

THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

2001 ANNUAL REPORT

OAKLAND COUNTY PROBATE COURT



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MESSAGE FROM CHIEF CIRCUIT JUDGE



THE HONORABLE JOAN E. YOUNG

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

It is customary that the chief judge devote his or her introductory letter to recounting the highlights and accomplishments of the year just completed. The unimaginable events of this past September have compelled many to think about their priorities and to cherish the liberty and prosperity we as Americans enjoy. I want to depart from the norm and share some thoughts from my perspective regarding the aftermath of September 11.

I graphically recall that infamous morning. Like so many of my colleagues and staff, we were all doing what we do each day in the midst of confusion and uncertainty. News was sometimes sketchy and slow, and there was the occasional rumor about attacks taking place elsewhere in the country. Many of us were trying to come to grips with what was unfolding before our eyes. There has probably not been a day in my working career when focusing on our responsibilities has been more difficult.

Yet, somehow people managed to muster the resolve to do their jobs – and do them well. Attention to detail, accuracy, thoroughness, and responsiveness have come to characterize the judges and employees of the Circuit and Probate Courts, and never were those attributes more vividly displayed than on that incredible morning.

We all feel tremendous pride as Americans. Perhaps no event since World War II has so unleashed the patriotic fervor that symbolizes the American spirit. It is easy to notice the swell of patriotism through the lenses of the television networks. Rescuers working tirelessly, legislators laying aside their political ideologies to demonstrate unity, a massive American flag draped next to a charred section of the Pentagon. We saw it in our neighborhoods as nearly every house proudly displayed the flag. But beyond the obvious, I see it in the faces and actions of those with whom I work. It is a quiet but unmistakable resolve. And it was prominently on display on September 11.

I was impressed with the way in which judges and staff went about their business that dreadful day. I have seen firsthand that we can thrive under difficult circumstances. Unfortunately, violent behavior can occur anytime, anywhere. We all know that courthouses are not immune and we should not take security for granted. It will be our continued goal to provide a safe and secure environment for all that work in and visit the courthouse and to protect the integrity of court operations and functions.

Much groundwork has been laid for heightened security measures in the aftermath of September 11. I am thankful for the swift attention to security given by the Chief Justice. I am also grateful for the support demonstrated by the Board of Commissioners, County Executive, and law enforcement in the development, funding, and implementation of enhanced security measures. Together, we will continue to refine our security procedures and policies.

We often make contingency plans to handle “what-ifs.” We didn’t have a plan in response to the specific terror we witnessed last September, yet the “what ifs” were answered resoundingly. We continued to do our jobs with an impressive display of professionalism. I am proud of the judges and employees of the Circuit and Probate Courts. Their dedication to the administration of justice and selflessness in the face of uncertainty and anxiety is exceptional. It gives me great assurance that the interests of those who seek redress will continue to be paramount no matter the contingency.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan E. Young', written in a cursive style.

Joan E. Young
Chief Circuit Judge

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF PROBATE JUDGE

THE HONORABLE LINDA S. HALLMARK

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

It is with pleasure and pride that we are presenting our 2001 Annual Report for the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts. This edition reflects our one year of operating with a merged Circuit and Probate Court Administration. We continue to provide Probate Court services through our Probate Court judges and Estates and Mental Health areas, however, through our merged administrative services, we have gained many efficiencies and benefits for our court users and staff. Year 2001 saw our first Probate and Circuit combined budget presented to the Board of Commissioners and combined programs, including: employee staff meetings, award ceremonies, and administrative functions.



On January 29, 2001, we welcomed the Honorable Elizabeth M. Pezzetti who was appointed to the Oakland County Probate bench by Governor John Engler. Before joining us, Judge Pezzetti was a partner at Dickinson Wright, PLLC. Her practice concentrated in employment law, including civil and administrative law, media law, and commercial litigation. Judge Pezzetti has been an active member of local and state professional organizations, including the State Bar of Michigan and Oakland County Bar Association.

Our Probate Court staff worked diligently throughout 2001 on designing a document imaging system. Each document processed with the court (approximately 500 documents per day) will go through this new system called imaging (or "scanning"). Within 48 hours of filing a document, it will be available for review by our staff on their computer screen. While this has been a labor-intensive project, we are certain to recognize many efficiencies from this system when it is fully operational.

Oakland County continues to be blessed with over 1,000 dedicated volunteers to help serve our citizens and families. Through our Youth Assistance programs, volunteers are extensively involved in all aspects of our community organization activities. Typically, over 30,000 youth and adults annually participate in programs offered by our Youth Assistance program.

We are also continuing to work with our senior population through our Citizens Alliance for the Oakland County Probate and Circuit Courts. A focus group of professionals in the aging field and court staff are currently working on recommendations and proposals to help ease the burden for our senior citizens, especially in the area of providing viable options for guardians and conservators for those vulnerable individuals who have no one willing or able to serve.

Finally, it does not go without notice that September 11, 2001, had an impact on all of us. Since the tragic events of that day, our court has come to more fully recognize the value of the services we provide to our citizens and families of Oakland County. We are committed more than ever to ensure that our system of justice does not go without compassion and dedication, and our staff has fully rallied around our mission and purpose this year. Our goal has always been to provide operations of a unified court system that are more efficient and better serve our children, families, and Oakland County citizens. I thank you for your continued support and interest in our courts and their services to the public.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda S. Hallmark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda S. Hallmark
Chief Probate Judge

DEMOCRACY AND THE COURTS

An annual report is intended to reflect on a past year's progress. Although this document may resemble past reports in its content, the incidents and aftermath of September 11 have guided its design. That cataclysmic morning reminded us all, in the words of commentator Bill Moyers, "of a basic truth at the heart of democracy: no matter our wealth or status or faith, we are all equal before the law, in the polling booth, and when death rains down from the sky." We cannot forget this as we describe our year.

Neither our nation nor our Court had ready strategies to respond to such a crisis. Our nation, fortunately, had not carried this particular burden before 2001. But when chaos dominated the political and economic centers of our nation, our Court did what it always does; what it was created to do by our founders: we kept the business of justice going. Dockets persisted, counters stayed open, calls were answered. A public in panic at the disarray created by the quick disintegration of buildings and dispersal of leaders was still able to find us. We became one of the natural ports in the political/emotional storm of that day and those that followed.



Staying open on 9/11 was a tough call for court leaders, but the right one. By responding with optimism and action and without panic, the terrorists' goal of universal turmoil was neutralized. Our Court became, instead, a stabilizer, crafting from the twisted wreckage of imposed fear, the sustained promise of security. From our posts at the Court we, perhaps inadvertently, became part of our country's antidote to terror simply by acting normally.

Courts exist to produce balance. The scales of justice reflect this, poised between opposing elements, offsetting over-weight or over-influence, and always preserving the forum for peaceful disagreement, where differing perspectives are given voice.

The Court is not always loved for what we do. In fact, we are often criticized as infringing on a litigant's freedom or satisfaction when we deliver judgment. The balance of freedom and responsibility necessary in a democratic society imposes an obligation upon courts to make and convey the reasonableness of complicated decisions that can be misunderstood or resented. Recent surveys seem also to support a general mistrust of the intention of courts. Perhaps this is because so many people frame their ideas of who we are based on growing exposure to pop-culture media courts, where formality is abolished, complainants are encouraged to match wits with an (ostensible) arbiter of order, and then to armchair quarterback their decisions. The actual machinery of dispute resolution – democracy's true alternative to crude terrorism or revenge – is necessarily, and thankfully, more structured in our courtrooms. So, the uninitiated litigant, who misunderstands our devices and procedures, often reacts with mistrust and hostility.

For most people who enter our Court, we make a significant, positive difference. Our mission of service, which is the essence of our work, provides a clear value-set that can (and does) act as a legal, social, and sometimes even cultural anchor for people in real trouble. What we do day to day is not always easy to understand and much of it is tedious. But it is precisely that well-performed tedium that creates the equilibrium that a nation needs in times of serenity as well as in crisis. As society's servants, we are the "domestic engineers" of democracy, performing the chores that preserve the rights and liberties of the citizenry. Our heroics are defined not by the hefting of a hose or the digging of debris, but by the diligence of detail well done. It is obvious how much small things matter when our court orders remove fear from a domestic violence victim; when we give protection and support to a child with a family in fragments; when we forge peaceable resolutions with adequate distributions, or resolve estates for the bereaved; when we support due process by providing needed free counsel. When we make people fight fair. "He who would do good to another" said William Blake, "must do it in the minute particulars." We are very good at these particulars, and we strive to be ever better.

DEMOCRACY AND OUR COURTS



Photographs on these two pages were taken at the Oakland County Patriotic Rally held at the north entrance to the courthouse on Monday, September 17, 2001.

Whether we are elected, appointed, or simply employed here, judgment is as much a part of our daily landscape as the rewards of expressed appreciation. It helps, nonetheless, to cultivate a larger view of the goals of our work, to boost ourselves beyond the distraction of dissatisfaction, or the friction of daily conflict. September 11 enlarged and reframed that picture. When you can see your place in the design of democracy, purpose shines like opportunity. Now, every day we have a new chance to embrace, enact, and enable the principles of justice and liberty, just by going to work and doing our jobs.

Some of this year's initiatives give evidence to the big picture commitments of our courts. In 2001 we strove to increase public trust, understanding, and confidence by convening numerous citizen groups for education as well as operational feedback. We forged significant court/community/agency partnerships when we developed and implemented both an adult and a juvenile drug court. We extended our reach into the youth community by expanding our court tours program.

In 2001 we also continued to dramatically improve access to justice through the sustained and substantial commitment to electronic records management. Our Next Generation Model Trial Court initiative, which enabled consolidation of Family Division operations, will improve effectiveness and greatly reduce duplication and confusion for court clients. We continued to enlighten seniors about probate procedures and to educate parents on child management to decrease the need for future court involvement.

It is important that we, as members of the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts, continue to unearth from the tedium the grace to do our best work always, because it is so vital for individuals and for community.

Upon setting the cornerstone to the United States Supreme Court Building in 1932, then Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes proclaimed, "We find in (this) building a testimonial to an imperishable ideal of liberty under law." It is not the building, we now know, that is permanent. What lives

on is that ideal, that spirit, that "local heroism" of justice done routinely and well. The job of justice is infinite. We are fortunate to have this work, when doing it well matters most. We hope our readers will share our commitment to the service of liberty in the coming years.



HISTORICAL ROSTER OF THE CIRCUIT COURT BENCH

Sanford M. Green	1848–1852	Frederick C. Ziem	1959–1986	George LaPlata	1979–1985
Joseph Copeland	1852–1858	Arthur E. Moore	1963–1976	Robert C. Anderson	1980–1998
James S. Dewey	1870–1874	Philip Pratt	1963–1970	David F. Breck	1982–2000
Levi B. Taft	1873–1876	James S. Thorburn	1963–1988	Fred M. Mester	1982–Present
Aug C. Baldwin	1876–1880	William R. Beasley	1966–1976	Norman L. Lippitt	1985–1989
Silas B. Gaskill	1880–1882	Farrell E. Roberts	1966–1982	Jessica R. Cooper	1986–2000
William Stickney	1882–1888	Daniel C. Devine	1966–1966	Edward Sosnick	1988–Present
Joseph B. Moore	1888–1896	Daniel C. Devine	1969–1969	Barry L. Howard	1989–2001
George W. Smith	1896–1908	Robert L. Templin	1966–1986	Deborah G. Tyner	1990–Present
Kleber P. Rockwell	1917–1921	William P. Hampton	1970–1976	Rudy J. Nichols	1991–Present
Frank L. Covert	1919–1933	Richard D. Kuhn	1973–Present	Denise Langford Morris	1992–Present
Glenn C. Gillespie	1922–1934	John N. O'Brien	1972–1993	John J. McDonald	1993–Present
Frank L. Doty	1928–1959	Robert B. Webster	1973–1982	Nanci J. Grant	1996–Present
Goodloe H. Rogers	1935– ?	Steven N. Andrews	1976–Present	Joan E. Young	1997–Present
George B. Hartrick	1935–1958	Alice L. Gilbert	1977–1992	Wendy L. Potts	1998–Present
H. Russel Holland	1935–1965	Alice L. Gilbert	1995–Present	Colleen A. O'Brien	1998–Present
Clark J. Adams	1956–1973	Francis X. O'Brien	1975–1988	Patrick J. Brennan	2001–Present
Sanford M. Green	1958–1970	Hilda R. Gage	1978–1996	Rae Lee Chabot	2001–Present
William J. Beer	1958–1980	Bernard L. Kaufman	1978–1979	James M. Alexander	2001–Present
Theodore Hughes	1959– ?	Gene Schnelz	1978–Present		
Stanton G. Dondero	1959–1965				

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 Bagg	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		

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Abraham Lincoln

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



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

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.

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



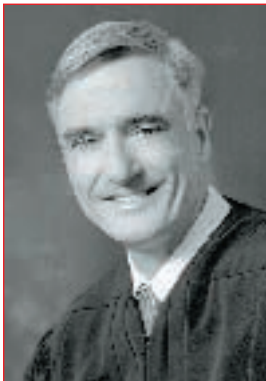
The Honorable James M. Alexander

- ♦ Appointed to Oakland Circuit Court Bench by Governor John Engler, August 2001
- ♦ Recipient of Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Miami University in 1970 and Juris Doctor degree from the University of Detroit School of Law in 1973
- ♦ Member of the Michigan State Bar Association and the Oakland County Bar Association
- ♦ Served as Chairman of the ADR Section for the State Bar; Past Co-Chair of the OCBA Legislative Committee; Chairman of the Commercial Arbitration Advisory Board for the American Arbitration Association; Fellow of the Oakland County Bar Foundation
- ♦ Recipient of the Frances Avadenka Memorial Award
- ♦ Currently serves on the Walsh College President's Advisory Council; the Griffin Advisory Board of CMU; and Vice President of the Detroit Jewish Community Council



The Honorable Steven N. Andrews

- ♦ Circuit Judge 25 years; 3 terms as Chief Judge; 3 terms as Chief Judge Pro Tempore
- ♦ Selected one of the Most Respected Judges of Michigan in a lawyers poll in *Michigan Lawyers Weekly*; listed in Oxford's *Who's Who Among American Judges*
- ♦ Rated "Outstanding" by both the Oakland and South Oakland County Bar Associations
- ♦ Served as One Man Grand Juror and Presiding Judge for the Citizens' Grand Jury
- ♦ Received an Honorary Juris Doctorate from the New England Law School in 1986
- ♦ Served on Adrian College's Board of Trustees and Providence Hospital's Advisory Board; Chairman, Oakland County Library Board; Past Pres., American Inn of Court
- ♦ Guest Lecturer and Instructor at Detroit College of Law and Michigan State University; author of articles and periodicals on the First Amendment and the Public Trial Concept



The Honorable Patrick J. Brennan

- ♦ Elected to the Oakland County Circuit Court on November 7, 2000
- ♦ Graduate of Wayne State University Law School, University of Detroit (MA), and Oakland University (BA)
- ♦ Private practice attorney, specializing in civil and criminal litigation, for 21 years
- ♦ Member: State Bar of Michigan, Oakland County Bar Association, American Trial Lawyers Association, and Michigan Trial Lawyers Association
- ♦ Member of Board of Directors, Crossroads for Youth



The Honorable Rae Lee Chabot

- ♦ Appointed to the Circuit Court in December 2000
- ♦ Civil litigation experience in private practice 1977-2000
- ♦ State of Michigan Civil Service Commissioner 1993-2000
- ♦ Appointed to the State Board of Law Examiners in 2001
- ♦ Oakland County Bar Association Board of Directors and Executive Board 1993 to the present
- ♦ State Bar Attorney Discipline Board panelist 2000-2001
- ♦ State Bar Judicial Qualifications Committee 1995-1998
- ♦ Member: American Bar Association, Federal Bar Association, D. Augustus Straker Bar Association

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

The Honorable Alice L. Gilbert

- ◆ Circuit Judge 24 years, and served as Chief Judge Pro Tempore, Court of Appeals by assignment, 48th District Judge for 8 years, and served as Chief Judge
- ◆ Graduate: Northwestern Law School, Wellesley College; postgraduate at Harvard University, University of Michigan, Wayne State School of Law, University of Detroit, University of Kansas, National Judicial College, and University of Nevada
- ◆ Member: State of Michigan Board of Ethics; American Hospital Association Task Force; Past President, Michigan District Judges Association; Past Chair, Oakland County Corrections Advisory Board, Providence Hospital Advisory Board
- ◆ Director & Trustee Karmanos Cancer Institute; National Crime Foundation; Trustee, United Health Organization; recipient of several honors and special recognitions



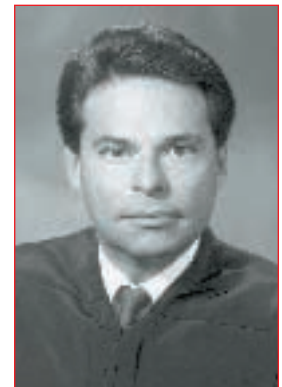
The Honorable Nanci J. Grant

- ◆ Elected to the Circuit Court in 1996; Presiding Judge, General Jurisdiction, Sixth Circuit Court; appointed January 2000
- ◆ Graduated from the University of Michigan, with honors, and Wayne State University Law School; director of honors program
- ◆ Treasurer, Michigan Judges Association Executive Committee
- ◆ Board Member of Women Officials Network
- ◆ Recipient, Oakland County Probate Court's Citizens Alliance "Merit Award"; selected by Crain's Detroit Business as one of "40 under 40"
- ◆ Former member, Michigan State Bar's Representative Assembly
- ◆ Formerly a private practice attorney specializing in commercial litigation



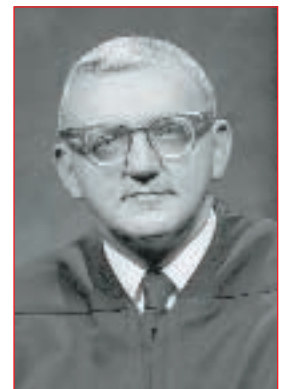
The Honorable Barry L. Howard

- ◆ Appointed to the Circuit Court, February 1989; Chief Judge, 2000 - 2001; Chief Judge Pro Tempore, 1996 -1999
- ◆ Member: State Bar of Michigan; American Bar Association; Oakland County Bar Association, Executive Board; Michigan Judges Association, serving as President in 2000; Michigan Supreme Court Council of Chief Judges in 2000
- ◆ Faculty member, Michigan Judicial Institute (the teaching arm of the Michigan Supreme Court) and member of its Advisory Committee
- ◆ Private practice attorney for 15 years with emphasis on Labor and Administrative Law, plus litigation before state and federal agencies and courts; counsel to Police Officers Association of Michigan, and Special Assistant Attorney General



The Honorable Richard D. Kuhn

- ◆ Oakland County Circuit Judge since 1973
- ◆ Chief Judge in 1979 and for two subsequent two-year terms
- ◆ Delegate, 1961 Constitutional Convention
- ◆ Past President, Detroit College of Law Alumni Association
- ◆ Graduate: Michigan State University, Detroit College of Law
- ◆ Member: State Bar of Michigan, Oakland County Bar Association, American Judges Association, Michigan Judges Association, and the American Judicature Society
- ◆ Chancellor American Inn of Court - Oakland County Chapter
- ◆ Served on Governor Engler's Criminal Justice Advisory Council



JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



The Honorable Denise Langford Morris

- ◆ Appointed to the Circuit Court in August 1992; elected in 1994 and re-elected in 2000
- ◆ Private practice attorney with extensive civil and criminal trial experience
- ◆ Former: Oakland County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney; Assistant United States Attorney Eastern Dist. of Michigan; Founding member, D. Augustus Straker Bar Assoc.
- ◆ Director: Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society; Help Against Violent Encounters Now (HAVEN); Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency (OLHSA) governing board; Michigan Judges Association
- ◆ Member: Michigan Supreme Court Civil Jury Instructions Committee; Michigan Supreme Court Access to Justice Committee; Former Member, William Booth Legal Aid Clinic (Salvation Army)



The Honorable John J. McDonald

- ◆ Oakland County Circuit Judge since 1993
- ◆ Former Oakland County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
- ◆ Former Oakland County Commissioner, 14 years
- ◆ Liaison, Circuit Court Mediation Selection Committee
- ◆ Member: American Judges Association, Michigan Judges Association, Oakland County Bar Association, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and American Judicature Society



The Honorable Fred M. Mester

- ◆ Recipient: John N. O'Brien Memorial Award for Distinguished Community Activities; Centennial Award; Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, Central Michigan University; NAACP 1997 Humanitarian Award; CMU ROTC Hall of Fame; Royal Oak Dondoro High School Hall of Fame
- ◆ President, Pontiac Alumni Foundation; Chair, Board of Directors, William Booth Legal Aid Clinic (Salvation Army); Chair, Oakland County Community Corrections Board; National Council on Alcoholism, Detroit Board; Multiple Sclerosis Board; Founder: Reading to Reduce Recidivism; Member, RARE Foundation
- ◆ Adjunct Professor: Oakland Univ., Madonna Univ., and Oakland Community College
- ◆ Military service: Capt., U.S. Army; Former Federal Prosecutor; U.S. Attorney's Office



The Honorable Rudy J. Nichols

- ◆ Oakland County Circuit Court Judge since 1991
- ◆ Graduate: Michigan State University, Detroit College of Law
- ◆ General and municipal law practice, 1974-1982
- ◆ Former member: Michigan House of Representatives, Michigan Senate, 1982-1990
- ◆ Former chair, Michigan Senate Judiciary Committee
- ◆ Recipient of Outstanding Legislator of the Year by Michigan Judges Association
- ◆ Recognized as Legislator of the Year by the Police Officers Association of Michigan
- ◆ Author and co-author of articles published in professional journals, including "Overview of Michigan Rules of Evidence" and Michigan's "Domestic Violence Law" appearing in the *State Bar Journal* and in *Laches*

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

The Honorable Colleen A. O'Brien

- ◆ Sixth Judicial Circuit Judge since 1998
- ◆ Graduate: University of Michigan, 1978; Detroit College of Law, 1981
- ◆ Private practice attorney specializing in civil litigation for 17 years
- ◆ Member: State Bar of Michigan, Oakland County Bar Association, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan (WLAM), Board of Directors of WLAM in 1992 and 1993; Board of Directors, Crossroads for Youth; Criminal Assignment Committee
- ◆ Past President of the Oakland County Women's Bar Association in 1993
- ◆ Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation
- ◆ Currently on the Oakland County Family Task Force and Crim. Assignment Comm.
- ◆ Received the Oakland County Bar Association "Pro Bono" award in 1992



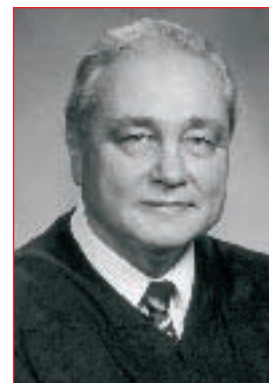
The Honorable Wendy Potts

- ◆ Appointed to Oakland Circuit Court, January 1998; elected November 1998 and 2000; Judge, Oakland County Probate Court, March 1997-January 1998
- ◆ Secretary, State Bar of Michigan, 1996-97; Commissioner, 1990-2000; ABA House of Delegates; President, Oakland County Bar Association, 1994-95; Magistrate, 48th District Court, 1984-95; Board, Child Abuse & Neglect Council of Oakland; Trustee, Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society; Fellow: Michigan State Bar Foundation, American Bar Foundation; Co-Chair, State Bar Children's Justice Comm., 1995; Governor's Task Force on Domestic Violence 1994; Chair, National Resources Trust Fund, 1994; Member, Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Rules of Evidence
- ◆ American Inn of Court; Chair, Circuit Court Crim. Assign. & Docket Mgmt. Comm.



The Honorable Gene Schnelz

- ◆ Oakland Circuit Judge, 22 years; District Judge, 4 years; also served as Chief Judge
- ◆ Graduate: Alma College, MSU-Detroit College of Law, and National Judicial College
- ◆ Recipient: State Bar's highest award for service to public and profession, OCBA's Memorial Award for public service; Honored by Michigan Legislature for public service; Women's Bar Association Award for outstanding contributions; Jewish Association for Residential Care Civil Rights Award; NAACP Presidential Award for Judicial Service, Alma College distinguished Alumni Award, Lutheran Attorneys in Witness First Award for positive leadership in the church and community; Sunshine Award from Child Abuse & Neglect Council Oakland County
- ◆ Selected one of Michigan's Most Respected Judges by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* poll



The Honorable Edward Sosnick

- ◆ Chief Judge of the Oakland Circuit Court for the 1996-1997 and 1998-1999 terms
- ◆ Recipient: State Bar of Michigan's Champion of Justice Award, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Award for Meritorious Service to the Children of America, Eleanor Roosevelt Humanities Award
- ◆ Co-founder, Oakland County Circuit Court's SMILE Program, an educational program for divorcing parents
- ◆ Twice voted one of Michigan's Most Respected Judges by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* poll
- ◆ Four-time honoree, Michigan State Police for Professional Excellence
- ◆ Presiding Judge, Oakland County Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court



JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



The Honorable Deborah G. Tyner

- ◆ Elected to the Oakland Circuit bench in 1990
- ◆ Graduate: University of Michigan and Wayne State University Law School, with honors; National Judicial College
- ◆ Former Wayne County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
- ◆ Former Partner, private law firm specializing in commercial litigation
- ◆ Member: Michigan Judges Association Executive and Legislative Committee, State Bar of Michigan; Advisory Board, Kadima; Former Member, State Bar Representative Assembly; Board of Trustees of Muscular Sclerosis Society
- ◆ Former Co-Chair: Criminal Attorney Appointment Comm. and Bench/Bar Conference
- ◆ Fellow: Adams Pratt Foundation and Michigan Bar Foundation



The Honorable Joan E. Young

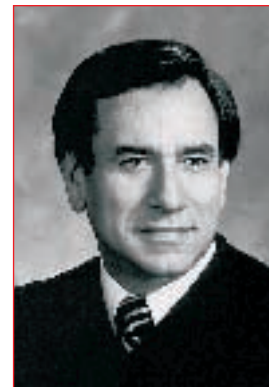
- ◆ Appointed Circuit Judge, March 1997; assigned to Family Division, 1998-present; Circuit Court Chief Judge, April 2001; Chief Judge Pro Tempore 2000-March 2001; Probate Judge, January 1989-March 1997; Probate Court Chief Judge, 1994-1997
- ◆ Recipient: Oakland County Bar Association Distinguished Service Award, Women's Survival Center Wonder Woman Award, John N. O'Brien Leadership Award, Congressional Coalition on Adoption 2000 "Angel in Adoption" Award; HAVEN's Sustained Community Leadership Award; Parents of Murdered Children Metro Detroit Chapter's Judicial Advocate Award
- ◆ Michigan Opera Theatre Trustee; Advisory Board of Parents of Murdered Children, Inc., Metro Detroit Chapter; Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit Advisory Board



JUDGES OF THE PROBATE COURT

The Honorable Barry Grant

- ◆ Probate Judge since 1977; former Chief Judge and present Chief Judge Pro Tem
- ◆ Graduate, Wayne State University, post-graduate work at Northwestern University and Harvard Law School
- ◆ Past president: National College of Probate Judges and Michigan Probate Judges Association; Oakland County Judges Association
- ◆ Former: Assistant Prosecuting Attorney; Chairperson, Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission; Editor-in-chief, secretary, and treasurer of the *National Publication for Probate Judges*; Trustee, Beaumont Hospital; Secretary, Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission; Michigan Strategic Planning Committee for Mental Health
- ◆ Trustee, Southfield school board, and columnist for *The Detroit News* and *Detroit Free Press*



The Honorable Linda S. Hallmark

- ◆ Appointed to the Probate bench by Governor John Engler, December 1997; serving as Chief Judge beginning in 2000; Friend of the Court Referee in 1980
- ◆ Recipient, Bachelor of Science degree from Michigan State University in 1973 and Juris Doctor degree from Wayne State University Law School in 1977
- ◆ Member: State Bar, Federal Bar Assoc., Oakland County Bar Assoc., U.S. Supreme Ct. Bar, Michigan Interprofessional Assoc., State Bar Open Justice Comm., State Bar Assoc. Fellows
- ◆ Past chair: State Bar Family Law Section Council, Oakland County Family Law Committee; Past President, Referees Association of Michigan; Served on the Governor's Task Force for Children's Justice since 1993; Executive Board member of the Arab-American & Chaldean Council, and Governor appointee to the Arab-American Advisory Board



The Honorable Eugene Arthur Moore

- ◆ Elected Probate Judge in 1966; served as Chief Judge 1989-1992 and 1998-1999
- ◆ Graduated from University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts and law degree
- ◆ Past President: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the Michigan Probate Judges Association; Past Vice Chair, Michigan Trial Court Assessment Commission
- ◆ Former Instructor of Juvenile and Probate law; Detroit College of Law; National College for Juvenile Court Judges in Reno, Nevada; Michigan Judicial Institute
- ◆ Member: Board of Fellows, National Center for Juvenile Justice in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- ◆ Trustee: Kingsbury School, Crossroads for Youth; Past trustee, STARR Commonwealth; Trustee Emeritus, Cranbrook Educational Facility; Governor Emeritus, Cranbrook Schools; Serves on Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect



The Honorable Elizabeth Pezzetti

- ◆ Appointed to Oakland County Probate Court in 2001, assigned to the Family Division
- ◆ Graduated from Wayne State University Law School Cum Laude
- ◆ Senior Associate Editor, Wayne Law Review
- ◆ Private practice attorney specializing in employment law, media law, school law, and commercial litigation
- ◆ Former Board Member, Oakland Livingston Legal Aid
- ◆ Former member, Oakland County Business Roundtable
- ◆ Member: Order of the Coif, Oakland County Inns of Court, State Bar of Michigan, and Oakland County Bar Association
- ◆ Fellow, Michigan Bar Foundation





MESSAGE FROM THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

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

When we talk about American history, we usually talk about events – the American Revolution, the Civil War, industrial revolution, women’s suffrage, civil rights, and the moon landing, to name but a few. Sometimes we talk about those events with little or no reference point as to when they took place. Do you know in what year the American Revolution began or when women were granted their right to vote? I doubt many do.

But sometimes a date is so inextricably linked to an event that it will forever be embedded in our minds. Its mere mention can conjure memories, stir emotions, inspire or dishearten. Three dates fit into that category – December 7, November

22, and September 11. Others have historical significance, but these three don’t need a descriptor – we all know what happened.

September 11 was the first day in a new era of heightened security awareness. The next day the Chief Justice directed all Michigan courts to review their emergency management plans and to begin making arrangements to tighten security. Even as I prepare this letter, the Supreme Court has promulgated court security standards for consideration. Undoubtedly, 2001 was highlighted by renewed efforts on the part of the Circuit and Probate Courts to foster a more secure environment. This effort will never stop because security, in the truest sense of the word, is an unattainable goal. Nevertheless, we won’t be deterred in our efforts to continuously improve security for the benefit of all that visit and work in the courthouse.

Thanks to the thoughtful deliberation and collaboration of many, both inside and outside of the court, two new treatment courts were launched in 2002 – one for juvenile substance abusers and the other targeted to adult offenders. The goal of both courts is to reduce the cycle of dependency that leads to criminal behavior, repeated appearances in the criminal justice system, and ruined lives. Non-violent offenders are placed in a structured and controlled environment where a sustained continuum of intervention, intensive treatment, substance abuse testing, and other services are employed in an effort to conquer the dependency.

The legislature authorized two new circuit judgeships late last year. The new judges were recommended by the State Court Administrative Office in response to its judicial resource study conducted in 2001. We have been working in earnest to ensure that the new courtrooms, chambers, staff offices and related facilities are ready when the new judges take office this coming January 1.

The remainder of this Annual Report will provide you with a glimpse of what transpired at the Circuit and Probate Courts in 2001. Last year was much like any year in that we realized many achievements. But the latter part of the year was also strangely unique and difficult ... probably much like people experienced in December of 1941 and November of 1963. Yet, through it all, the judges and employees continue to manifest the professionalism and commitment to duty that symbolizes the Circuit and Probate Courts. This Annual Report is a testament to that professionalism and commitment.

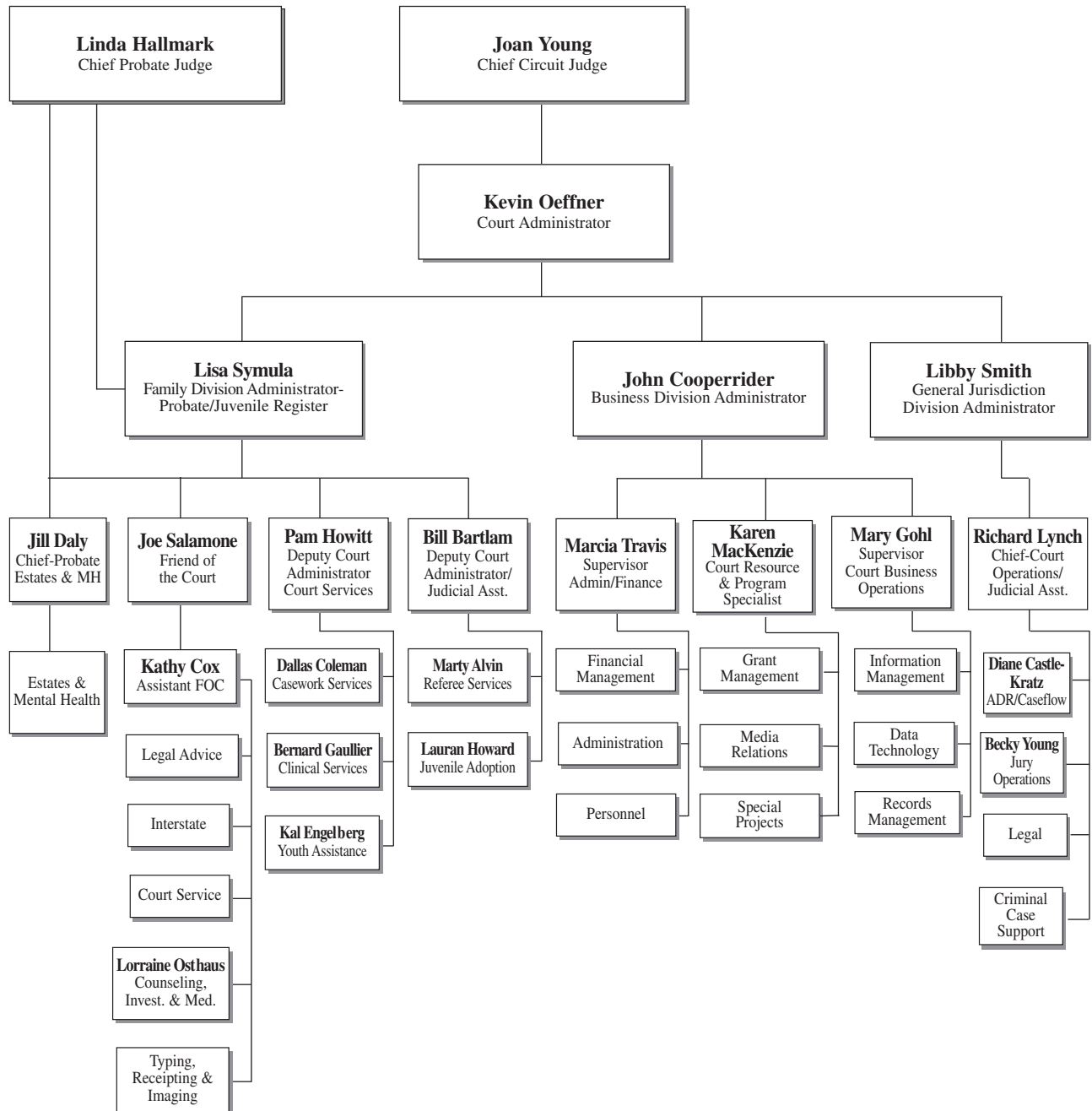
Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Oeffner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin M. Oeffner
Court Administrator

CIRCUIT COURT – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

CIRCUIT/PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



CIRCUIT COURT – GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION



*Elizabeth A. Smith
General Jurisdiction Administrator*

“Technological Advancements Lead to More Efficient Jury Management”

With the purchase of an optical mark scanner and newly designed scannable questionnaires, the Jury Office staff is able to process forms and respond to jurors’ requests for deferments more quickly. The scanner is capable of reading 4,000 two-sided questionnaire forms per minute. Data from juror questionnaires, which prior to the purchase of the new system was entered manually by staff, is now read by the scanner and downloaded to the database.

In addition, bar code readers and hand-held laser scanners enable staff to check jurors into morning attendance and process groups of jurors to courts for the jury selection process more efficiently.

Cost savings were also realized through the design of the new jury forms, and allowed the Court to provide jurors with postage-paid return envelopes to return their completed questionnaires, rather than supply their own postage.

Due to the implementation of the new jury management software (Juror for Windows), letters in response to jurors’ requests, such as deferment or excusals, attendance letters, and follow-up on absent or non-responding jurors, are generated by the computer – rather than manually typing tens of thousands of letters each year.

We are pleased to be able to incorporate state-of-the-art jury management technologies, thus providing Oakland County jurors with the utmost in efficiency and personal service.

GENERAL JURISDICTION OVERVIEW

The General Jurisdiction Division of the Circuit Court handles civil cases over \$25,000, criminal cases involving felonies, and high misdemeanors. In addition, it hears appeals from courts of lesser jurisdiction and administrative agencies. Within the General Jurisdiction Division are 13 sitting judges, elected for six-year terms, in non-partisan elections.

During 2001, we also utilized several visiting judges to assist the Court with processing cases through the judicial system more expeditiously. These visiting judges presided over the Miscellaneous Civil Docket, Special Docket – Civil cases evaluated for \$15,000 or less, Rapid Adjudication Drug Docket, and the Adult Treatment Court.

Supporting the judges within this division are 60 judicial staff (staff attorneys, secretaries, clerks, and court reporters), as well as the departments listed below:

- ♦ Administrative Support Staff – Richard Lynch serves as the Chief-Court Operations/Judicial Assistant. In this capacity he manages the division’s legal support and criminal support staff, serves as the project manager for the Adult Treatment Court, and advises the court on legal matters. He also oversees the 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. This department also manages the visiting judges’ dockets and staff. Diane Castle-Kratz serves as the Caseflow/ADR Supervisor and is assisted by Andrea Bayer, Caseflow Coordinator, and Lisa Czyz, ADR Coordinator, as well as 10 additional full-time staff.
- ♦ Jury Office – This 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.



General Jurisdiction Division Management Team: (From back left to right) Lisa Czyz, ADR Coordinator; Deb Fahr, Deputy Jury Clerk; Richard Lynch, Chief Court Operations, Judicial Assistant. (From front left to right) Andrea Bayer, Caseflow Coordinator; Diane Castle-Kratz, Caseflow/Alternate Dispute Resolution Supervisor; and Becky Young, Jury Clerk.

CIRCUIT COURT – GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION

JURY OFFICE

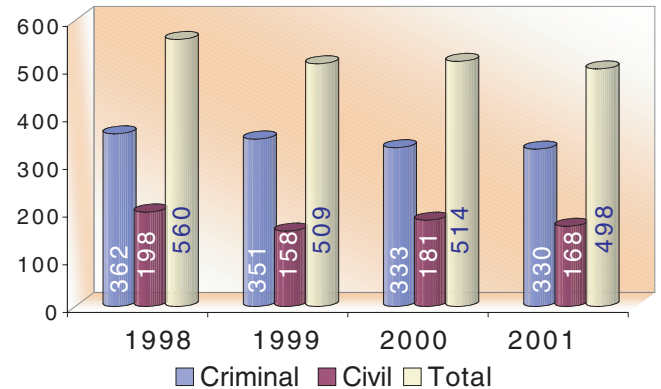
The Jury Office is responsible for obtaining jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts in Oakland County. Jurors are mailed a summons/questionnaire scheduling them for jury selection. Jurors must be available for selection for two days. The courts have a two-day/one-trial jury system. If selected to serve as a juror on a trial, 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 United States, have served as a juror within the past 12 months, are not physically able to serve, or are serving a sentence for a felony conviction. Persons over the age of 70 are exempt upon request.

An orientation is conducted each morning for new jurors that explains what to expect throughout their stay. Several of the judges participate in the orientation by saying a few words to welcome jurors and explain courtroom procedures.

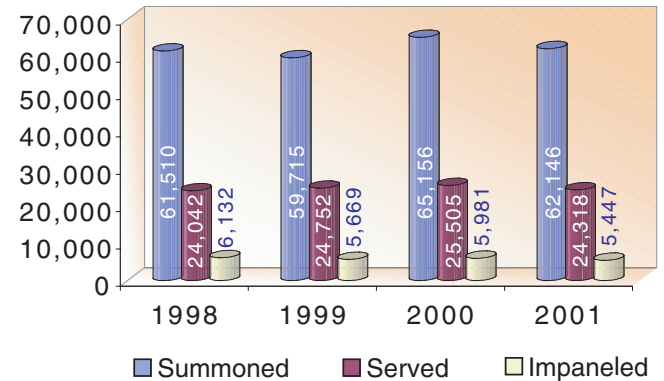
HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Processed all jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 168 civil trials, with an average trial duration of 3.9 days.
- ◆ Processed all jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 330 criminal trials with an average trial duration of 3.5 days. Of those trials, 59 were capital offenses.
- ◆ A summons was issued to 62,146 citizens this year. That number is reduced after excusals for legal exemptions which include those who have moved outside of Oakland County, are not a U.S. citizen or conversant in the English language, served as a juror in the preceding twelve months, for medical reasons, have a felony sentence pending, or are 70 years old or older and request excusal. After determining the number needed to accommodate the daily requirements of the courts, 24,318 jurors were required to report.
- ◆ Of the 168 total civil cases for which juries were pulled, 23 were for cases which were evaluated at less than or equal to \$15,000. These cases were tried by visiting judges and district court judges.

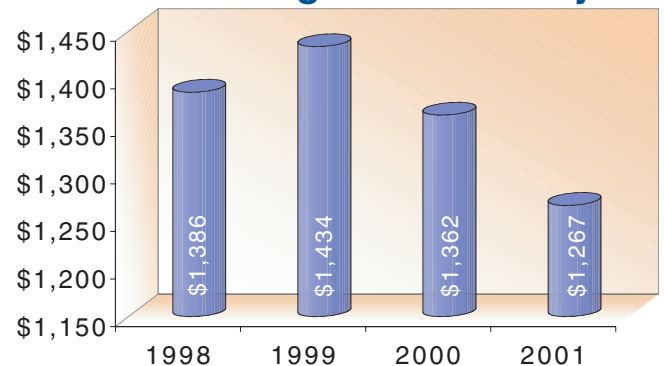
Juries Selected



Citizen Involvement



Average Cost Per Jury



CIRCUIT COURT – GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION

CASE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

The Case Management Office is responsible for scheduling and monitoring cases from initiation through disposition. The Caseflow Division tracks cases from initiation through completion. Within that function, cases are scheduled for hearings, trials, and sentencing. The Caseflow Division also docket miscellaneous motions. The ADR Division is responsible for the case evaluation and mediation programs, both of which are used as methods of settling disputes before going to trial. During case evaluation, a panel of three attorneys reviews a case and decides how much money the case is worth. With mediation, the parties meet with a neutral mediator to discuss their conflict. With the help of the mediator and their attorneys, the parties fashion an acceptable solution to their dispute.

As part of the merger of the Circuit and Probate Court functions, which took place in 1998, the Case Management Office assumed several of the responsibilities of the Probate Assignment Clerk. Andrea Bayer, as the Caseflow Coordinator, coordinates the scheduling of visiting Probate Judges to sit at the Caro Mental Health Facility. Oakland County is one of many Michigan counties responsible for securing a judge and staff to visit this facility approximately six times a year. Andrea Bayer processes the paperwork

for judicial reassignments and disqualifications along with sending information to the State Court Administrative Office regarding judicial assignments.

Family Division judges are cross-assigned to hear both Probate and Circuit Court matters. Probate blind draw cards, used to select the judge on a case, are requested, prepared, and distributed to the proper court personnel. Once used, the cards are returned to the Caseflow Coordinator for storage.

In July, the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) plan for Oakland County was adopted by the Oakland County Bench and forwarded to the State Court Administrative Office for final approval as Administrative Order 2001-03. Five judges from the General Jurisdiction Division, Family Division, and district courts, along with fifteen attorneys and eight court personnel were involved in creating the plan. Lisa Czyz, ADR Coordinator for the Case Management Office, was instrumental in this process. Under Lisa's direction, a core group from the planning committee met to begin the process of creating forms and applications, sending information, and approving civil mediators for this process.



Case Management Office staff: Diane Castle-Kratz, ADR Caseflow Supervisor; Donna Place; Michelle Sawyer; Jean Harroun; Shelly Hollingsworth; Rebecca Reyes; Michelle Kase; Cindy Morales; Kate Doebel; Milly Marion; and Cathy Holland. Not pictured: Andrea Bayer, Caseflow Coordinator.

CIRCUIT COURT – GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION

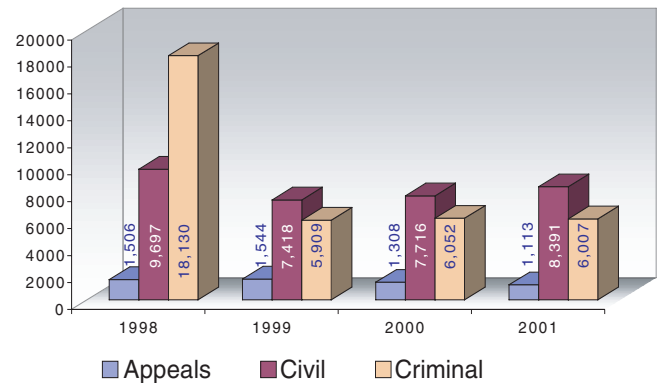
CASEFLOW UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Dedicated one member to the Judicial Information Management System project to ensure a smooth transition into the new computer system. All computer processes were reviewed and analyzed in preparation for the switch.
- ◆ Helped prepare an administrative order that included a procedure for assigning Mass Tort Cases.
- ◆ Produced and mailed approximately 15,600 scheduling orders on new civil cases.
- ◆ Coordinated the trial dockets for all visiting judges, which included 6 circuit, 5 probate, and 32 district judges. Visiting judges handled cases from many different dockets, such as: drug, ≤\$15,000, miscellaneous, and probate, which included off-campus facilities.
- ◆ Produced and mailed nearly 234,000 orders resulting from 3 new judges joining the bench and other various judicial activity.
- ◆ Processed 28,973 new filings.

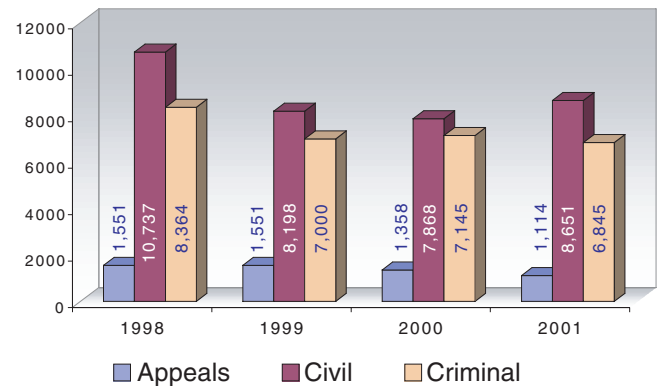
ADR HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Implemented a successful ADR plan with the coordinated efforts of the Oakland County Bar Association, staff from the various divisions within the Court, and the Oakland County Circuit Court Bench.
- ◆ Created and implemented an application process for civil mediators pursuant to the new SCAO guidelines and ADR plan. Sixty-four mediators were approved by a committee of court personnel, members of the Oakland County Bar Association, and the Oakland County Circuit Court Bench.
- ◆ Started preparation of the Domestic Relations mediator application process by establishing a committee of court personnel, members of the Oakland County Bar Association, Oakland County Family Division, and District Court Judges.
- ◆ Modified the ≤\$15,000 docket. A visiting judge was assigned to handle all pre-trial matters and manage the docket until cases are trial ready. When trial ready, cases are sent to volunteer district court judges for trial.
- ◆ Distributed \$176,775 to the law library from late fees assessed to case evaluation.

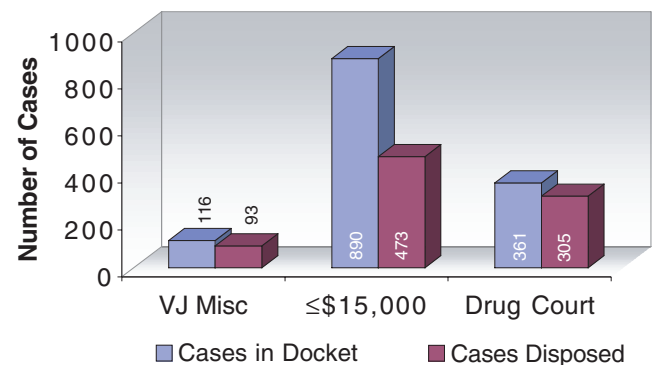
New Filings



Dispositions



Visiting Judge Dockets



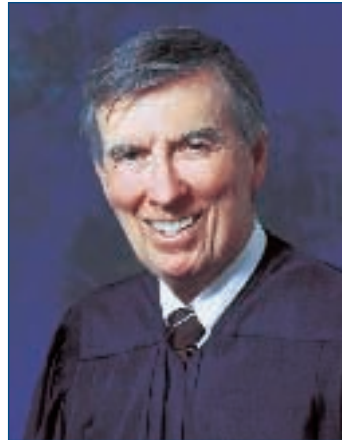
CIRCUIT COURT – DRUG TREATMENT COURTS

ADULT TREATMENT COURT

According to a recent study conducted by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, eighty-one percent of all inmates imprisoned nationwide in 1991 were involved with drugs or alcohol. While only a portion of surveyed inmates were actually convicted of a drug or alcohol offense, forty-eight percent report that they were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol when they committed their crimes. This problem takes on greater significance when one considers that approximately fifty percent of all probation and parole violators that same year were also under the influence of substances when they committed a new offense. These staggering findings reflect the destructive interrelationship that exists between a person's alcohol and/or drug dependency and their criminal behavior.

Demographic figures tell only a partial story of the societal traumas caused by untreated substance abuse. Other results include: huge costs associated with incarceration, sick, neglected, or drug addicted babies, chronic unemployment, disrupted or divorced families, and health problems aggravated by substance abuse and a lack of proper medical care. The full list of associated difficulties is nearly endless and notoriously difficult to track.

In August 2001, the Oakland County Circuit Court – General Jurisdiction Division attacked this problem head on when it opened the Adult Treatment Court or ATC. The ATC offers the Court a sentencing alternative for nonviolent felony offenders with serious substance abuse problems who will presumptively be sentenced to a term of incarceration in either the county jail or state prison. As a collaboration between the Court, Community Corrections, representatives of the Defense Bar, the Office of Substance Abuse Services, the Probation Department, and the Prosecutor's Office, the ATC cooperatively addresses the underlying substance abuse problems that lead many offenders to engage in criminal behavior.



*Judge David Breck
Adult Treatment Court*

It also provides intensive probation and supervision for each participant to ensure program engagement and increase the likelihood of success.

The ATC planning team recognizes that not all offenders are suitable for a treatment court. Since public safety is a concern, only non-violent offenders may enter the program.

Offenders must also have a demonstrable substance abuse problem. To that end, candidates are pre-screened to determine if and to what extent they suffer from substance dependency and to support the creation of an initial treatment plan. The substance-abusing offender must also agree to fully engage in the treatment process.

Accountability is critical to a participant's success. Therefore, stringent reporting, drug screening, and treatment requirements have been developed to address the participant's substance and criminal problems, while holding them responsible for their actions. The ATC reinforces personal accountability with a graduated system of sanctions and rewards. A minor program violation, for instance, may be addressed by requiring that the participant sit in the jury box for part of the next court session. A more significant violation may require additional reporting or drug testing, while incarceration or removal from the program may punish the most serious transgressions. Likewise, a participant's accomplishments are noted. Public recognition and applause draw attention to small achievements. Prolonged progress warrants graduation to a less restrictive stage and is accompanied by certificates and material awards. A formal graduation honors participants who successfully complete all ATC requirements.

The Oakland County Circuit Court recognizes that treatment courts offer a cost-effective and efficient sentencing alternative for non-violent, substance abusing offenders. The ATC exists as a sentencing option for those offenders whose criminal behavior results from a serious underlying substance abuse problem. While it is too soon to forecast a success rate, the ATC anticipates that it will reduce crime by reducing recidivism, save money by redirecting offenders to treatment instead of prolonged incarceration, and reintegrate participants into the social fabric of Oakland County.



Adult Treatment Court Coordinator Ellen Zehnder (left) confers with Juvenile Treatment Court Coordinator Corene Munro (right).

CIRCUIT COURT – DRUG TREATMENT COURTS

JUVENILE TREATMENT COURT

As probationers filed into court recently, there was an audible sigh of surprise and pleasure from the assembled audience. One of the longest-participating youngsters strode confidently to the jury box dressed appropriately in slacks and a collared shirt ... and his hair was close-shaven and a natural brown in color! Why was this remarkable? Because this young man, whom we'll call "Terry" had previously appeared in court with his hair dyed in many different shades of blue, purple and blonde. He had been scolded for wearing a t-shirt with drug insignia, and loved to bare his tattoos and piercings to public view. But now "Terry" has a full-time job, has been drug-free for many weeks, and has earned the maximum incentive of 10 points three weeks in a row!



*Judge Edward Sosnick
Family-Focused Juvenile Drug
Treatment Court*

Welcome to juvenile drug court. The official name is the "Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Treatment Court," and it is arguably the most unique program the court offers to juvenile offenders. The grant-funded drug court operates on guidelines established by the National Office of Drug Court Policy, using a program framework with proven success. Youth who are non-violent, repeat offenders, charged with drug and alcohol or related offenses, and who are assessed to be severely substance abusing, are provided with close judicial supervision, intensive (9 hours per week) drug treatment, frequent random drug testing, regular probationary counseling, and supports for getting and keeping a job and remaining in school. Because this is an adolescent population, a key component is the involvement of the clients' families, who must attend treatment sessions and participate in court hearings along with their children.

The juvenile drug court is fortunate to have Judge Edward Sosnick as lead jurist in this program. Each week he volunteers his time after hours (court convenes from 5:45 p.m. – 6:30 p.m., every Tuesday evening), to hold progress hearings. Youngsters' treatment and probation plans are reviewed, as are their successes and/or shortcomings, for the week. Incentives such as food vouchers and gift certificates are handed out for good performance, and sanctions for misconduct range from admonishment by the judge or community service hours, to short-term detention for serious program violations.

The mission of the program is to protect public safety and reduce the incidence of juvenile drug crime by helping youth and their families achieve drug-free lifestyles and healthy family relationships. The goals are to reduce drug abuse, expedite drug case processing, reduce recidivism, provide community-based treatment alternatives to incarceration, and improve youth and family functioning. Since

June 2001, the juvenile drug court has hired a coordinator, two full-time probation officers, a cadre of interns, and a data entry clerk. More importantly, approximately 16 youngsters, 85% of whom have not committed a new offense, have been enrolled. The four-phase program is expected to take about 12 months for participants to complete, and there are currently several youth who have moved to advanced phases. The drug court is looking forward eagerly to its first graduation.

While "Terry's" story is certainly one of the most dramatic, virtually every youth who has participated thus far has a very serious history of drug use, significant school and family adjustment issues, emotional problems, and, often, failure in previous treatment programs. These youngsters' lives are improving due to the incredible dedication of the multi-disciplinary coordinating team, which includes Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Robert Zivian, defense counsel Eliot Zipser, Referee Marty Alvin, Office of Substance Abuse representative Marlene Hughes, treatment provider Dr. Charles Weddell, Oakland Schools representative Margaret Kelley, Coordinator Corene Munro and staff, and, of course, Judge Sosnick. They expect there will be many more "Terrys" as they continue to improve and enhance this program. A sincere thanks is due to all members of the planning and coordinating teams, staff, and the judge. Together, they are changing lives.



Members of the core team for the Juvenile Drug Court include (seated, left to right): Dr. Pamela Howitt, Judge Edward Sosnick and coordinator, Corene Munro. Standing (left to right) are: Kelly Kammer, Marlene Hughes, Mondrea Teague, Elliott Zipser, Megan Abraham, Robert Zivian, Jackie Howes, and Danette Bertovich.



*Lisa Symula
Family Division Administrator
Probate/Juvenile Register*

“CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM”

Friend of the Court successfully converted to Michigan’s Statewide Child Support Enforcement System (CSES) the week of September 24, 2001. This massive undertaking completed almost a year’s worth of diligent effort and cooperation among staff, Oakland County’s Department of Information Technology, and the Family Independence Agency. The system was established to comply with a 1988 federal mandate that states create a single system to enforce, collect, and distribute child support payments. This uniform system was designed to make it easier to track delinquent payers across county and state lines.

To avoid federal penalties, the state had to be on line with this system by September 30, 2001. This time frame resulted in an intense year-long collaborative effort to prepare for this conversion.

A significant concern during the actual conversion week was any delay in issuing support checks. Although checks could not be distributed during the week of September 24, the distribution of checks began as planned on October 1. The dedication and flexibility shown by staff up to and during this conversion process was praised by Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura Corrigan in an October press release issued after the completion of this successful conversion.

The Next Generation System will be implemented by our courts in the fall of 2002. We are proud and pleased to have such dedicated staff at our Friend of the Court who continue to strive to meet the needs of the community and its citizens.

FAMILY DIVISION OVERVIEW

The Family Division for the Oakland County Circuit Court continues to develop our newly merged administrative functions which include our Judicial Support unit, Court Services unit, Friend of the Court operation, and the administration of the Probate Court.

The Judicial Support unit consists of Juvenile Referees, Juvenile Intake, and Juvenile Adoption areas. This unit is headed by William Bartlam, Deputy Court Administrator and Judicial Assistant. In Mr. Bartlam’s role as Judicial Assistant, he is also the lead legal advisor for our Probate and Family Division areas.

The Friend of the Court operation, administered by our Friend of the Court, Joseph Salamone, deals primarily with domestic relations matters and provides legal services through referees, court services, counseling, investigations, and mediation.

The Court Services arm of the division is headed by Dr. Pamela Howitt, Deputy Court Administrator for Court Services. The Court Services unit provides casework and intensive casework services, clinical services through the Psychological Clinic, and community diversion efforts through the Youth Assistance unit.

In 2001, the Family Division also completed work on the Next Generation Model Trial Court Project sponsored through the State Court Administrative Office. Through this effort, the court was able to submit recommendations to improve our service delivery and referee functions. Also, Oakland County was able to work within our service area and Family Division referee area and submit proposals and recommendations for improvements in each of these areas.



Family Division Management Team: (Front row from left) Joe Salamone, Friend of the Court; Dr. Pamela Howitt, Deputy Court Administrator/ Court Services; Kathy Cox, Assistant Friend of the Court; and Dr. Bernard Gaulier, Chief, Clinical Services. (Back row from left) Dallas Coleman, Chief, Casework Services; Jill Daly, Chief, Probate Estates and Mental Health; Lauran Howard, Chief of Adoptions and Juvenile Support; Kal Engelberg, Chief, Youth Assistance Services; and Bill Bartlam, Deputy Court Administrator/ Judicial Assistant.

CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION

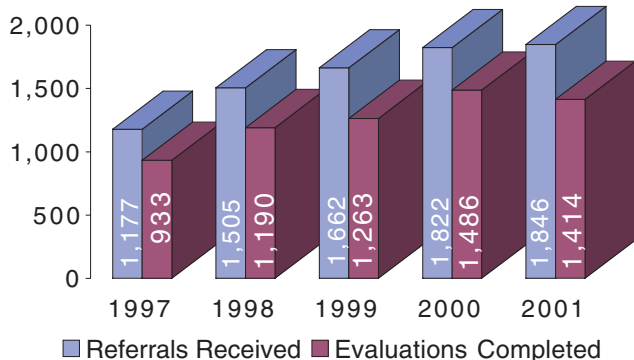
SUMMARY OF FAMILY DIVISION ACTIVITY

FILING ACTIVITY	1998	1999	2000	2001
Juvenile/Adoptions				
Authorized Delinquency Petitions	2,135	2,225	1,973	2,071
Authorized CPP* Petitions	302	306	339	333
Unofficially Closed Delinquency Complaints	3,607	3,089	2,845	2,197
Unofficially Closed CPP* Complaints	41	48	36	18
Supplemental Delinquency Complaints	291	296	296	260
Juvenile Traffic Tickets	648	645	531	539
Authorized Adoption Petitions	451	453	497	477
SUBTOTAL	7,475	7,062	6,517	5,895
Domestic Relations				
No Children	2,870	2,809	2,805	2,772
With Children	2,898	2,887	2,891	2,792
Paternity	905	848	913	851
URESAs	430	398	409	411
Support	654	589	831	863
Other	177	220	200	187
SUBTOTAL	7,934	7,751	8,049	7,876
Personal Protection Orders	3,987	4,060	4,102	3,994
TOTAL NEW FILINGS	19,396	18,873	18,668	17,765

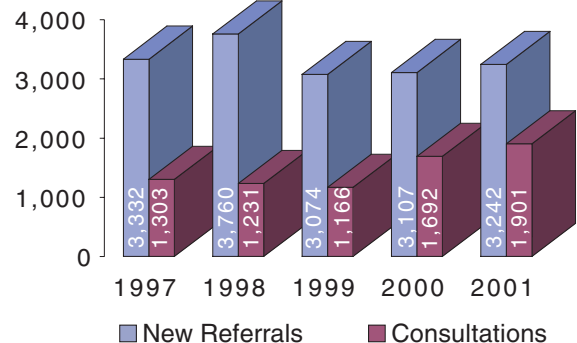


*Child Protective Proceedings

Psychological Clinic Activity



Youth Assistance Activity



CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION



Claudia Martello, Chief of Accounting and Banking, and Rhonda Taber, Scanning Unit Supervisor, were crucial to the smooth transition to the new CSES system.

FRIEND OF THE COURT

The Friend of the Court is responsible for assisting in domestic relations cases. The office investigates matters involving custody, support, and parenting time in contested cases. Once the court orders specific obligations, the Friend of the Court ensures the orders are upheld.

Friend of the Court offers free programs to persons involved in family law cases such as SMILE (Start Making It Livable for Everyone), an educational workshop designed for divorcing parents, and Forget Me Not,

an educational program for never married parents. The office also provides speakers to local groups.

Family Counseling Services assists families in domestic relations matters through mediation, counseling, and investigation of issues pertaining to custody and parenting time. They also sponsors educational programs to promote understanding of the effects of separation and divorce on families. The goal is to help make positive adjustments to dramatic changes in the family unit.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ Provided mediation to over 2,500 families to assist them to voluntarily resolve custody and parenting time disputes.
- ♦ Involved parents in SMILE, a divorce education program, and Forget Me Not, an education program for never married parents, to provide information about the effects of divorce and parental separation, and how parents can create a positive environment for their children.
- ♦ Partnered with the Psychological Clinic to provide a series of workshops designed to improve co-parenting skills for separated or divorced couples engaged in mild to moderate conflict.
- ♦ Redesigned the SMILE, Forget Me Not, and Mediation brochures.
- ♦ Connected to the State Disbursement Unit in Lansing to allow employers to send all payroll deducted support payments to one statewide central location.
- ♦ Connected to the state New Hire Directory to allow prompt access to new employer information for payers of support.
- ♦ Converted the FOC computer system to the state system to comply with federal requirements.
- ♦ Networked FOC's existing Job Placement Program with Oakland's Work First Program, Oakland Community College, and Oakland Family Services to provide training and assistance to non-custodial parents to obtain employment and parenting skills.
- ♦ Partnered successfully with HAVEN to renew a federal grant to provide increased services for parenting time in special and difficult cases.
- ♦ Collected and disbursed over \$186 million in support payments, \$575,000 in statutory fees, and over \$35,000 in court costs.

CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION

Friend of the Court Referees include: (left to right, back row) Robert Kief, Betty Lowenthal, Art Spears, Ron Foon, Susan Bolton, Vince Walicka, Ken Tolbert, Kittie Fairbrother, and Dave Hoffman. (Left to right, front row) Patrick Cronin, Mark Sherbow, Phil Ingraham, Adrian Spinks, Michelle Barry, Martha Anderson, Alisha Martin, and Royden Jones.



FRIEND OF THE COURT REFEREES

Friend of the Court referees enforce Family Division orders regarding child support, custody, and parenting time. The referees review complaints by parties and attorneys, and initiate appropriate legal action. The Friend of the Court referees conduct show cause hearings for violations of child support, custody, and parenting time orders. They assist the Family Division judges by making recommendations for resolutions of sensitive and complex family law disputes.

By an Order of Reference from the Family Division, referees act as the trier of fact in hearings involving complex legal issues of custody, parenting time and support, and interstate proceedings in pending and post-judgment actions. They refer many unemployed clients to the job placement/Work First Program and have conducted Early Intervention Conferences for every new divorce action filed with children since the inception of the Family Division of the Circuit Court.

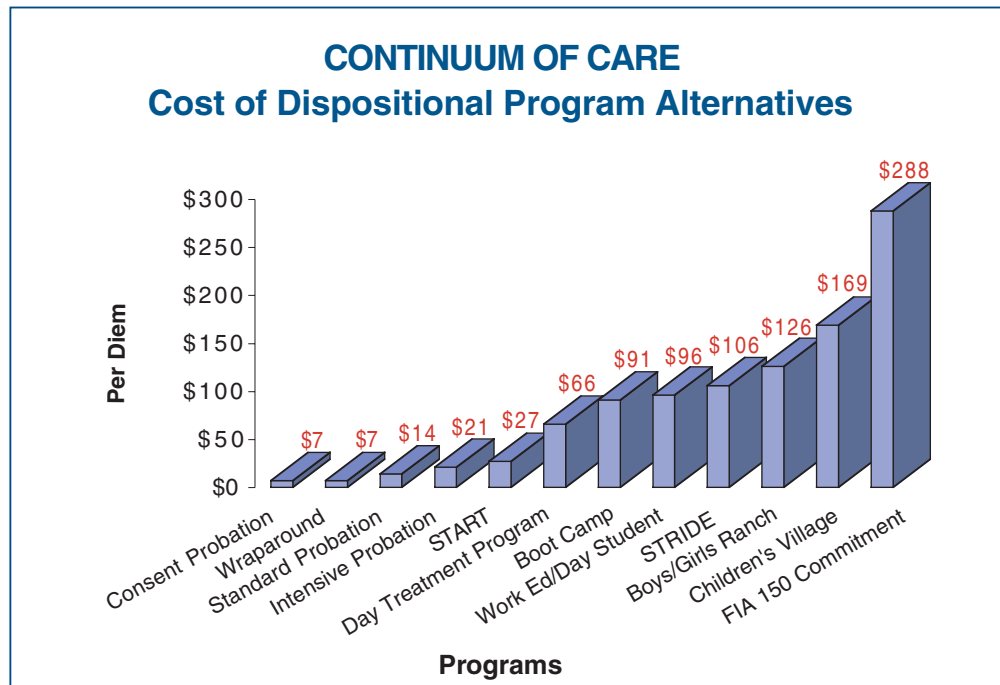
“ . . . to the support of the Constitution and the laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor.”

Abraham Lincoln

REFEREE ACTIVITY

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Motion/oral arguments heard	5,988	6,512	8,125
Evidentiary hearings held	4,140	5,115	6,205
Total orders entered as a result of referee recommendation	8,327	6,591	6,961
Number of appeals to Family Division Judges	420	457	465
Show cause enforcement hearings scheduled	18,272	19,736	20,895
Early intervention conferences scheduled	2,893	3,014	2,831
Job placement/Work First referrals	496	800	988

CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION



COURT SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Court Services operation is comprised of Casework Services (Juvenile Probation), Psychological Clinic, and Youth Assistance. The 108 staff are responsible for providing direct client services, case management, research and program development, community resource develop-

ment through volunteer coordination, and education/ public awareness. Services include individual and family assessment, prevention, status offender services, juvenile probation, group therapy for adjudicated youth, and parent guidance programs.

CASEWORK SERVICES

The Casework Services operation is responsible for all delinquency cases authorized for court by Intake. They assist the case through the adjudicating process, when necessary. Once a case has been adjudicated, they prepare a social history report, including corroborative information, that makes recommendations to the court regarding disposition, and takes into account both the needs of the child and the protection of the community. During post-disposition,

the Casework Services operation assists in implementing court orders, including the monitoring of probation and restitution, community service, parental education, counseling, etc. They also monitor clients' compliance or noncompliance with court orders and report to the court on a regular basis, making further recommendations when necessary.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Developed a unit floater position to assist with expediting cases red-flagged for potential drug court participation and to assist with overflow cases from all unit areas.
- ◆ Developed a new format for statistical accountability which will allow for the gathering of data not previously collected.
- ◆ Trained casework staff in the use and interpretation of a new substance abuse assessment tool, the ACIDI.
- ◆ Streamlined the information sharing process with Childrens Village by requiring that staff provide information packets to the Village on any child screened for a Village program at the time of Out-of-Home Screening.
- ◆ Completed a unit audit whose purpose and goals are to improve unit service delivery with the implementation of the plan to occur during 2002.
- ◆ Completed the Child Care Fund audit successfully.

CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION

CLINICAL SERVICES

The Psychological Clinic is responsible for aiding the court in making informed dispositional decisions by providing clinical forensic evaluations of children and families who are involved with the court. In addition, it provides specialized treatment services to clients. Staff are available for case consultations with hearing officers, caseworkers, attorneys, Family Independence Agency, school personnel, and others. Clinical Services also conducts and coordinates training and research, including program evaluations and staff development programs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Continued to conduct psychological evaluations in delinquency, neglect/abuse, and domestic matters. Since the clinic became part of the Family Division, the proportion of evaluations regarding custody or parenting time disputes has grown from 0% to 26%. Of 1,846 individuals referred for testing in 2001, 485 were for domestic matters.
- ◆ Implemented the program ADEPT, or “After Divorce: Effective Parenting Together,” an eight-week educational and communication skills training program. It serves children by training parents to share co-parenting through appropriate communication and peaceful conflict resolution, rather than engaging in conflict and additional litigation.
- ◆ Coordinated the implementation of the Adolescent Chemical Dependency Inventory-Corrections Version (ACDI-CV). This computer-scored instrument was selected to be used by all caseworkers in order to assess the presence and severity of substance abuse among adolescents who become involved with the Court.
- ◆ Participated in a community presentation on parenting issues, offering a seminar on parenting and discipline techniques for young children.
- ◆ Coordinated in-service training for clerical, casework, clinical and supervisory staff of the Court. The following seminars were organized: “Effect of Divorce or Loss on Children”; “Focused Thinking Mediation”; “Using Origami as a Therapeutic Tool”; “Domestic Violence-Beyond the Bruise”; “Juvenile Drug Court Training”; “Personal Safety Training”; and “Fathers: America's Greatest Untapped Resource.” Also presented were in-house seminars entitled “Accessing Michigan Courts” and “Sorry, I Can't Give Legal Advice.” The Training Council sponsored individuals to attend training seminars of their choice in the community.

YOUTH ASSISTANCE

As the primary prevention segment of the Court's continuum of services, the mission is to strengthen youth and families and prevent and reduce delinquency, abuse, and neglect through volunteer involvement. Using a decentralized approach, staff work in 30 different locations with a cadre 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 casework services. Each of the 26 local programs is co-sponsored by the school district, municipalities therein, and the Court.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Increased the number of new matches in Mentors Plus (97) which is almost double compared to last year.
- ◆ Instituted a new educational program called “U-Turn” that was developed with the cooperation and the participation of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department which includes a small group conversation with an inmate, a jail tour, and a debriefing session offered to 94 youth on our Youth Assistance caseload and their parent.
- ◆ Over 6,000 parents and youth attended Family Education programs, over 4,600 youth participated in summer and after-school recreation programs, and over 32,500 youth and families participated in one or more community programs, all offered by Youth Assistance. Over 1,200 youth were recognized for their positive contributions to their community at local Youth Recognition events conducted by Youth Assistance.
- ◆ The average age for youth referred to Youth Assistance was 12.68 years, representing a continuing downward trend consistent with our efforts to provide early intervention services. Over 21% (685) of all referrals received (3,242) were on children age 10 and under.



Youth Assistance workers participate in an activity called “The Trolley.” Held at Crossroads for Youth, this adventure-based team building event encouraged communication, problem-solving, cooperation, and trust.

CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION

JUDICIAL SUPPORT

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

- ♦ Adoptions, including adoption records and confidential intermediary services
- ♦ Child abuse and neglect cases
- ♦ Juvenile delinquency and juvenile traffic
- ♦ Juvenile Court intake
- ♦ Personal protection orders
- ♦ Safe delivery of newborns
- ♦ Waiver of parental consent to abortion

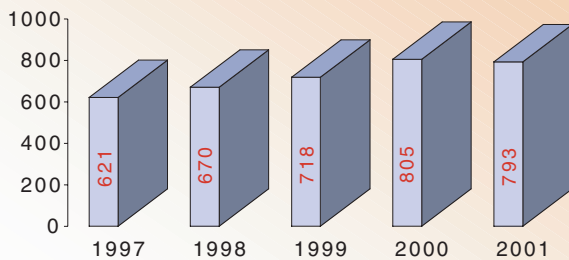
In these areas, support staff schedule cases, prepare files, create certain documents, maintain both public and confidential records, serve summons and other process, and distribute court orders and other materials.

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, then make confidential recommendations to judges.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ Worked with staff from the Prosecutor’s Office and other organizations in implementing the provisions of the Crime Victim’s Rights Act, 2000 PA 503, which changed many of our business practices.
- ♦ Continued evaluation of all adoption policies to ensure compliance with statute and case law.
- ♦ Developed the protocols and procedures for the Safe Delivery of Newborn cases required by 2000 PA 232, and met with a multi-disciplinary statewide group to propose needed modifications to this law.
- ♦ Continued the working relationship with the Adoptions Advisory group and implemented changes in adoption practices, including temporary custody in direct placement, procedures for the termination of parental rights of putative fathers, and court practice for finalization hearings.
- ♦ Facilitated (with the Prosecuting Attorney’s office) the Fourth Annual Orientation for new police officers/new juvenile officers, and obtained Michigan Council on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) Certification for the program. Once again, the program was extremely well attended and the participants indicated the information was “very relevant” to their jobs.
- ♦ Performed a comprehensive compliance review of the Personal Protection Order process, including a review of all forms, internal procedures, and practices. As efficiencies were identified, initiated corrective actions or improvements and updated the internal staff training manual.
- ♦ Developed, as a part of the Next Generation Model Trial Court planning process, a plan for a Structurally Integrated Referee Function which would merge the administration and operations of Juvenile Referees and Friend of the Court Referees.
- ♦ Implemented many of the required provisions of the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act into practices in Child Protective Proceedings, including many new court forms.
- ♦ Produced a monthly synopsis of all Family Law cases decided by the Michigan Supreme Court of Appeals as released in the State Bar of Michigan’s E-Journal and distributed the synopsis to judges, referees, and administrative staff.
- ♦ Promoted and trained three intake clerks to the position of juvenile deputy register and evaluated, hired, and trained three positions in Juvenile Intake.

Adoption Hearings Held



CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION

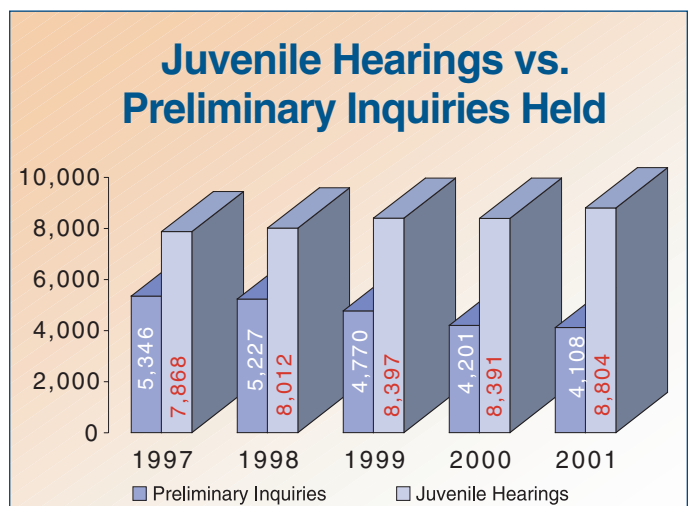
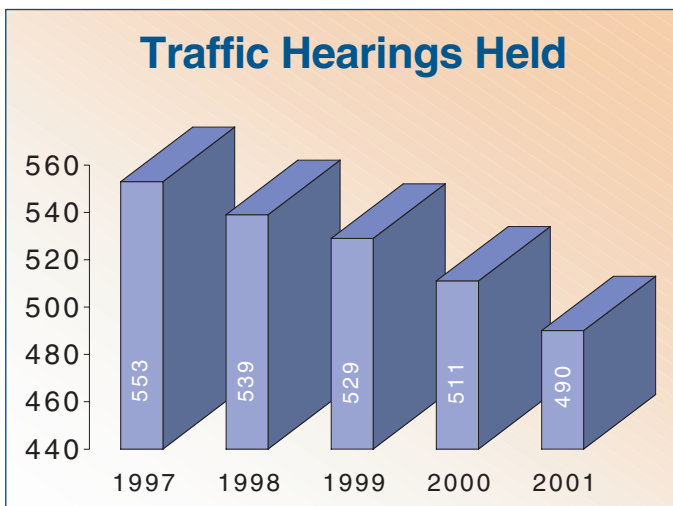


Juvenile Court Referees include (back row, left to right) Joseph Racey, Scott Hamilton, Michael Hand, and Jean Dohanyos. (Front row, left to right) Twila Leigh, Marty Alvin – Referee Supervisor, Karla Mallett, and Robert Martin.

JUVENILE COURT REFEREES

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 conduct more than 10,000 preliminary inquiries and hearings each year. Unless one of the litigants demands a judge or a jury, referees hear matters and make recommended findings and orders for the assigned judge. All referees are experienced attorneys and bring special expertise in child welfare law to their profession.



CIRCUIT COURT – BUSINESS DIVISION



*John L. Cooperrider
Court Business Administrator*

“Accounting for Drug Court”

Besides monitoring the expenditures of a \$60 million budget, this past year included an additional and increasing effort of monitoring expenditures of various Drug Court grant funding sources. As you can imagine, this can be a very complex and detail-oriented process, especially when mixing several grants together.

On the juvenile side of the drug court ledger, funding is currently received from four sources: Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) \$8,000; State Court Administrative Office Incentive Grant #1 (SCAO #1) \$98,876; the SCAO #2 \$74,431; and the Byrne Implementation Grant \$314,401.

On the adult side of the drug court ledger, funding is currently received from three sources: Local Law Enforcement Block Grant (LLEBG) \$113,451; State Court Administrative Office Incentive Grant #1 (SCAO #1) \$95,000; and the SCAO #2 \$75,000.

Besides the grant funds awarded, there is typically local match funds required for these grants which also have to be expensed and monitored for compliance. Total approved funding from the various adult and juvenile drug court grants to date is over \$779,000.

Accounting for these special drug court programs will continue to be a challenge. However, it pales in comparison to the challenges that drug court participants must overcome. We have a great staff, which I know will successfully meet this challenge and many more.

BUSINESS DIVISION OVERVIEW

The Court’s 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 is supervised by Marcia Travis. Responsibilities of this unit include the development and monitoring of the Court’s \$60 million budget, processing all payments for services including court appointed attorney payments, processing personnel transactions, recording attendance and mileage, managing courthouse and satellite office facilities, managing capital improvement and special project requests, and managing the equipment needs of the courts.

The Data/Technology Unit is supervised by Mary Gohl. 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 includes the development and implementation of the Court’s new Judicial Information Management System (JIMS). 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). Finally, this unit provides court reporter services for the Court’s juvenile referees, creating records of courtroom proceedings and producing transcripts.

The last area of general responsibility for this division is coordinating special projects and events, grant writing, and public information management. Karen MacKenzie directs the Court’s efforts in this regard. Responsibilities include the development of the Court’s new 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.



Business Division Management Team: (From left) Marcia Travis, Supervisor–Administrative/Financial; Karen MacKenzie, Court Resource & Program Specialist; and Mary Gohl, Supervisor–Court Business Operations

CIRCUIT COURT – BUSINESS DIVISION

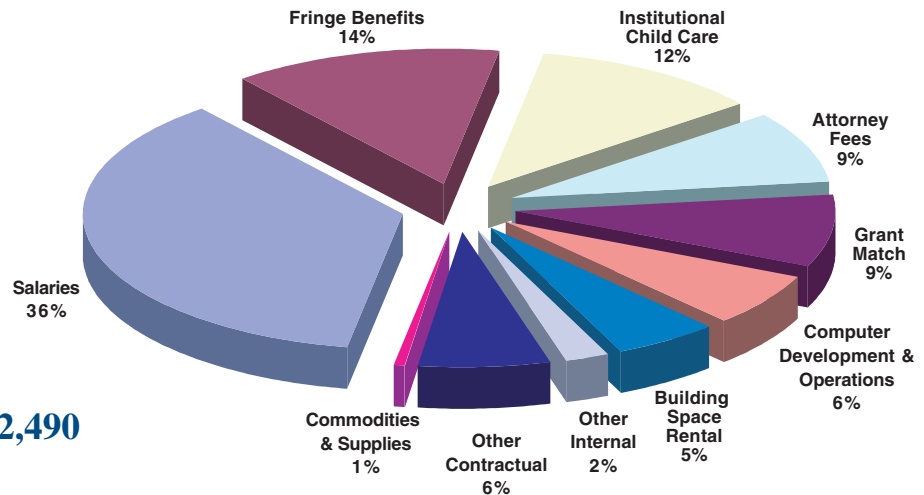
HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Constructed new offices with the assistance of FM&O, for the JIMS Program Manager and staff attorneys in the Court Administrator's office; new jury room and staff offices for the drug court programs on the 2nd floor tower and east wing; and new offices for the Clinic in the Troy and Walled Lake satellite offices.
- ◆ Started the planning effort for constructing two new courtrooms in the east wing to accommodate two new Circuit Court judges.
- ◆ Planned for the design, acquisition, and implementation of an imaging system for the Probate Estates and Mental Health unit. Implementation to begin January 1, 2002.
- ◆ Continued preliminary work related to the redesign of the Probate and Circuit Courts' website. This will follow the format of the County's newly launched website. We hope to make suitable upgrades that will make the site more interactive, with the overall goal of improving our service delivery to the legal community as well as the community at large.
- ◆ Upgraded the Probate and Juvenile's file tracking system from Imagetrax (Access db) to File-On-Q (SQL db).
- ◆ Updated and established emergency response and security procedures as a result of 9/11, including new court emergency leaders and alternates for the county's Emergency Management System. Also established emergency notification fan-out lists in case of an emergency.
- ◆ Secured web-based imaging access for each judicial staff attorney.
- ◆ Purchased and installed new case management software for the juvenile (cjPartner) and adult (ADE) drug court programs.
- ◆ Claudia Gooden retired after 15 years of service in the Business Office. Claudia paid all the court appointed attorney vouchers for the Family Division and Probate Court.
- ◆ Monitored juveniles committed to the State of Michigan Family Independence Agency and produced over \$150,000 in credit adjustments for Oakland county in 2001.
- ◆ Promoted Debbie Thompson to Account Clerk II, replacing retired Claudia Gooden; promoted Terry Castiglione to the new User Support Specialist II position for the JIMS project; promoted Linda Russell to Records Clerk position; hired Christina Bujak from the Reimbursement Division to become the new Report Writer for the JIMS project, hired Cheryl Macias to Clerk II position to become the new receptionist for the Court Administrator's Office; hired Barbara Felder to Secretary III position to become an administrative assistant to the Circuit Court Administrator, General Jurisdiction Administrator, and Business Division Administrator.
- ◆ Coordinated various new events and produced new documents resulting directly from the administrative merger of the Probate and Circuit Courts. These new events and documents included consolidated Court Picnic, Annual Report, Employee Annual Awards, Holiday Party, Court Newsletter, JIMS Newsletter, and Court Tours.



CIRCUIT COURT – BUSINESS DIVISION

CIRCUIT COURT AND PROBATE COURT FINANCIAL REPORT



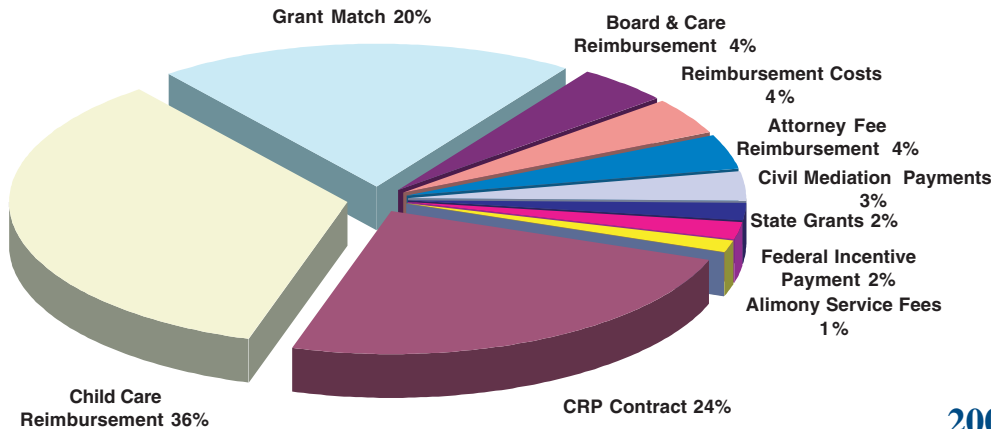
2001 Expenditures: \$60,442,490

<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000-01 % Chg</u>
Salaries	\$19,382,439	\$20,194,069	\$21,483,370	6.4%
Fringe Benefits	\$6,915,090	\$7,549,358	\$8,017,930	6.2%
Institutional Child Care	\$4,358,754	\$5,926,767	\$7,009,340	18.3%
Attorney Fees	\$4,770,099	\$4,884,194	\$5,115,498	4.7%
Grant Match	\$0	\$0	\$5,084,345*	
Computer Development & Operations	\$3,579,471	\$4,071,150	\$3,715,466	-8.7%
Building Space Rental	\$2,513,015	\$2,964,982	\$3,127,390	5.5%
Indirect Costs	\$310,529	\$325,289	\$1,075,838	230.7%
Professional Services	\$366,468	\$1,116,238	\$696,556	-37.6%
Mediator Fees	\$670,450	\$679,050	\$690,625	1.7%
Jury Fees & Mileage	\$692,979	\$744,176	\$645,788	-13.2%
Operating Transfer	\$0	\$0	\$558,500	
Visiting Judges	\$248,925	\$342,061	\$460,074	34.5%
Telephone Communications	\$363,714	\$434,218	\$438,873	1.1%
Other	\$419,786	\$328,490	\$325,799	-0.8%
Postage	\$207,036	\$290,287	\$280,686	-3.3%
Transcripts	\$207,441	\$241,691	\$220,351	-8.8%
Mileage/Leased Vehicles	\$204,755	\$219,520	\$214,587	-2.2%
Commodities/Supplies	\$120,100	\$186,949	\$203,639	8.9%
Furniture/Equipment Purchase	\$170,642	\$217,972	\$194,209	-10.9%
Printing	\$81,165	\$94,216	\$137,721	46.2%
Overtime	\$50,651	\$92,816	\$133,732	44.1%
Insurance	\$127,489	\$127,489	\$129,811	1.8%
Copiers	\$46,937	\$76,703	\$111,236	45.0%
Court Reporter Services	\$58,594	\$81,456	\$104,665	28.5%
Maintenance Charges	\$30,226	\$34,775	\$78,192	124.9%
Equipment Rental	\$78,885	\$82,724	\$51,246	-38.1%
Micrographics/Reproductions	\$59,579	\$59,611	\$48,180	-19.2%
Interpreter Services	\$30,254	\$29,205	\$46,409	58.9%
Computer Legal Research	\$0	\$38,359	\$42,434	10.6%
Software Rental/Lease	\$0	\$134,662	\$0	-100.0%
Total	\$46,065,473	\$51,568,477	\$60,442,490	17.2%

*Increase is due to a change in county financial reporting. Friend of the Court is now considered a Grant program.

CIRCUIT COURT – BUSINESS DIVISION

CIRCUIT COURT AND PROBATE COURT FINANCIAL REPORT



2001 Revenues: \$27,679,214

<u>Revenues/Sources of Funds</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000-01 % Chg</u>
Child Care Reimbursement	\$7,281,919	\$8,255,412	\$8,952,720	8.4%
CRP Contract	\$6,316,947	\$5,670,291	\$5,831,064	2.8%
Grant Match	\$0	\$0	\$5,147,821*	
Board & Care Reimbursement	\$1,098,828	\$1,002,734	\$1,116,262	11.3%
Reimbursement Costs	\$1,051,650	\$1,041,539	\$1,073,777	3.1%
Attorney Fee Reimbursement	\$997,835	\$1,003,790	\$985,709	-1.8%
Civil Mediation Payments	\$961,378	\$816,715	\$865,262	5.9%
State Grants	\$543,246	\$606,272	\$561,552	-7.4%
Federal Incentive Payment	\$568,912	\$722,051	\$484,544	-32.9%
CRP State Supplement	\$0	\$0	\$422,549	
Alimony Service Fees	\$619,726	\$576,675	\$339,213	-41.2%
Probate Estate Fees	\$262,178	\$278,106	\$302,050	8.6%
Prior Years Revenue	\$456,242	\$0	\$227,125	
Reimbursement State County Agent	\$175,819	\$176,993	\$183,157	3.5%
Mediation Fines	\$162,245	\$162,405	\$178,200	9.7%
Probation Service Fees	\$224,621	\$204,043	\$161,485	-20.9%
Other	\$85,870	\$188,606	\$149,844	-20.6%
ADC Incentive Payment	\$215,761	\$138,373	\$141,494	2.3%
Family Counseling Fees	\$126,930	\$121,305	\$121,755	0.4%
Probate Certified Copies	\$107,649	\$102,806	\$99,799	-2.9%
FOC Filing Fees	\$107,700	\$100,440	\$89,820	-10.6%
Psychological Clinical Evaluation Fees	\$58,671	\$94,820	\$88,013	-7.2%
Other Probate Filing Fees	\$80,849	\$80,710	\$71,426	-11.5%
Processing Fees	\$73,711	\$64,917	\$35,813	-44.8%
FOC Judgement Fees	\$32,130	\$30,080	\$29,360	-2.4%
Probate Will Deposits	\$23,675	\$25,125	\$19,400	-22.8%
Total	\$21,634,492	\$21,464,208	\$27,679,214	29.0%

*Increase is due to a change in county financial reporting. Friend of the Court is now considered a Grant program.

PROBATE COURT

PROBATE ESTATES AND MENTAL HEALTH OVERVIEW

Although we have merged many administrative functions with Circuit Court, constitutionally there remains a Probate Court. Honorable Linda S. Hallmark presides as Chief Probate Judge and Honorable Barry M. Grant as Chief Judge Pro Tempore. Lisa Symula is the appointed Probate Register.

Probate Courts perform important functions in our society, one of which is to make a formal record of the status of property of decedents. The Oakland County Probate Court, under the Estates and Protected Individuals Code (EPIC), which took effect April 1, 2000, handles the "probating" of wills and the administration of estates of deceased persons by personal representatives. It is the Court's task to interpret last wills and trusts in the event of uncertainty or conflict, and to determine the heirs in "intestate" (without a will) estates. The Estates "counter" is the bustling center of activity as staff process the necessary paperwork, set court hearings, and direct files into court for motion call. Besides estates and trusts, this unit

also handles the paperwork and oversight of guardianships and conservatorships of adults and minors (including arranging for guardianship reviews), and also 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 handling proceedings under the Mental Health Code, including involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill persons and judicial admission and guardianships of developmentally disabled persons. The Mental Health Unit also handles cases involving minors in need of substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services. Staff processes the paperwork for all of the above, and is called upon frequently to assist petitioners who are requesting emergency court orders to transport a qualifying individual immediately to a preadmission screening unit for examination and possible hospitalization.

HIGHLIGHTS

While much of 2000 was spent preparing for and implementing the Estates and Protected Individuals Code (EPIC), which took effect April 1, 2000, the year 2001 was spent fine-tuning the changes in procedures and policies necessitated by this major change in the law effecting Probate Court.

You could say that 2001 was an "in-between" year or a "breather," if you will, because although no new major laws, procedures, or technology were implemented by the court in 2001, they were in an advanced state of preparation for what is to come in 2002 -- and there are many exciting and extensive changes in store for everyone! The probate staff, in addition to working through lingering EPIC issues, spent tremendous amounts of time in 2001 in thoughtful preparation for these changes, and to pave the way for their implementation and success in 2002.

Projects worked on in 2001 with an eye towards 2002 implementation included:

- ♦ Scanning (or Imaging) of all documents filed with the court, set for implementation in January 2002, will allow staff to access images of scanned documents on their computer screens. This innovation will result in better service to the public by being able to retrieve necessary information quickly and accurately.

- ♦ JIMS (Judicial Information Management System) represents a total revamping of the computer system and the way the work is completed. It is a massive project which has resulted in many hours of staff time dedicated to careful planning before being implemented late in 2002 or early 2003.

- ♦ Internal reorganization of staff resources, a plan which will be implemented in 2002, will give updates and upgrades to various positions within the court. Not only will the reorganization of court resources allow court staff to provide better service to users, it will also establish new promotional opportunities for staff. A new unit of "probate specialists" will lend its considerable expertise and problem solving skills to the most complicated filing issues, thus allowing routine matters to be handled more expeditiously.

This "in-between" year of 2001 has allowed us to look to the past, by refining our legal practices and procedures, and it has allowed us to look to the future, by affording us the luxury of time to plan for some terrific technological and staffing changes. We think you will like what you see in 2002!

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

This year two special sessions of "Removing the Mysteries of Probate Court" were held, tailored to the hearing impaired population. Presenters at the October 25th session at the Hazel Park Senior Center were (left to right) Jill Koney Daly, Chief - Probate Estates & Mental Health; Alisa Kwang, attorney for Couzens Lansky; and Robert Gaglio, trust officer for Comerica. Monalee Ferraro, regional site coordinator for Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Services, provided signing services. The other session was held in Waterford.



NEW FILES OPENED

Probate	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Small Estates	729	632	676
Deceased-Supervised	448	135	0
Deceased-Independent	1,494	495	0
EPIC-Supervised	0	53	79
EPIC-Unsupervised	0	1,193	1,877
Adult Guardianships	755	844	827
Minor Guardianships	534	618	599
Adult Conservatorships	352	399	409
Minor Conservatorships	236	216	214
Other	295	234	256
Subtotal	4,843	4,819	4,937
Mental Health	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Mentally Ill	1,139	1,294	1,479
Developmentally Disabled	296	276	179
Subtotal	1,435	1,570	1,658
Total	6,278	6,389	6,595

ACTIVE CASES	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Deceased-Supervised	1,528	857	8
Deceased-Independent	3,002	1,581	25
EPIC-Supervised	0	80	671
EPIC-Unsupervised	0	1,289	3,159
Adult Guardianships (LIP)	3,217	3,249	3,119
Adult Guardianships (DDP)	1,457	1,458	1,460
Minor Guardianships	2,669	2,756	2,681
Adult Conservatorships	1,572	1,544	1,538
Minor Conservatorships	1,767	1,699	1,664
Other	225	2	233
Total	15,437	14,515	14,558

COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

A SPECIAL THANKS

The Courts recognize that people from other county offices, and local and state agencies, make valuable contributions to our daily operations. These representatives spend many hours assisting us with matters pertaining to facilities, budget and collections, personnel, security, case management and record keeping, information technology, and legal issues. They support our mission by offering observations, resources, and information to enhance our ability to serve. The judges, administration, and staff of the Circuit and Probate Courts wish to extend our gratitude to the following entities for their expertise and cooperation in 2001.



ADE Inc.	Oakland County Coordinating Council Against Domestic Violence
Adams-Pratt Law Library	Oakland County Corporation Counsel
Area Agency on Aging 1-B	Oakland County Department of Facilities Management
Botsford Hospital	Oakland County Department of Information Technology
CASA	Oakland County Department of Management and Budget
Catholic Social Services	Oakland County Executive Offices
Child Abuse and Neglect Council	Oakland County Health Division/Office of Substance Abuse Services
Circuit Court Probation Department	Oakland County Human Services Coordinating Council
Citizen's Alliance for the Circuit and Probate Courts	Oakland County Human Services Department
Common Ground/Sanctuary	Oakland County Legal News
Community Programs Inc.	Oakland County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney
Crossroads for Youth	Oakland County Personnel Department
Family Independence Agency	Oakland County Purchasing Division
FISH of Oakland County	Oakland County Reimbursement Division
HAVEN	Oakland County Resource Library
Havenwyck	Oakland County Sheriff's Department
JAMS	Oakland County Support Services
Jewish Home for Aging Services	Oakland County Treasurer's Office
Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel Office	Oakland County Youth Assistance Coordinating Council
Michigan Court of Appeals	Oakland Family Services
Michigan State Court Administrative Office	Oakland Intermediate School District
Oakland County Bar Association	Oakland Mediation Center
ADR Committee	Perspectives of Troy
Circuit Court Committee	Plante & Moran
Criminal Assignment Committee	State Appellate Defender's Office
Juvenile Law Committee	United Way of Oakland
Oakland County Board of Commissioners	Women's Survival Center
Oakland County Children's Village	
Oakland County Clerk-Register of Deeds	
Oakland County Community Corrections	
Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority	

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Citizen's Alliance for the Probate and Circuit Courts consists of members from schools, medical centers, public and private agencies, and the business community, who work in collaboration with Court personnel. Standing members are (left to right): Hon. Linda Hallmark, Phil Roller, Lisa Symula, Chris Piatkowski, Marge Huggard, Phil Fabrizio, Michael Hughes, William Penner, Jill Koney Daly, Jim Perlacki, Tom Trainer, Henry Knight, Karen MacKenzie, Renee Mahler, Jim O'Neil, Monica Lee, and Micheline Sommers. Seated members (left to right): Jan Doolittle, Lillian Molitz, Suzanne Dreifus, and Jan Carlstein.



CITIZEN'S ALLIANCE FOR THE PROBATE COURT

Citizen's Alliance for the Probate Court enjoyed its eleventh year of activity supporting the Court in 2001. Members represent a cross-section of the community. Under the distinguished leadership of Mr. Philip Roller, retired Senior V.P. of Operations from Midwest Benefit Corporation, the Alliance created or supported the following activities:

- ♦ Expanded the court tour initiative to include juvenile, adult felony, and drug court proceedings. A total of 77 tours were conducted.
- ♦ The Senior and Juvenile Focus Groups recommended several court enhancements to judges and court administrators, including installation of wheelchair availability signage at all public entrances, and text enhancements in the newly designed Citizen's Alliance brochure to improve readability for special populations.
- ♦ Continued the "Removing The Mysteries of Probate Court" series with sessions held in Clawson, Milford, Hazel Park, Royal Oak, White Lake, Ortonville, Waterford and Hazel Park. The Hazel Park and Waterford sessions were geared to the hearing impaired population.
- ♦ Collaborated with the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, the Oakland County Citizen's Alliance Guardianship Task Force has identified issues pertinent to adult guardianships, prepared a report, and began advocating for constructive change.

The Youth Assistance Coordinating Council provides funding and other guidance to local Youth Assistance Boards. Pictured are Board members: (seated) Marylynn Baleweski and Laone Trese; (standing) Robert Zigler, Betty Smith, John Turchin, and Thomas Ring. Not present: Jeff Allsteadt.



YOUTH ASSISTANCE VOLUNTEERS

Eight hundred and thirty-nine volunteers contributed more than 33,915 hours of their time to Youth Assistance programs in 2001. The 26 community-based Boards of Directors, under the guidance of the Youth Assistance Coordinating Council, provided services to almost 40,000 county residents. Volunteer service highlights include:

- ♦ Trained ninety-seven new volunteer mentors, interviewed and matched, for a total of 201 active matches in 2001.
- ♦ Honored Berkley/Huntington Woods YA volunteer Betty Smith for 30 years of service.
- ♦ Acquired a \$10,000 matching grant through Rochester Area YA Chair Carol Wilson, which provided child-care to non-FIA eligible families.
- ♦ Acquired \$2,000 in matching funds through Oxford-Addison YA volunteer Shirley Clancy, which was used to develop an aikido program for troubled adolescents.

GUARDIANSHIP VOLUNTEERS

The Probate Court is mandated to conduct periodic reviews of adult and minor guardianships. Reviews involve a home visit and an interview, culminating in a written report containing findings and recommendations. Sometimes a court appearance is also required. Of the 1,478 adult and minor guardianships reviewed in 2001, 32% (468), were completed by volunteers. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers are specifically trained to manage such guardianship reviews. The National Council of Jewish Women - Legal Guardianship Committee, provides the Court with CASA volunteers. This year, 70 CASA reviewers handled 153 minor guardianship cases for the court.

JUDICIAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (JIMS)

The Judicial Information Management System (JIMS) is an integrated case management system that is being designed to enable the Prosecutor's Office, County Clerk's Office, 52nd District Courts, Probate Court, and Circuit Court to electronically share and transfer case and party information. This system also lays the foundation for future phases in which we hope to incorporate functionality, such as electronic filing of court pleadings and other similar web-based technologies that will benefit the public, legal community, and the county courts.

On June 25, the vendor with whom the county contracted to deliver and install the new case management system – SCT's Global Government Solutions Division, was acquired by Affiliated Computer Systems (ACS). ACS has continued to provide the same high-level of service that they were accustomed to receiving from SCT.

Tentative implementation "go live" dates are:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| ♦ Adoptions Unit of Circuit Court | December 2002 |
| ♦ Probate Court | Spring/Summer 2003 |
| ♦ Prosecutor's Office | Spring/Summer 2003 |
| ♦ 52 nd District Courts | Spring/Summer 2003 |
| ♦ Circuit Court Family & General Jurisdiction | Spring/Summer 2003 |
| ♦ County Clerk's Office | Spring/Summer 2003 |

HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE YEAR 2001

- ♦ **Creation of JIMS Program Manager Position** – In September, Norma Miller was hired by Oakland County as the JIMS Program Manager. The program manager leads the overall planning and management of the JIMS project, which entails the development of detailed work plans, adherence to project schedules, program estimates, resources plans, and status reports. The program manager is the primary point of contact for all functional, technical, and vendor-related issues.
- ♦ **Creation of 8 User Support Specialist Positions** – Under the direction of the JIMS Program Manager, eight members of the JIMS training team volunteered to relocate to the JIMS project room. This highly talented and dedicated group work full-time to resolve issues and serve as liaisons to their "home" departments regarding the JIMS project.
- ♦ **Creation of JIMS User Support Specialist II/ Report Writer Position** – In November, Christina Bujak was hired to fill this newly created position. Though contained within the Circuit Court organizational structure, Christina will be providing support for all JIMS-related agencies. In this capacity, Chris will be serving as a liaison between Information Technology and the JIMS team to resolve reporting issues. She will also be aiding in the development of new reports and the conversion of existing reports.
- ♦ **Creation of JIMS Project Room** – Located on campus in the former CMH building, this room houses the program manager and eight user support specialists. The room is also used for other JIMS-related meetings, provides an environment that is free from the distractions of their "home departments," and allows for quicker resolution of issues because people working on the team are located in one central area.
- ♦ **Prosecuting Attorney Module** – JIMS team members from the Prosecutor's Office performed a functionality assessment of this new ACS module. In doing so, they found ways to use the baseline system to achieve many of their business processes without the need for costly modifications.



*Norma Miller
JIMS Program Manager*

JUDICIAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (JIMS)

- ◆ **Sentencing Business Process Re-Engineering** – Under the guidance of Plante & Moran and Project Leader Jennifer Clark, the JIMS-related agencies and other stakeholders underwent a thorough analysis of the sentencing and disposition processes to develop more efficient methods of performing the required processes in the ACS Justice case management system.
- ◆ **Fast-Track Training** – Forty-eight employees of the Circuit, Probate and 52nd District Courts, as well as the Prosecutor's and County Clerk's Office, participated in a one-week training session on the ACS Justice case management system.
- ◆ **Other Project Activities:**
 - Business Objects Analysis, Selection for Report Writing and Application Training
 - Definition of Project Roles & Responsibilities
 - Development of Functional and Technical Work Plans
 - Modification Design
 - Development of Modification Test Plans and Acceptance Testing
 - Data Warehouse Assessment
 - Data Mapping
 - Training Plan and Curriculum Development
 - Trillium Training – Technical
 - Letter Setup Assistance
 - Coding Setup Assistance
 - Traffic Case Processing
 - Juvenile Case Processing
 - Accounting Case Processing
 - Criminal Case Processing
 - Security Matrix Assistance
 - Migration to ACS Justice version 4.1
 - SCT User Conference Attendance

Special Recognition – Special thanks is due to the Board of Commissioners, Personnel Department, Management & Budget, the Department of Information Technology, and Facilities Management & Operations for their assistance in creating the new positions and JIMS project room.



JIMS full-time User Support Specialists (top left to right): Vicki Nellis, 52nd District Court; Phil DeBarr, Probate Court; Lisa Czyz, Circuit Court. (Middle left to right) Christina Bujak, all JIMS agencies; Gwynne Starkey, Prosecutor's Office; Lorna Skipworth, 52nd District Court; Jennifer Rowden, County Clerk's Office. (Bottom left to right) Norma Miller, Program Manager - IT; Terry Castiglione, Circuit Court; Jennifer Clark, County Clerk's Office.

JIMS STEERING COMMITTEE

John Cooperrider - Circuit/Probate Court
 Mary Gohl - Circuit/Probate Court
 Kevin Oeffner - Circuit Court
 Libby Smith - Circuit Court
 Jennifer Marlinga - 52nd District Court
 Jim VerPloeg - 52nd District Court
 Frank Millard - County Clerk's Office
 Kim Noble - County Clerk's Office
 Mary Larkin - Prosecutor's Office
 Gwynne Starkey - Prosecutor's Office
 Jeffrey Pardee - Management & Budget
 Linda Spiekerman-Harvey - Reimbursement
 Carol Howden - Information Technology
 Joe Maletta - Information Technology

JIMS Full-Time Team

Terry Castiglione - Circuit Court
 Lisa Czyz - Circuit Court
 Phillip DeBarr - Probate Court
 Norma Miller - Information Technology
 Victoria Nellis - 52nd District Court
 Deb Nolen - Information Technology
 Janet Brinker - Information Technology
 Carol Howden - Information Technology
 Karla Early - Information Technology
 Lorna Skipworth - 52nd District Court
 Jennifer Clark - County Clerk's Office
 Jennifer Rowden - County Clerk's Office
 Gwynne Starkey - Prosecutor's Office
 Charlie Covetz - Information Technology
 Mary Gaissert - Information Technology
 Christina Bujak - all JIMS agencies

JIMS Part-Time Team (20% - 60%)

Carol Esher - Probate Court
 Julie Fabrizio - Circuit Court
 Mary Gohl - Circuit & Probate Court
 Bill Hamilton - Circuit Court
 Dave Leslie - Circuit Court
 Porki Mellado - Circuit Court
 Mary Columbo - 52nd District Court
 Jennifer Marlinga - 52nd District Court
 Missy Neff - 52nd District Court
 Helen Soehren - 52nd District Court
 Linda Thierry - 52nd District Court
 Kim Noble - County Clerk's Office
 Brenda Coppens - Prosecutor's Office
 Debbie Sims - Prosecutor's Office
 Kevin Bertram - Information Technology

A YEAR IN REVIEW

What would we do without our students? Two great additions to our summer team were Rachel Wolock and Michele Blasczyk, both from the University of Michigan.



Judge Mester samples the winning dessert in the "Most Decadent" category made by Laurie Willing of the Friend of the Court at the Annual Circuit/Probate Court Employees Picnic held on August 24, 2001.



Pat Breen of Youth Assistance was the officiator of the Bubble Gum Blowing contest held at the Circuit and Probate Court Employees Picnic. Pat is shown measuring Cindy Harper's best try, but the contest was officially won by Linda Freeland.



The annual "Take Your Child to Work Day" is a huge success with 75 children in attendance. One of the many courthouse activities for the day includes a K-9 demonstration in Judge Mester's courtroom.



Still smiling after another grueling Human Resources Directory meeting are John Cooperrider and committee members Dan Hosler and Rose Culpepper.

A YEAR IN REVIEW



The Oakland County Circuit Court and the Oakland County Bar Association co-sponsor the New Lawyers Admission Ceremonies held bi-annually in May and November. The ceremonies, held in the Board of Commissioners Auditorium, recognize approximately 80 inductees taking the oath for admission to the bar.

Jennifer Edens is the grand prize winner for the 2001 Employee Suggestion Program. County Executive L. Brooks Patterson presents her with the cash award at the County Executive Holiday Party held in December.



The Oakland County Bar Association's Circuit Court Committee conducted its Litigation Technology seminar on Tuesday, October 23, in the Kiva Auditorium of the Oakland Schools Building in Waterford. Taking part in the event are (left to right) Ken Demark, Brad Smith, Stephen Landau, Marsha Edwards, Libby Smith, Circuit Court's General Jurisdiction Division Administrator; Circuit Court Chief Judge Joan Young, Mandi Ross, Lauren Bienenstock, and Steven Secor.



Engrossed in thought regarding plans to further consolidate services are (left to right): Family Division Next Generation committee members John Greenhill, Lorraine Osthaus Randolph, Group Facilitator Jim Inloes, and Dr. Pamela Howitt.



COURT EMPLOYEES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Court's talented and committed staff makes 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 recognitions received:

Mr. Salamone received a letter of thanks regarding Beverly Miller, Martha Anderson, and Twyla Tripp, Friend of the Court:

"This letter is in regard to the wonderful service I have received from Beverly Miller this year. In all the years I have dealt with staff at FOC, never have I had anyone as caring, compassionate, responsive and prompt as she has been. I must add that Martha Anderson and her assistant, Twyla, were also helpful in the past, but I did not put that in writing and would like to do so at this time. I believe credit should be given where it is due. Thank you for your time."

A family in Pontiac expressing their appreciation for Youth Assistance worker, Ms. Gabrielle Osooli.

"The letter is in regard to the services my family receives from the Pontiac Youth Assistance Program. Garbielle Osooli is exceptional at her job, she has gone above and beyond, she has worked with our family, and she has left no stone unturned to provide us with the quality of service so much needed. She instantly connected with our family; she has a wonderful personality and represents Pontiac Youth Assistance very well. Thank you for being available to us, thank you for your much-needed program, and thank you for Gabrielle."

Chief of Police for the Auburn Hills Police Department presents Deborah Hyde with a Citizens Commendation:

"Your selfless dedication to the youths of our community and usage of positive role models has helped families resolve reoccurring issues which promote a safer community through enhanced family values."

WINSTON CHURCHILL HIGH SCHOOL WISHING TO THANK KRISTY SLOSSON AND JEFF ALLSTEADT, JUDGE SOSNICK'S CLERK:

"WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE OAKLAND COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT. WE APPRECIATE YOUR TAKING TIME OUT OF YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE TO GIVE US A TOUR OF THE COURT. AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY AND MAKING THIS FIELD TRIP ONE WE WILL ALL REMEMBER."

Jill Geddes, Probate Estates, received a couple of letters of thanks during 2001:

"I write this letter as a way of saying thank you for the exemplary performance of Ms. Geddes. Ms. Geddes helped me through the complex system and provided me with personal attention. She treated me like I was the most important person in the world at the time she helped me. Please give her my personal thanks and appreciation. She is a true professional and a most graceful ambassador of the Oakland County Probate Court."

"Thank you for your most gracious offer of assistance today in expediting the processing of obtaining records. You have reinforced our faith in humankind by your extra efforts."

A letter to Kristy Slosson, Court Services, from Kettering High School regarding a field trip:

"We appreciate your time and effort, as well as that of Ms. MacKenzie and of our tour guide (Adam Kochenderfur). Our appreciation particularly extends to those prosecutors, staff and judges -- Judge Sosnick and Judge Breck -- whose Courts and work we observed. Accordingly, again, thank you."

Kal Engelberg recognized by Oakland Schools:

"I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to you for your participation in our event. Your dedication and your participation on the Selection Committee for the Oakland County Newsweek-WDIV Outstanding Teachers was greatly appreciated. Our WDIV Program was only successful because you cared enough to support it. Thank you again, so very much."

Lisa Symula, Probate/Juvenile Register, congratulating Linda Russell, Court Services Unit, and Richard Lynch, Chief of Court Operations/Judicial Assistant, with a thank you to Linda Russell

"Congratulations on your nomination for Employee of the Year for the Court Services Unit. I genuinely feel that employees such as yourself have made our Services Unit and Family Court Division one of the most successful in the state. Your continued dedication and hard work to our Court serves as an inspiration to those around you."

Thank you very much for your help. You were a lifesaver. I appreciate all of your hard work and, again, thank you very much.

COURT EMPLOYEES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

State Appellate Defender Office recognizes Sherry Robinson, Court Administrator's Office, for her assistance:

"I am greatly indebted to you for all your help. I am so impressed with the time and effort you invested in helping reinstate a Claim of Appeal. You are truly a treasure. Thank you so much again and again."

Judge Grant received a letter regarding Bridgett Ray, Probate Court:

"It was necessary for me to contact the Oakland County Probate Court to discuss procedures which are slightly different from those in Kalamazoo County. Although the Probate Court staff was kind and courteous, Bridgett Ray was extraordinarily helpful and pleasant. She explained the procedure(s) in a careful and concise manner. I would like you to know how impressed I was with the Ms. Ray's professionalism and assistance."

A note of thanks to Fern Ogans, Friend of the Court:

I just wanted to thank you for all the time and effort you put into our meeting. Following our meeting I ran into an acquaintance. She asked if I had ever dealt with a woman named "Fern" at Friend of the Court. She stated she thought you were excellent at your job and very "pro children."

I couldn't agree more. The children are the ones who benefit from your efforts. Thank You!

From a client regarding Referee Sherbow, Friend of the Court:

"I am so touched to know there is a person like Referee Sherbow helping all the thousands of children whose parents come before the Court. He does care for the children and I guess you can't ask for anymore than that. Thank you for having in your employment a true advocate for children."

An attorney from Massachusetts thanks Tina Sobocinski and John Range, Court Services:

"I am writing to express my appreciation for the excellent service I received from Ms. Sobocinski and Mr. Range. Ms. Sobocinski had all the videotapes sent to me within days of my request. Mr. Range prepared the transcripts and sent them to me within two days. Ms. Sobocinski was very professional and helpful to me. Mr. Range was extremely accommodating and responsive to me. Ms. Sobocinski and Mr. Range make all the difference. I had a wonderful experience practicing in your Court."

A fifth grade class thanks Karen MacKenzie and Judge Potts for their field trip:

"Thank you very much for inviting my fifth grade students to Circuit Court. They had such a valuable learning experience. Please extend our gratitude to Judge Potts. She was so kind and generous with describing the operations of a courtroom with the children. Thank you again for such a wonderful experience."

A short note of thanks from an attorney regarding Kim Osterhamp, Probate Estates:

"You were a pleasure to deal with. You were professional and efficient, and, most importantly, you have a great sense of humor. Thanks."

Mr. Doug Quinn, Youth Assistance, receives a Certificate from the Holly Area Youth Coalition:

"In honor of your dedication to the youth of the community in helping them to make wise decisions, choose positive path and grow up competent, caring and responsible."

Mr. Salamone, Friend of the Court, received a letter regarding Deputy Jack Watkins, from a client in Nashville, Tennessee:

"I just wanted to drop you a quick note on one of your deputies. Deputy Jack Watkins took my call and after my explanation of my frustrations, he said he would try to help. Deputy Watkins listened with a kind ear and was honest with me on the circumstances. Deputy Watkins followed up with a phone call as promised and did what needed to be done. I thank all of you for your continued support."

The ADEPT Program through the Court Psychological Clinic received some positive comments about the presentation from Jim Windell and Katie Schultz:

"It was helpful that the counselor did not take either side and pointed out problems with both co-parents since nothing is ever one sided. I feel that this program could be very helpful in certain circumstances."

"I wish the class was longer. I would attend every day for as long as necessary."

"Katie was great and Jim was great also."

"I really like the way that Katie and Jim work together to make there point. Thanks for everything. What you both do is important to our children's lives."

ANNUAL AWARDS

The second annual Circuit and Probate Courts Employee of the Year ceremony was held on December 12, 2001, honoring seven employees who were deemed outstanding in their performance for the Circuit and Probate Courts of Oakland County. Colleagues and supervisors submitted nominations for employees who have exceeded their job descriptions and who have made significant contributions to their individual departments. The following seven individuals were honored in their respective categories as the 2001 Employee of the Year:



Chief Judges Joan Young (end left) and Linda Hallmark (end right) present the 2001 Employee of the Year Awards to the following recipients: (left to right, front row) Deborah Fahr, General Jurisdiction; Yvonne Zerba, Estates and Mental Health; Rhonda Taber, Friend of the Court; and (left to right, back row) Tracey Howden, Court Services; Kristy Slosson, Business Division; Karen Koshen, Judicial Staff; and Michael Hand, Judicial Support.

General Jurisdiction - Deborah Fahr

Deborah is an assistant jury clerk in the General Jurisdiction Jury Office. She was instrumental in developing a new procedure to process jury payments and is an adaptable team player who is always willing to help even when a task is outside of her domain. Her nominator describes her as being efficient, well-organized, dedicated, and dependable. She is courteous, patient, and professional to the citizens reporting for jury service.

Court Services – Tracey Howden

Working as a technical assistant in the casework unit, Tracey is efficient, dependable, personable, and demonstrates grace under pressure. She is adept at disseminating information to casework staff and supervisors, assists with computer difficulties, and keeps up with routine issues regarding supplies, space, and unit training needs. Tracey's care and thoughtfulness enable her unit to deliver quality services to the public.

Friend of the Court – Rhonda Taber

As a supervisor for the Friend of the Court, Rhonda had a critical role in the implementation of the CSES project and, despite the intense demands of the transition, is described as being very easy-going. She was nominated for her strength and sensitivity and is organized, professional, energetic, and always willing to entertain new ideas. She is a team builder who stands by her employees. One nominator said, "Rhonda's main strength is finding the strengths in her employees."

Estates and Mental Health – Yvonne Zerba

Yvonne was recognized for her dedication and years of service in her role as deputy probate register where she has served for 23 years. She is organized and efficient, and calmly, kindly, and knowledgeably assists attorneys and employees with procedures and court expectations. She is so dedicated that she schedules her vacation time to minimize interference with the court calendar. Going the extra mile has been the hallmark of her tenure with the court, and she will be sorely missed when she retires next year.

Judicial Staff – Karen Koshen

As a judicial administrative assistant for Judge Sosnick, Karen is multi-talented, hard working, and always willing to take on unusual tasks or help anyone who requests her assistance. In addition to her regular responsibilities and duties, she devotes enormous time and energy to several court and community-wide committees and activities. She is a pleasure to work with, always having a smile and kind word for her colleagues.

Business Division – Kristy Slosson

Kristy serves as an employee records specialist for the Business Division and is cheerful, dedicated, courteous, friendly, and efficient. Despite numerous competing duties, she responds quickly, and with good humor, to

urgent requests from the bench and other departments. Her work in conducting courthouse tours is a significant community outreach effort and one nominator referred to her as the “definition of public relations.”

Judicial Support – Michael Hand

Michael was acknowledged for his assistance this year in carrying the caseload of an ailing colleague while maintaining his duties in Intake. Despite the challenge of this dual role, nominators remarked upon his respectful, professional, and assuring responses to youth and families. He ensures defendants’ rights while standing firm regarding decisions that may not always be palatable to all parties. He is well liked and is known for his “somewhat unusual” sense of humor.



At the Annual Awards ceremony, several worthy employees are nominated as Employee of the Year for their service and dedication to the court. Pictured are: (front row, left to right) Dr. Pamela Howitt, Donna Weinstein, Karen Allen, Kit Schatz, Tonja Lawrence, and Tom Swieboda; along with (second row, left to right) Gail Innis, Tina Sobocinski, Kay Galetto, and Doc Prud'homme; and (back row, left to right) Linda Russell, Len Kleparek, and Jim Windell. Not pictured are: Kelly Winslow, Anne Modelski, and Vicki Spicer.

STAFF RECOGNITION

SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Circuit Court

30 Years

Carole Boyd
Gary Contesti

25 Years

Timothy Albertson
The Honorable Steven Andrews
Beth Calder
Arlene Cook
Joy Delauter
Nancy Elfes
Robert Fachnie
Clyde Payton

20 Years

Robert Jueckstock
Hilary Kokenos
Frederick Morden
Donna Riley
Theodore Wright, Jr.

15 Years

Andrea Cooley
Beverly Hagerman
Nancy Ketchum
Bonnie Lavergne
Karen MacKenzie
Bryan McCaffrey
George McGrath
Shelley Nelson
Maria Ortez
Mary Schusterbauer
Marianne Schwab
Paul Scobie
Donna Smigelski
Tina Stenborg
Henry Szlenkier
Marcia Travis

10 Years

Martin Alvin
Sandra Binder
Gerald Gavette
Carilu Guerrero
Linda Halicek
Annette Himmelspach-Collins
Philip Ingraham
Royden Jones
Twila Leigh
Julie McKenzie
The Honorable Rudy Nichols
Kathy Rivers
Carol Stephens
Judith Trombley
The Honorable Deborah Tyner
Elizabeth Whiston

Probate Court

10 Years

Bridgett Ray

PAST EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR RECIPIENTS

Circuit Court

- 2000 Annette Agazio, Court Clerk for Visiting Judges
Julie Berz, Court Services Child Welfare Worker
Kathleen Cox, Chief Assistant Friend of the Court
Kathleen Morton, Judicial Secretary for Judge Nanci Grant
Karen MacKenzie, Business Division Resource & Program Specialist
Joseph Racey, Family Division Referee
- 1999 Laila Azzouz, Judicial Secretary for Judge Barry Howard
Jeff Allsteadt, Court Clerk for Judge Edward Sosnick
- 1998 Bruce Brakel, Judicial Staff Attorney for Judge Edward Sosnick
- 1997 Mary Jane Rigonan, Assignment Clerk
Kenneth Tolbert, Friend of the Court Referee
- 1996 Linda Hallmark, Friend of the Court Referee
Kelly Collins, Court Clerk for Judge David Breck
- 1995 Barbara Wernet, Probation Department Clerical Supervisor
Richard Lynch, Law Clerk for Judge Hilda Gage
- 1994 Dave Bertucci, Friend of the Court Referee
- 1993 Joan Hutchinson, Judicial Secretary for Judge Richard Kuhn
- 1992 Nancy VanCamp, Court Administration Records Clerk
- 1991 Kim Bateman, Friend of the Court Chief Assistant
Kathy Huber, Clerk's Office Legal Division Trainer
- 1990 Janet Lindsey, Jury Clerk
Lorraine Osthaus, Friend of the Court Family Counseling Director
- 1989 Gloria Rose, Court Administration Office Supervisor
- 1988 Carolyn Chavez, Assignment Clerk
- 1987 Randy Matkin, Court Reporter for Judge Steven Andrews

Probate Court

- 2000 Phillip DeBarr, Clerk, Estates and Mental Health
- 1999 Charles Ludwig, Chief Juvenile/Adoption
Mary Batchelor, Estates and Mental Health
- 1998 Cynthia Harper, Accountant II, Administrative Support
- 1997 Robin Zapinski, Technical Assistant, Clinical Services
- 1996 Lorie Willing, Child Welfare Worker II, Youth Assistance
- 1995 Bill Bartlam, Deputy Court Administrator, Judicial Support
- 1994 Mary Jo Best, Office Supervisor II, Estates and Mental Health
- 1993 Jill Daly, Attorney II, Estates and Mental Health
- 1992 Paul Scobie, Child Welfare Worker II, Youth Assistance
- 1991 Joan Connelly, Case Management Coordinator, Estates and Mental Health
- 1990 Allen Kaczkowski, Child Welfare Worker Supervisor, Youth Assistance
- 1989 Ruth Szabo, Psychological Clinic
- 1988 Jack Haynes, Psychological Clinic
- 1987 Helen Andrews, Office Supervisor II, Estates and Mental Health

RETIREES FOR 2001

Circuit Court

Ronald Auten
Beth Calder
Jon Clapp
Arlene Cook
Karen Corr

Alice Hagerman
The Honorable Barry Howard
Karlann Hudson
Mary Martin
Paul McFarland



On January 4, 2001, Judge Patrick Brennan takes the oath as an Oakland County Circuit Court Judge at the investiture ceremony in the Board of Commissioners Auditorium. Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorcyca welcomes Judge Brennan to the bench.



On February 15, 2001, Judge Rae Lee Chabot is sworn in as an Oakland County Circuit Court Judge. Ron Winkler, retired Oakland County Sheriff, gives congratulatory remarks to Judge Chabot at the investiture ceremony.



Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti is officially sworn in at an investiture ceremony held on February 27, 2001. Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard presents Judge Pezzetti with the county flag.



Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura Corrigan gives the oath of office to Judge James Alexander at an investiture ceremony on October 30, 2001.



JUDICIAL RETIREMENT

Judge Barry L. Howard



In April 2001, Chief Judge Barry Howard retired from the Oakland County Circuit Court bench to return to private practice. Judge Howard was appointed to the bench in 1989 and selected as Chief Judge for a two-year term beginning January 2000. He also served in the capacity as Chief Judge Pro Tempore from 1996 through 1999.

Judge Howard was the immediate past president of the Michigan Judges Association and received numerous accolades for his performance on the bench. He earned the rating of “Outstanding” and “Preferred” by the Oakland County Bar Association and the South Oakland County Bar Association. In 1995, he was selected as “one of the top five most respected judges” in a state lawyers survey. He received the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanities Award and was presented with the Distinguished Service Award by the Police Officers of Michigan. Judge Howard is a member of the State Bar of Michigan, the American and Oakland County Bar Associations, as well as a former member of the Representative Assembly of the State Bar. He is a member of the Academic Advisory Committee and on the faculty of the Michigan Judicial Institute.

In private practice, Judge Howard specializes in alternative dispute resolution, litigation, administrative law, land use, and government relations. Judge Howard will be remembered as an advocate for improving technology in the court and for his strong leadership in the Judicial Information Management System (JIMS) project. He is married and has three grown sons and four dogs.

“We look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression . . . the second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way . . . the third is freedom from want . . . the fourth is freedom from fear.”

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

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We the People

of the United States
in Order to form a more
perfect Union, establish
Justice, insure domestic
Tranquility, provide for
the common defence,
promote the general
Welfare, and secure the
Blessings of Liberty to
ourselves and our Posterity,
do ordain and establish
this Constitution for the
United States of America.