

News Bits

by Kevin M. Oeffner
Circuit Court Administrator



This month's column includes, in no particular order, a variety of informational items. Although the items are not lengthy, each is newsworthy and may be of some assistance and interest to the readers.

For family law practitioners the protocol had been that attorneys and parties would deliver briefs to chambers to obtain a court clerk's initials prior to filing. There is no legal requirement, so the Family Division judges agreed that the

practice should be discontinued. You may now file briefs with the County Clerk's office without the preliminary step of visiting chambers. Many practitioners still deliver a courtesy copy of briefs to chambers after filing; those who wish may continue to do so but it is discretionary on the part of the filer.

We received word that Tyler Technologies, a leader in the development of public sector software, will present the Tyler Public Sector Excellence Award to the court for its eFiling program. The award recognizes programs that excel in organizational efficiency, responsiveness and productivity. The award will be presented at the Court Technology Conference this October. Our eFiling program is a cooperative effort between the Oakland County Bar Association, Circuit Court, County Clerk's Office and Oakland County Department of Information Technology. A special "thank you" to all of the many persons in these organizations who have aided in making the eFiling program a success.

The Circuit and Probate courts recently amended their joint Local Administrative Order (LAO) governing the access, inspection, reproduction and creation of court records. The primary revision to LAO 2011-01J is that copies of video and audio records of court proceedings will no longer be available. This change was made for a couple of reasons – not the least of which is to eliminate the instances of edited courtroom proceedings appearing on YouTube and various Internet and social networking sites.

The courts will make arrangements with parties so that they may view video records during normal business hours. A *Request for Viewing Video Court Proceeding* form is available on our Web site at www.oakgov.com/circuit/form_application (go to the *Request Form to View Court Proceeding* link) and in hard copy format in the Court Administrator's Office. The form must be completed and submitted to the Court Administrator's Office.

We will make arrangements with parties to view court proceedings within 48 to 72 hours of the request. If the video cannot be viewed in its entirety on the date scheduled, the person(s) requesting to view the video must return the next business day to finish viewing the record.

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How can you increase your visibility to the general public and enhance the image of the legal profession at the same time?

The OCBA Public Service Committee has opportunities for you!



For more information about how you can take advantage of these opportunities, contact the Jenna Huskinson at (248) 334-3400

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Requests to view all juvenile-related proceedings (child protective, delinquency, adoption or juvenile PPO cases) will require approval by the assigned judge, so please understand that this may delay the date and time scheduled for viewing. Requests to view other proceedings may also require approval of the assigned judges. You may view the LAO at <http://www.oakgov.com/circuit/assets/docs/ao/11-01j.pdf> or call my office for more information.

In partnership with the Michigan Office of Child Support, the Friend of the Court is now able to offer information about the services provided by the Friend of the Court or the domestic relations process in general. Friend of the Court personnel will meet with schools, agencies or community groups to present a program entitled "The Responsibilities of Parenting – RU Ready?" Key themes in the presentation include:

- the rights, responsibilities, and realities of parenting
- the value of paternity establishment
- the financial and emotional challenges of marriage and parenting
- the benefits of having both parents involved in a child's life
- the importance of financial and medical support
- healthy relationship skills

For more information about bringing a Friend of the Court speaker to a school or local agency or community group, please contact the Friend of the Court at 248-858-0591.

Last, the official retirement of Diane Kratz, Caseflow / ADR Supervisor for the Circuit Court's Case Management Office, was effective on April 22. Many attorneys know Diane because of her supervision of the Case Management Office, staff oversight of many ADR programs including Case Evaluation, and involvement with several OCBA committees. Diane began her employment with Oakland County in May 1982, when she worked at Children's Village. She transferred to the Circuit Court in 1989 and had been with us since then.

Two years ago, in the midst of learning that the court was asked to cut more than \$4 million from its budget, Diane approached me and mentioned that she was nearing retirement and that we should consider eliminating her position if it meant we could avoid laying off another employee. I filed that away as a very selfless act on her part.

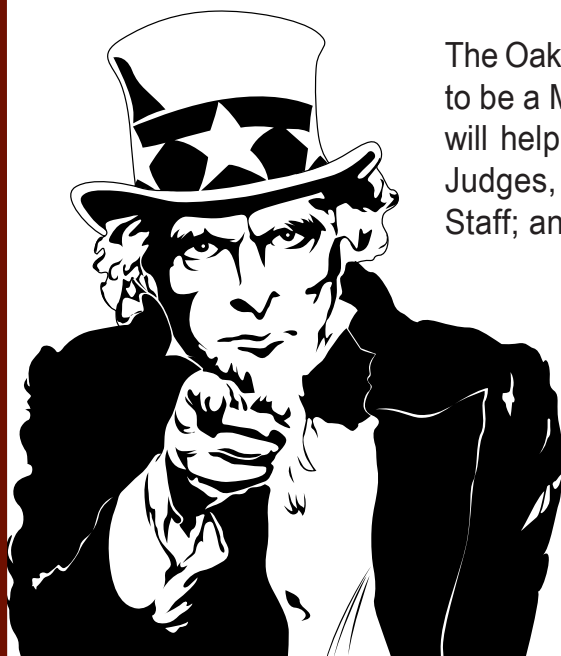
When the dust settled from our budget cuts, Diane's position was continued but I was put on notice that she would retire in 2011.

Diane was a dedicated employee and a tireless worker. I want to close this column by publicly expressing my thanks to Diane for her service to the court. I hope she and her husband enjoy a wonderful retirement. She earned it.

Until next time ...

THE OCBA NEEDS YOU...

TO MENTOR NEW LAWYERS



The Oakland County Bar Association needs you to volunteer to be a Mentor to a deserving new lawyer. In your role, you will help them to network; introduce him/her to Lawyers, Judges, Friend of the Court Personnel, Clerks and Court Staff; and invite him or her to OCBA events.

You can help to improve the practice of law!

Be a Mentor!

Please call (before she calls you...)

Jenna Huskinson (248) 334-3400

Mentor Program Coordinator