existing files, hearings are set, files are prepared for motion call, pleadings are filed on decedent estates, trusts, guardianship and conservatorship matters, and wills are received for safekeeping. The Probate Estates and Mental Health office also handles the oversight of adult and minor guardianship reviews as well as handling proceedings under the Mental Health Code.

Probate Court - Estates and Mental Health

NEW FILING TRENDS



NEW FILES OPENED

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Small Estates	676	678	671	692
EPIC-Supervised	79	53	53	32
EPIC-Unsupervised	1,877	1,942	2,028	1,909
Trust-Intervivos	130	185	193	195
Adult Guardianships	980	877	870	755
Minor Guardianships	599	645	716	657
Adult Conservatorships	409	399	444	363
Minor Conservatorships	214	176	206	161
Mentally Ill	1,338	1,494	1,542	1,457
Guardianship-Developmentally Disabled		155	258	230
Reopened Estates and Trusts		21	112	167
Protective Orders		38	30	43
Civil and Other	126	229	188	100
Total	6,428	6,892	7,311	6,761

ACTIVE CASES

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Deceased-Supervised	8	1	5	2
Deceased-Independent	25	0	0	1
EPIC-Supervised	671	484	337	228
EPIC-Unsupervised	3,159	3,381	3,224	3,265
Adult Guardianships (LIP)	3,119	3,144	3,168	3,119
Adult Guardianships (DDP)	1,460	1,451	1,480	1,521
Minor Guardianships	2,681	2,723	2,793	2,750
Adult Conservatorships	1,538	1,559	1,514	1,459
Minor Conservatorships	1,664	1,626	1,567	1,461
Other	233	208	219	190
Total	14,558	14,577	14,307	13,996

Business Division of the Courts



John L. Cooperrider
Court Business Administrator

*“Progress lies not in
enhancing what is, but
in advancing toward
what will be.”*

Kahill Gibran
Author

Business Division Overview

The [Business Division](#) is responsible for the development and delivery of business and administrative support services for both the Circuit and Probate Courts. In order to effectively manage its diverse and complex responsibilities, this division is divided into two primary units of operation.

The Administrative/Financial unit, under the supervision of Tina Sobocinski, is responsible for developing and monitoring the Courts' \$60 million budget, processing all payments for services, including court appointed attorney payments and personnel transactions, recording attendance and mileage, managing courthouse and satellite office facilities, handling capital improvement and special project requests, and managing the equipment needs of the courts.

Mary Gohl oversees the Data/Technology unit. The responsibilities of this unit include the advancement of court automation, managing day-to-day computer and network issues, and implementing new court technology initiatives. This unit also provides word processing support, including the typing of court documents necessary for the functioning of the court (i.e., court, psychological, and referee reports). In addition, this unit provides court reporter services for the Court's juvenile referees, creating records of courtroom proceedings and producing transcripts.

The Business Division is also responsible for coordinating special projects and events, grant writing, and public information management. Karen MacKenzie directs the Court's efforts in this regard. Responsibilities include developing the Court's website, press releases and media relations, developing court brochures and other publications, supervising court tours, producing the Human Resource Directory, acquiring alternative sources of funds, and directing and coordinating other special projects and events.

Marcia Travis was appointed to the position of Court Operations Analyst in the Business Division. Due to budget issues, it was necessary to find alternative ways to perform court functions more efficiently and effectively. The primary role of this position is to conduct improvement studies within the Circuit and Probate Court divisions/units regarding aspects of all court operations.

The Data/Technology Unit functions as the liaison between the Circuit and Probate Courts and the Information Technology Department. Staff include (front row, left to right): Christina Bujak, Mary Gohl (supervisor), and Phil DeBarr. Back row, left to right: Terri Castiglione, Porferia Mellado, and Julie Fabrizio.



Business Division of the Courts

Court Appointed Attorney Payments

In 2004, over 13,000 requests for court appointed attorneys were received from indigent defendants. When an attorney is appointed by the court to represent a client in a criminal, juvenile, or probate matter, the Business Division has the responsibility for processing the paperwork and securing payment for the court appointed attorney.

At the conclusion of a case, the court appointed attorney submits a voucher for payment to the Business Division. Upon receipt of the voucher by the Business Division, vouchers are thoroughly reviewed and information is verified. In 2004, this process was streamlined by implementing new forms, which are now available online, as well as allowing completed forms to be faxed. This change significantly increased the speed at which forms were processed and payments made to the court appointed attorneys.

Over 10,000 court appointed attorney vouchers were processed for payment for the Civil/Criminal Division, Family Division and the Probate Court. Debbie Thompson is responsible for processing attorney vouchers and submitting payments. She is assisted by Linda Russell for processing Circuit Court vouchers and Donna Riley for juvenile vouchers.



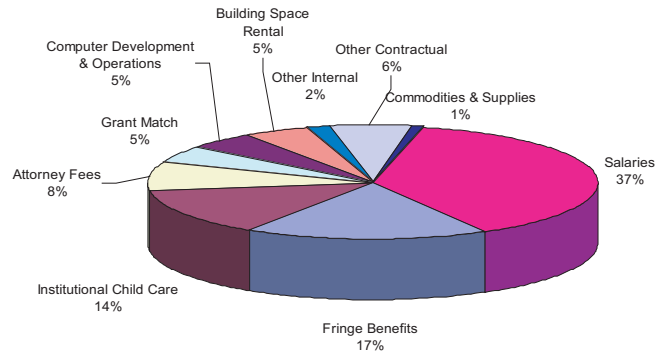
Reviewing payment vouchers is an integral part of the processing of court appointed attorney requests. The Business Division streamlined the payment of court appointed vouchers by implementing new forms and changing the way forms may be submitted. Over 10,000 court appointed attorney vouchers were processed by this office in 2004.

Accomplishments

- ◆ Continued improvements to the website, making it more service oriented and interactive for the legal community and citizens of Oakland County.
- ◆ Continued implementation of new caseload reporting requirements mandated by the Michigan Supreme Court, including identifying and programming information related to reporting pending case age and case age at disposition.
- ◆ Established and monitored five grant contracts for the drug courts totaling over \$700,000.
- ◆ Added a third video transcription agency via the RFP (Request for Proposal) process to assist administration and judges in the preparation of video transcripts.
- ◆ Upgraded all video courtrooms in preparation of moving to digital storage of courtroom proceedings on CDs and networking all video courtrooms.
- ◆ Implemented new juror filing fee changes.

Business Division of the Courts

CIRCUIT COURT AND PROBATE COURT FINANCIAL REPORT

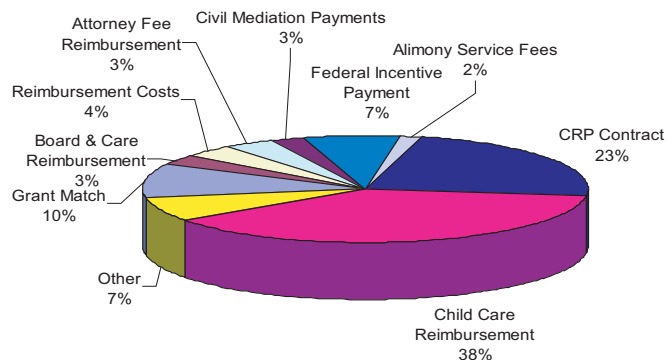


2004 Expenditures: \$65,898,557

<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003-04</u> <u>% Chg</u>
Salaries	\$24,006,228	\$24,150,153	\$24,979,519	3.4%
Fringe Benefits	\$9,237,517	\$9,539,814	\$11,548,288	21.1%
Institutional Child Care	\$7,975,312	\$7,966,648	\$9,032,371	13.4%
Attorney Fees	\$4,363,856	\$4,784,065	\$5,419,797	13.3%
Grant Match	\$4,336,621	\$5,005,332	\$3,068,151	-38.7%
Building Space Rental	\$3,092,415	\$3,107,504	\$3,015,136	-3.0%
Computer Development & Operations	\$2,961,680	\$2,724,512	\$3,155,532	15.8%
Indirect Costs	\$1,364,199	\$914,632	\$932,016	1.9%
Professional Services	\$777,173	\$693,782	\$765,403	10.3%
Mediator Fees	\$696,125	\$707,000	\$695,200	-1.7%
Jury Fees & Mileage	\$587,863	\$588,945	\$859,079	45.9%
Other	\$469,708	\$407,324	\$73,460	-82.0%
Postage	\$363,322	\$358,554	\$229,987	-35.9%
Telephone Communications	\$312,117	\$438,121	\$553,083	26.2%
Visiting Judges	\$279,645	\$112,088	\$50,766	-54.7%
Overtime	\$265,318	\$145,312	\$123,708	-14.9%
Commodities/Supplies	\$229,795	\$204,621	\$194,629	-4.9%
Mileage/Leased Vehicles	\$223,582	\$213,081	\$177,872	-16.5%
Transcripts	\$202,324	\$189,528	\$234,625	23.8%
Furniture/Equipment Purchase	\$161,818	\$254,272	\$81,745	-67.9%
Printing	\$158,627	\$187,887	\$181,201	-3.6%
Copiers	\$143,514	\$93,574	\$92,819	-0.8%
Equipment Rental	\$106,472	\$121,920	\$112,224	-8.0%
Insurance	\$88,980	\$56,785	\$81,186	43.0%
Court Reporter Services	\$87,262	\$75,825	\$32,937	-56.6%
Maintenance Charges	\$77,269	\$38,679	\$60,416	56.2%
Operating Transfer/Adjust Prior Yrs Rev	\$70,000	\$651,123	\$0	N/A
Interpreter Services	\$53,993	\$65,234	\$67,815	4.0%
Micrographics/Reproductions	\$48,784	\$21,351	\$19,550	-8.4%
Computer Legal Research	\$45,580	\$48,900	\$50,608	3.5%
Library Materials	\$0	\$0	\$9,434	N/A
Software Rental/Lease	\$5,600	\$0	\$0	N/A
Total	\$62,792,699	\$63,866,566	\$65,898,557	3.2%

Business Division of the Courts

CIRCUIT COURT AND PROBATE COURT FINANCIAL REPORT



2004 Revenues: \$29,971,587

<u>Revenues/Sources of Funds</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003-04</u> <u>% Chg</u>
Child Care Reimbursement	\$9,714,943	\$9,228,533	\$11,427,258	23.8%
CRP Contract	\$6,460,198	\$6,301,803	\$6,756,994	7.2%
Grant Match	\$4,336,621	\$5,005,332	\$3,046,727	-39.1%
Costs	\$1,181,697	\$1,286,022	\$1,194,636	-7.1%
Federal Incentive Payment	\$1,028,738	\$1,522,260	\$2,083,179	36.8%
Board & Care Reimbursement	\$1,018,255	\$912,147	\$959,536	5.2%
Attorney Fee Reimbursement	\$1,003,633	\$939,452	\$1,008,308	7.3%
Civil Mediation Payments	\$815,045	\$883,050	\$803,060	-9.1%
State Grants	\$531,444	\$145,039	\$0	N/A
Alimony Service Fees	\$487,171	\$473,579	\$507,107	7.1%
Transfer - In	\$469,760	\$609,193	\$0	N/A
Grants - Federal	\$456,250	\$478,595	\$0	N/A
CRP State Supplement	\$422,549	\$383,863	\$369,545	-3.7%
Probate Estate Fees	\$279,707	\$282,054	\$274,798	-2.6%
Probation Service Fees	\$186,387	\$163,314	\$175,901	7.7%
Mediation Fines	\$185,345	\$171,400	\$168,300	-1.8%
Reimbursement State County Agent	\$180,455	\$180,533	\$135,400	-25.0%
Reimbursement - Salaries	\$166,924	\$67,199	\$35,525	-47.1%
Family Counseling Fees	\$123,060	\$0	\$228,495	N/A
Psychological Clinical Eval Fees	\$117,174	\$133,570	\$97,185	-27.2%
Other	\$101,272	\$82,895	\$85,272	2.9%
Probate Certified Copies	\$98,486	\$84,505	\$91,483	8.3%
ADC Incentive Payment	\$93,365	\$0	\$0	N/A
FOC Filing Fees	\$84,240	\$93,870	\$111,150	18.4%
Other Probate Filing Fees	\$73,276	\$70,504	\$83,499	18.4%
Processing Fees	\$62,481	\$57,753	\$64,176	11.1%
FOC Judgment Fees	\$27,600	\$28,880	\$26,000	-10.0%
Jury Fees	N/A	N/A	\$218,267	N/A
Probate Will Deposits	\$21,850	\$17,925	\$18,075	0.8%
Prior Years Revenue	\$0	\$1,375	\$1,711	24.4%
Total	\$29,727,926	\$29,604,645	\$29,971,587	1.2%

Awards and Honors

2004 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR



Employee of the Year awards were presented in December to representatives from various areas of court operations acknowledging their contributions to the Circuit and Probate Courts. Those recognized were (standing, left to right, front row): Julie Ritter, Probate Court; Jenny Clark, Civil/Criminal Division; Susan Koop, Friend of the Court; and Kris Vollmar, Friend of the Court. (Standing, left to right, back row): The Honorable Wendy Potts, Chief Judge of Circuit Court, and the Honorable Eugene Arthur Moore, Chief Judge of Probate Court.

2004 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Employee of the Year nominees also recognized for their service and dedication to the Court were (first row, left to right): Angela Miller, Mary Kaye Neumann, Diane Grabar, Vicki Spicer, Sheila Russ, Cheryl Boyle, and Patrina Anthony. (Second row, left to right) Gwynne Starkey, Mary Mansch (Honorable Mention), Shannon Fler, Kim Voss, Colleen Bagazinski, Sandy Grubbs, Dr. Bernard Gaulier, and Barbara Pickens. (Third row, left to right) Jeanette Leshan, Julie McKenzie, and Brenda Kirtland. (Fourth row, left to right) John Greenhill and Robert Proudfoot. Not shown: Lori Hale, Joanna Papiiez, Robert Fachnie, Armethyst Lucius, Cassandra Goulding, Vladimir Vandalov, Sandra Binder, Renee Bush, Patricia Cronney, Mike DeSantis, April Hutchings, Robert Keif, Sandra Krusky, Bonnie Lavergne, Betty Lou Lowenthal, Daniel Pitsos, Joseph Rzepecki, Vicki Shelton, Don Smith, Jack Watkins, Ted Wright, Bridgett Ray, and Jill Adkins.

Court Employees Make A Difference

The Courts' talented and committed staff make every effort to provide service in a knowledgeable, efficient, and caring manner. The outstanding reputation of the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts is a reflection of this philosophy and the Courts' commitment to service. Throughout the year, unsolicited testimonials recognizing Court employees for service excellence were received from citizens and users of the Courts' services. What follows is a sampling of the recognition received:

Pat Croney

Child Support Account
Specialist
Friend of the Court

"I just wanted to take a minute to compliment one of your staff. I have had the occasion, in the past year, to work with Pat Croney on several matters. She has been just wonderful. Pat has been prompt in returning my calls, gone out of her way to provide the information which I needed, has been very efficient and cordial, and truly has been a pleasure to work with. I know this view of Pat is shared by several family law attorneys who have worked with her because when her name has come up, the comments have all been positive. I know you hear when someone has something negative to say about someone --thought you should hear when someone has something positive to say."

Andrea Bayer

Case Coordinator
Civil/Criminal Division

"It was refreshing to deal with a person in the court system who actually was willing to help as opposed to look across the desk and try to jam you. I just wanted to say thank you for your help and understanding as I seek to represent my client."

Hank Szlenkier

Youth Assistance Caseworker
and
Oxford Youth Assistance
Circuit Court Family Division

"It's me, Jason, just writing to thank you for sending me to camp. I had a GREAT time! We did fun things like archery, the BLOB! and the Aqua Jump. It was really cool. My counselor was really nice and I made some friends too!

You were also a really nice person who taught me some good things like going for a walk when I'm angry and deep breathing exercises to steady my nerves. Wish I could send you a lot more than just a card. Thanks a lot. Hope to see you soon."

Jill Daly

Chief, Probate Estates
and Mental Health

Carol Esher

Case Management Coordinator

Pat Hays

Secretary, Probate Court

"We want to thank you for the excellent training session you presented on Friday, April 24, to the crew of new volunteers. Carol and Pat were also very effective in their talks. . . . It is reassuring and comforting for us to know we can rely on all of you to help us unsnarl a difficult case or even help us see what is sometimes an obvious solution.

The new volunteers are eager to get going on a case and to start putting some of the pieces of the puzzle together. They don't know how fortunate they are in having had such a well-presented training at the Courthouse!! But we know and many thanks."

Paula Jefferson

Youth and Family Caseworker
Circuit Court Family Division

"Thank you Ms. Jefferson for all that you have done for us since first contact. You are a very classy lady, like I told you before, and not many women can pull that off. In the profession you're in, you know when to be stern, when to believe or not believe, when to listen to your heart, and when to listen to your head.

With the way you carry yourself and handle situations, there will be families that you will have helped more than you know."

Jury Office Staff

Civil/Criminal Division

"My experience serving on a jury was an extremely positive one. It was a very exciting learning experience as well as an interesting course in the laws of the state. Everyone was very nice and our accommodations were pleasant. I had always heard jury duty was "not fun," but I enjoyed it and would do it again if I was called."

A Year In Review



Judge Kuhn presents Dennis Heinrich, court clerk for Judge Nanci Grant, with the 2003-04 Kuhn Scholarship. The scholarship is given to court clerks employed by the Circuit Court who are enrolled in law school for the academic year or have been accepted to law school for the upcoming academic year.



Youth Assistance Caseworkers (left to right) Nancy Minckler and Judy Berz visit with Youth Assistance Volunteers Judy Kiley, Chairperson of Huron Valley Youth Assistance, Patricia Pilchowski, and Judy Dietrich as they wait to hear the keynote speaker, Kent Roberts of the National Civility Center, at the Youth Assistance Coordinating Council 2004 Annual Meeting.



The Second Annual Adoption Day was held on November 23 with five family division judges finalizing adoptions for 37 children. Following the hearings, adoptive families, along with their families and friends, celebrated with court staff at a reception where Chief Justice Maura Corrigan addressed the group.



The Citizen's Alliance for the Circuit and Probate Courts consists of members from schools, medical centers, public and private agencies, and the business community, who work in collaboration with Court personnel. Members are (front row, left to right): Chris Piatowski, Jan Carlstein, Karen MacKenzie, Lynn Alexander, and Renee Mahler. Second row, left to right: Judge Linda Hallmark, Lisa Langton, Suzenne Dreifus, Helene Phillips, and Coleen Sootsman-Eicher. Third row, left to right: Andrew Hubbs, Tom Trainer, Michael Hughes, Carol Winter, Jill Koney Daly, and Phil Fabrizio. Fourth row, left to right: Monica Lee, James O'Neill, and Danny O'Neill.

A Year In Review



Judge James M. Alexander, Dick Stasys, and Mary Schusterbauer look on as Kevin Alder, President and COO of Akebono Corporation, presents a \$5,000 check to Jackie Koivu, Chairperson of the Oakland County Youth Assistance Coordinating Council at the Second Annual Kick-Start for Kids Golf Outing.



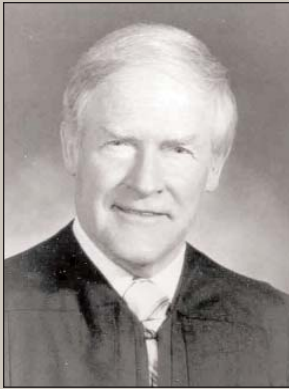
New Lawyer Admission ceremonies were held in the Commissioners Auditorium in May and November of this year. Eighty-eight law school graduates took the oath and were officially sworn into the practices of law.



Over \$3,600 was collected for the Circuit and Probate Court Casual Day Fund in fiscal year 2004. Recipients of the collection were: St. John's Episcopal Church Open Hands Food Pantry, Pamela S. Howitt Foundation for Innovative Youth Services, the Waterford Senior Center Focus Hope program and, on three separate occasions, to court employee families who were in financial need.



The Court Administration staff annually collects donations and wraps presents for those in need during the holiday season. This year, mittens were collected for the Women's Survival Center in Pontiac. Also, the staff collected food, clothing, toiletries, gift certificates, books, and toys for a family in connection with the Lighthouse organization in Clarkston.

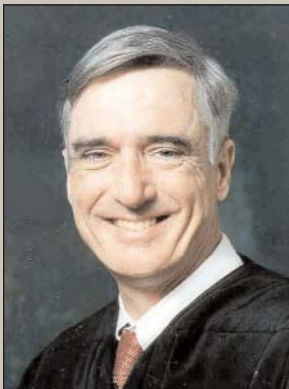


The Honorable Robert L. Templin

On July 29, 2004, former Oakland County Circuit Judge Robert Templin passed away at the age of 83. Having served the citizens of Oakland County for 30 years, Judge Templin was well respected by his colleagues and known for his diligent work ethic and fairness to everyone who appeared before him. After retiring from the bench, Judge Templin continued to assist the court in the capacity of visiting judge.

After serving in World War II as a bomber jet pilot with the Air Force, Judge Templin was in private practice before working as Chief Trial and Appellate Attorney for the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office.

At Judge Templin's memorial service, Judge Sosnick stated, "Bob Templin was an example of an earlier time when people were polite to one another and treated each other in a professional manner." Judge Templin will be remembered for being a true gentleman in a venue that often is contentious and for his selfless devotion to public service.



The Honorable Patrick J. Brennan

Judge Patrick J. Brennan passed away on February 9, 2004. Judge Brennan was elected to the bench on November 7, 2000, after practicing law in the private sector for 21 years, specializing in civil and criminal litigation.

He was a member of the State Bar of Michigan, Oakland County Bar Association, American Trial Lawyers Association, Michigan Trial Lawyers Association, and Board of Directors for Crossroads for Youth. He was a member of the Oakland County Circuit Court Criminal Assignment Committee and Fellow with the Michigan State Bar Foundation.

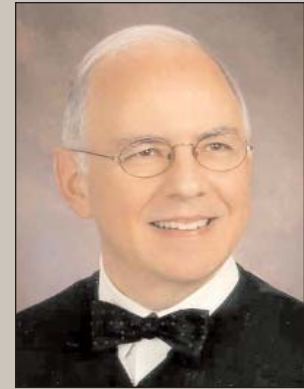
"Judge Brennan was a dedicated, hard-working judge. He was well respected by the bench and the community. His loss is tragic," stated Chief Circuit Judge Wendy Potts. Judge Brennan will always be remembered for his great sense of humor and even-tempered courtroom demeanor. His years of experience as a trial lawyer made him an excellent trial judge.

Judge Mark A. Goldsmith - Investiture

On March 19, 2004 Judge Goldsmith became the newest judge of the Oakland County Circuit Court, assuming the general jurisdiction docket formerly held by the late Judge Patrick Brennan.

Judge Goldsmith was a partner in a Detroit law firm, specializing in commercial litigation. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Michigan and his J.D. degree from Harvard University, where he graduated Cum Laude.

Chief Judge Wendy Potts stated: "Obviously we were saddened by Judge Brennan's sudden death. It is difficult to lose a valued colleague and friend. But we are certainly pleased to welcome Judge Goldsmith. He brings a wealth of trial experience and is highly qualified for the position."

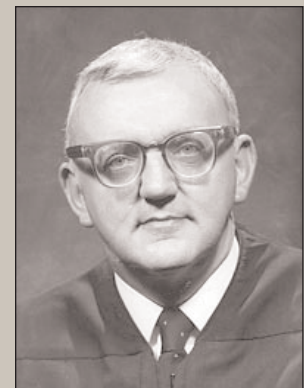


Judge Richard D. Kuhn - Retirement

After completing 32 years on the bench, Judge Richard D. Kuhn retired on December 31, 2004 as the second longest-serving judge in Oakland County Circuit Court history. He was elected Chief Judge for three separate terms, appointed supervising judge of the Citizens Grand Jury, and served most recently as Chief Judge Pro Tempore.

Public service has been a continual theme throughout his lifetime. Judge Kuhn was elected to the Michigan Constitutional Convention in 1961 and was one of 144 elected delegates who drafted the Constitution of 1963. Judge Mester remarked that he "continues to remind us that the Constitution is the basis for all our decisions. That reminder will be his legacy to the Bench."

Judge Kuhn is a past Chancellor of the OCBA's Oakland County Chapter of the American Inns of Court and also served on former Governor Engler's Criminal Justice Advisory Council. He is a graduate of Michigan State University and Detroit College of Law and is a past president of the Detroit College of Law Alumni Association. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Public Service Award from the Oakland County Bar Association.



Historical Roster of the Circuit Court Bench

Sanford M. Green	1848–1852	Arthur E. Moore	1963–1976	Fred M. Mester	1982–Present
Joseph Copeland	1852–1858	Philip Pratt	1963–1970	Norman L. Lippitt	1985–1989
James S. Dewey	1870–1874	James S. Thorburn	1963–1988	Jessica R. Cooper	1987–2000
Levi B. Taft	1873–1876	William R. Beasley	1966–1976	Edward Sosnick	1989–Present
Aug C. Baldwin	1876–1880	Farrell E. Roberts	1967–1982	Barry L. Howard	1989–2001
Silas B. Gaskill	1880–1882	Daniel C. Devine	1966–1966	Deborah G. Tyner	1991–Present
William Stickney	1882–1888	Robert L. Templin	1967–1996	Rudy J. Nichols	1991–Present
Joseph B. Moore	1888–1896	William P. Hampton	1970–1976	Denise Langford Morris	1992–Present
George W. Smith	1896–1908	Richard D. Kuhn	1973–2004	John J. McDonald	1993–Present
Kleber P. Rockwell	1917–1921	John N. O'Brien	1973–1993	Nanci J. Grant	1997–Present
Frank L. Covert	1919–1933	Robert B. Webster	1973–1982	Joan E. Young	1997–Present
Glenn C. Gillespie	1923–1934	Steven N. Andrews	1976–Present	Wendy L. Potts	1998–Present
Frank L. Doty	1928–1959	Alice L. Gilbert	1977–1992	Colleen A. O'Brien	1998–Present
Goodloe H. Rogers	1935–1935	Alice L. Gilbert	1995–2002	Patrick J. Brennan	2000–2004
George B. Hartrick	1935–1958	Francis X. O'Brien	1977–1997	Rae Lee Chabot	2001–Present
H. Russel Holland	1935–1965	Hilda R. Gage	1978–1996	James M. Alexander	2001–Present
Clark J. Adams	1956–1973	Bernard L. Kaufman	1979–1979	Michael Warren	2002–Present
William J. Beer	1958–1980	Gene Schnelz	1979–Present	Daniel P. O'Brien	2003–Present
Theodore Hughes	1959–1959	George LaPlata	1979–1985	Martha D. Anderson	2003–Present
Stanton G. Dondero	1959–1965	Robert C. Anderson	1981–1998	Mark A. Goldsmith	2004–Present
Frederick C. Ziem	1959–1986	David F. Breck	1982–2000		

Historical Roster of the Probate Court Bench

Dr. William Thompson	1821–1823	Alfred Crawford	1869–1872	Donald E. Adams	1960–1977
Nathaniel Millerd	1823–1826	Junius Ten Eyck	1872–1873	Norman R. Barnard	1963–1988
Smith Weeks	1826–1827	Joseph C. Powell	1873–1876	Eugene A. Moore	1966–Present
Gideon O. Whittemore	1827–1828	James A. Jacokes	1877–1880	John J. O'Brien	1975–1988
Williams F. Mosely	1828	Joseph C. Powell	1881–1884	Barry M. Grant	1977–Present
Ogden Clarke	1828–1832	Thomas L. Patterson	1885–1900	Sandra G. Silver	1988–2000
Stephen Reeves	1832–1844	Joseph S. Stockwell	1901–1909	Joan E. Young	1989–1997
M. LaMont Baggs	1845–1848	Kleber P. Rockwell	1909–1918	Wendy L. Potts	1997–1998
Michael E. Crofoot	1849–1856	Ross Stockwell	1917–1928	Linda S. Hallmark	1997–Present
Oscar F. North	1857–1861	Dan A. McGaffey	1928–1937	Elizabeth Pezzetti	2001–Present
Harry C. Andrews	1861–1863	James H. Lynch	1937–1938		
Zephaniah B. Knight	1863–1868	Arthur E. Moore	1938–1963		

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