

OAKLAND COUNTY MICHIGAN



2002 ANNUAL REPORT

THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
OAKLAND COUNTY PROBATE COURT

1200 NORTH TELEGRAPH ROAD PONTIAC, MICHIGAN 48341
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Message from Chief Circuit Judge and Chief Probate Judge | 2 |
| Historical Roster of the Circuit Court and Probate Court Bench | 4 |
| Judicial Bench Photos | 5 |
| Judges of the Circuit Court | 6 |
| Judges of the Probate Court | 11 |
| Circuit Court – Judicial Administration | |
| Message from the Circuit Court Administrator | 12 |
| Circuit/Probate Administrative Structure | 13 |
| Circuit Court – General Jurisdiction Division | |
| General Jurisdiction Overview | 14 |
| Jury Office | 15 |
| Case Management Office | 16 |
| Drug Treatment Courts | 18 |
| Circuit Court – Family Division | |
| Family Division Overview | 20 |
| Friend of the Court | 22 |
| Court Services | 24 |
| Judicial Support | 26 |
| Circuit Court – Business Division | |
| Business Division Overview | 28 |
| Financial Report | 30 |
| Probate Court | |
| Estates and Mental Health Overview | 32 |
| Collaborating Departments and Agencies | 34 |
| Volunteers Make a Difference | 35 |
| A Year in Review | 36 |
| Court Employees Make a Difference | 38 |
| Annual Awards | 40 |
| Staff Recognition | 42 |
| Judicial Retirement | 43 |
| Acknowledgments | 43 |



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF CIRCUIT JUDGE AND CHIEF PROBATE JUDGE



The Sixth Judicial Circuit Court and The Oakland County Probate Court

Honorable Joan E. Young
Circuit Court Chief Judge

Honorable Linda S. Hallmark
Probate Court Chief Judge

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

It has been said that challenges are not supposed to paralyze you, they are supposed to help you discover who you are. If that is true, then we should learn a lot about ourselves in the months ahead as we grapple with the challenges that emerged in 2002.

Much of our focus and energy was directed to reducing our budgets in the wake of massive deficits at the state level. In attempting to deal with its economic problems, the state reduced revenue that traditionally flowed to the counties, and also pushed expenditure obligations down to the local units of government that heretofore had been the responsibility of the state government. To help ease the county's worsening budget situation, we set about the task of reducing our budgets with two objectives in mind: maintain the ability to perform our constitutionally and statutorily-mandated responsibilities and preserve positions so that no one loses his or her job.

Our budgets are heavily driven by personnel and case-disposition-related expenses over which the Courts have minimal control. When these costs are set aside, there's little left in the way of true discretionary spending. But that is where we started, and with the insight and perseverance of judges and staff, we were able to achieve our objectives and help the County eliminate its budget shortfall. We still don't know the full extent of the state's economic trouble and how it may yet impact our Courts. Regardless of the outcome, we will continue to fulfill our responsibilities with the professionalism, excellence and fiscal responsibility that has come to characterize the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts.

In compliance with federal mandate, the Friend of the Court converted its computer system to the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System late in 2001. Within months of the conversion, we were notified that conversion to a second, newer version of the Child Support Enforcement system was on the horizon. Going through a change of this magnitude once in a professional career is enough for most. Yet, within months of the initial changeover, our Friend of the Court employees began to gear up for a second conversion that will occur in 2003.

With all the perseverance and resolve people can muster, the employees at the Friend of the Court worked diligently to set the stage for the upcoming conversion. We are glad to report that the Friend of the Court is on track. We cannot say enough about the professionalism exhibited by the employees in the wake of such trying circumstances. We are proud of the men and women who serve at the Friend of the Court and we recognize their invaluable contributions in this difficult time.

In an effort to control ever-burgeoning paper files and to expedite the retrieval of court documents, the Probate Court launched its imaging project in 2002 with excellent results. Every non-confidential document that is filed is scanned and made available for viewing via computer. Employees are no longer saddled with the burden of physically retrieving court files, but can now do so with the touch of a button on one's PC. Efficiencies have been created that enable staff to redirect their energies to more important matters.

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF CIRCUIT JUDGE AND CHIEF PROBATE JUDGE

We have seen an expansion of the pending civil litigation docket over the past couple of years. That is not a surprise, with some 8,000 new civil case filings annually. With an eye toward reducing the docket, yet ensuring that litigants “had their day in court,” we embarked upon an intensive Settlement Week in October. Court orders for litigants to appear on 723 cases were issued. Including those that settled prior to the settlement conference, those resolved during settlement conference, and those that settled within 60 days of their conference, 531 cases fell off the docket, an astonishing 73 percent settlement rate.

We are living in the “Information Age” where people want relevant, accurate, and thorough information, and they want it yesterday. The Courts have historically been deluged with requests for information. Sensitive to the public’s interest in court information, we revamped our web sites to provide an array of timely and complete information about the Circuit and Probate Courts. Our primary motivation was to boost access to information that is needed by litigants, attorneys, the media, and the public. We also have the ability to modify our sites to provide news and information about the most recent developments here at the Courts. Give our web sites a try. You can reach us at www.oaklandcourts.com



Pictured left to right: Circuit Court Chief Judge Joan Young and Probate Court Chief Judge Linda Hallmark

Space does not permit us to touch upon all of the challenges that befell us in 2002. The above-mentioned are but a few. To be challenged is a good thing. Challenges keep us sharp, active, and they make us think. We are blessed with a judiciary and staff who bring an array of talents, skills, and abilities that have enabled us to welcome challenges. As chief judges, that knowledge gives us great assurance that challenges yet unseen will not prove too difficult or dubious. They will merely convey what we already know...that our Courts are comprised of men and women who prove their mettle, resolve, ingenuity and dedication every day.

Very truly yours,

Joan E. Young
Chief Circuit Judge

Very truly yours,

Linda S. Hallmark
Chief Probate Judge



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 | 1981–1998 |
| 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 | 1967–1982 | Jessica R. Cooper | 1987–2000 |
| William Stickney | 1882–1888 | Daniel C. Devine | 1966–1966 | Edward Sosnick | 1989–Present |
| Joseph B. Moore | 1888–1896 | Robert L. Templin | 1967–1986 | Barry L. Howard | 1989–2001 |
| George W. Smith | 1896–1908 | William P. Hampton | 1970–1976 | Deborah G. Tyner | 1991–Present |
| Kleber P. Rockwell | 1917–1921 | Richard D. Kuhn | 1973–Present | Rudy J. Nichols | 1991–Present |
| Frank L. Covert | 1919–1933 | John N. O'Brien | 1973–1993 | Denise Langford Morris | 1992–Present |
| Glenn C. Gillespie | 1923–1934 | Robert B. Webster | 1973–1982 | John J. McDonald | 1993–Present |
| Frank L. Doty | 1928–1959 | Steven N. Andrews | 1976–Present | Nanci J. Grant | 1997–Present |
| Goodloe H. Rogers | 1935–1935 | Alice L. Gilbert | 1977–1992 | Joan E. Young | 1997–Present |
| George B. Hartrick | 1935–1958 | Alice L. Gilbert | 1995–Present | Wendy L. Potts | 1998–Present |
| H. Russel Holland | 1935–1965 | Francis X. O'Brien | 1977–1988 | Colleen A. O'Brien | 1998–Present |
| Clark J. Adams | 1956–1973 | Hilda R. Gage | 1978–1996 | Rae Lee Chabot | 2000–Present |
| William J. Beer | 1958–1980 | Bernard L. Kaufman | 1979–1979 | Patrick J. Brennan | 2001–Present |
| Theodore Hughes | 1959–1959 | Gene Schnelz | 1979–Present | James M. Alexander | 2001–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 | | |

Those who won our independence believed that the final end of the state was to make men free to develop their faculties . . . They valued liberty both as an end and as a means. They believed liberty to be the secret of happiness and courage to be the secret of liberty . . . that public discussion is a political duty; and that this should be the fundamental principle of the American government.

Louis Brandeis, US Supreme Court Justice

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



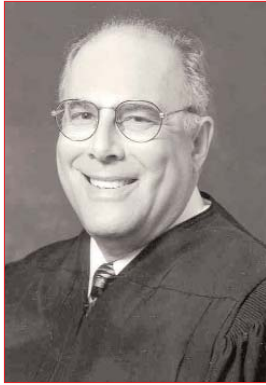
(Front row, left to right): Judges Denise Langford Morris, Deborah G. Tyner, Fred M. Mester, Steven N. Andrews, Richard D. Kuhn, Gene Schnelz, Edward Sosnick and Rudy J. Nichols. (Back row, left to right): Judges Alice L. Gilbert, Colleen A. O'Brien, James M. Alexander, Rae Lee Chabot, Patrick J. Brennan,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

JUDGES OF THE PROBATE COURT



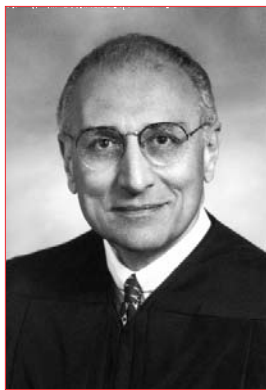
(Front row, left to right): Judges Elizabeth Pezzetti and Eugene Arthur Moore. (Back row, left to right): Judges Barry M. Grant and Linda S. Hallmark.

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



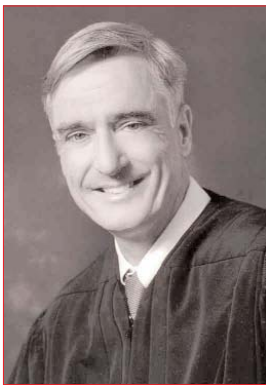
The Honorable James M. Alexander

- ◆ Appointed to Bench by Governor Engler, August 2001; elected to a full term 2002
- ◆ B.A., Miami University, 1970; J.D., University of Detroit School of Law, 1973
- ◆ Member of the Michigan State and the Oakland County Bar Associations
- ◆ Past-chair of the ADR Section for the State Bar; former Co-Chair of the OCBA Legislative Committee; Fellow of the Oakland County Bar Foundation
- ◆ Recipient of the Frances Avadenka Memorial Award
- ◆ Currently serves on the Walsh College President's Advisory Council, Griffin Advisory Board of Central Michigan University, Board of Directors of the Detroit Jewish Community Council, and Trustee of the Michigan Thanksgiving Day Parade Foundation



The Honorable Steven N. Andrews

- ◆ Circuit judge 26 years, 3 terms as Chief Judge, 3 terms as Chief Judge Pro Tempore
- ◆ Selected one of the Most Respected Judges of Michigan in *Michigan Lawyers Weekly*; listed in Oxford's, Stratmore's, and Marquis' *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 Cty. Library Board; Past-President, American Inn of Court
- ◆ Guest lecturer and instructor at DCL and MSU; 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, Board of Directors, Crossroads for Youth
- ◆ Member, Oakland County Circuit Court Criminal Assignment Committee
- ◆ Fellow, Michigan State Bar Foundation



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
- ◆ OCBA 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, and D. Augustus Straker Bar Association

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

The Honorable Alice L. Gilbert

- ◆ Circuit Judge 25 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 and Providence Hospital Advisory Board
- ◆ Director and Trustee Karmanos Cancer Inst.; National Crime Foundation; Trustee, United Health Organization; recipient of several honors and special recognitions



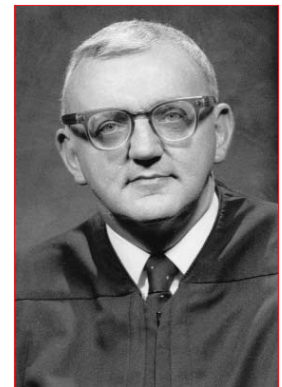
The Honorable Nanci J. Grant

- ◆ Elected to Circuit Court in 1996; Presiding Judge, General Jurisdiction in 2000
- ◆ Graduated from The University of Michigan, with honors, and Wayne State University Law School; Director of honors program
- ◆ Secretary, Michigan Judges Association; Member, State Community Corrections Commission, representing the state's circuit judges; Member, Advisory Board of the Michigan Judicial Institute; Treasurer and member representing all state courts, State Bar of Michigan Judicial Conference; Board Member, 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"; recognized by a national magazine as one of ten "Women to Watch" in 2002



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

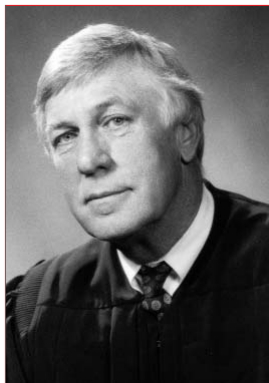


The Honorable Denise Langford Morris

- ◆ 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 and Assistant United States Attorney Eastern Dist. of Michigan; Founding member, D. Augustus Straker Bar Assoc.
- ◆ Director: Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society; Former Director: Help Against Violent Encounters Now (HAVEN) and Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency (OLHSA) governing board; Member, Michigan Judges Association
- ◆ Former member: Michigan Supreme Court Civil Jury Instructions Committee, Michigan Supreme Court Access to Justice Committee, and William Booth Legal Aid Clinic (Salvation Army)

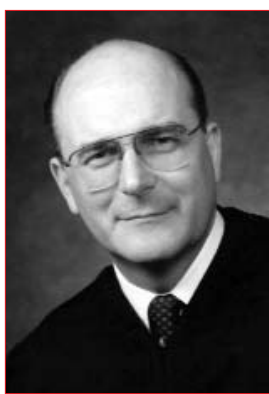


JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



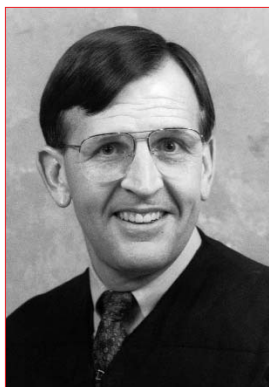
The Honorable John J. McDonald

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



The Honorable Fred M. Mester

- ◆ Recipient: John N. O'Brien Memorial Award for Distinguished Community Activities; CMU Centennial Award; Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, CMU; NAACP 1997 Humanitarian Award; CMU ROTC Hall of Fame; Royal Oak Dondoro High School Hall of Fame; Special Judicial Examiner – Grand Jurist for U.S. Courts in Hong Kong
- ◆ 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; Founder, Reading to Reduce Recidivism; Member, RARE Foundation; Adjunct Professor: Oakland Univ. and OCC
- ◆ Lecturer, Judicial Process, Political Science Department, Oakland University
- ◆ 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 *Laches*



The Honorable Colleen A. O'Brien

- ◆ Elected to the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court in 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, Oakland County Women's Bar Association
- ◆ Past-President, Oakland County Women's Bar Association; Past member, Board of Directors of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
- ◆ Fellow, Michigan State Bar Foundation; Advisor, Board of Directors at Crossroads for Youth; Member, Circuit Court Criminal Assignment Committee
- ◆ Judicial Representative of the OCBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

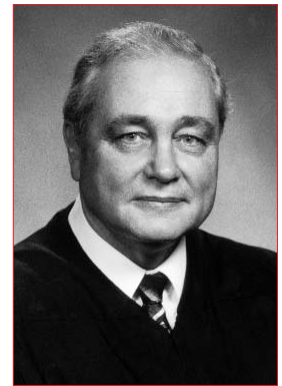
The Honorable Wendy Potts

- ◆ 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, OCBA, 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 Ct. Advisory Comm. - Rules of Evidence and Model Civil Jury Instructions
- ◆ Chancellor, Oakland County Bar American Inn of Court



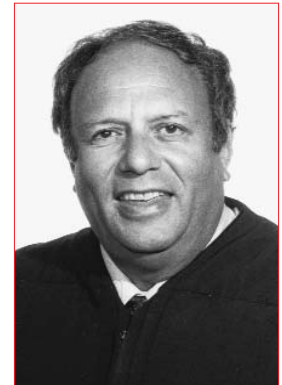
The Honorable Gene Schnelz

- ◆ Oakland Circuit Judge, 23 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 awards 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*



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, and 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*
- ◆ Four-time honoree, Michigan State Police for Professional Excellence; Chair, Oakland County Coordinating Council Against Domestic Violence
- ◆ Presiding Judge, Options - Oakland County Family Focused Juvenile Drug 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 Committees, State Bar of Michigan; Advisory Board, Kadima; Former Member: State Bar Representative Assembly, and Board of Trustees of Multiple Sclerosis Society
- ◆ Former Co-Chair: Criminal Attorney Appointment Comm. and Bench/Bar Conference
- ◆ Fellow: Adams Pratt Foundation and Michigan Bar Foundation



JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



The Honorable Joan E. Young

- ◆ Appointed Circuit Judge, March 1997; assigned to Family Division, 1998-present; Circuit Court Chief Judge, April 2001-present; Chief Judge Pro Tempore 2000-March 2001; Probate Judge, January 1989-March 1997; Probate Court Chief Judge, 1994-1997
- ◆ Recipient: OCBA 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, POMC 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
- ◆ Wayne State University Law School Board of Visitors

Democracies don't prepare well for things that have never happened before.

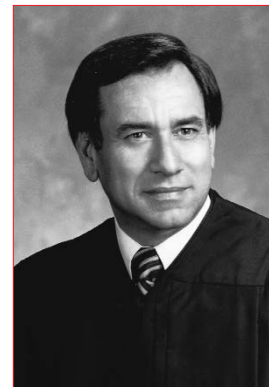
Richard A. Clarke
Former White House Counter-Terrorism Chief



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 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, and Friend of the Court Referee in 1980
- ◆ Recipient: B.S. degree from MSU and J.D. degree from Wayne State University Law School
- ◆ Member: State Bar, Federal Bar Assoc., Oakland County Bar Assoc., U.S. Supreme Ct. Bar, Michigan Interprofessional Assoc., State Bar Assoc. Fellows, Oakland Bar Inn of Ct., and Supreme Court Criminal Court Rules Committee
- ◆ 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, and as Presiding Judge of the Family Division 1998-2000; Univ. of Michigan B.B.A. 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 School; Member of the 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 Citizens of Oakland County:

In their introductory letter to this Annual Report, the Circuit and Probate Chief Judges spoke of the challenges that arose in 2002 and the Courts' responses to those challenges. For the second time in as many years, the Friend of the Court was directed by federal mandate to transition to a new child support enforcement computer application. The family division was tasked with implementing new juvenile and domestic legislation.

The Probate Court reviewed ways to reduce paper congestion and to provide for the immediate retrieval and review of court documents. The general jurisdiction of the Circuit Court considered means by which to reduce pending civil caseloads. Upon the discovery that many Family Independence Agency wards across the state were missing from court-ordered placements, the Circuit Court developed a plan to review cases and locate children who are absent from placement without legal permission.

In the backdrop of the above-referenced challenges was an emerging budget shortfall, due in large part to declining state revenues and reimbursements. As part of a countywide budget reduction effort, the Circuit and Probate Courts shaved \$2 million in budgeted expenditures. Even though budget cutting is never easy, it gave us the chance to review how we do business and make some changes for the better.

The above-mentioned challenges are but a few that we faced last year. Some were daunting in complexity and scope, others less so. People respond to challenges in different ways. Some shy away, others boldly embrace them. None of us are immune to challenges. We face them in our personal and professional lives. All of us are familiar with people who have turned seemingly insurmountable odds into opportunities. These people make the best of challenges rather than let challenges get the best of them.

One of the joys I have in working here is that we have so many people who fit this description. There is a "can do" attitude that is prevalent throughout the Circuit and Probate Courts here in Oakland County. Tackling the issues arising from challenges becomes a pleasant task when people demonstrate their desire and enthusiasm to turn challenges into opportunities. As the Chief Judges mentioned in their introductory letter, each challenge was met with a response that created new opportunities for us to improve upon the functions and responsibilities with which we have been entrusted.

We are blessed with a judiciary and staff who see opportunities in challenges, and that makes for a championship caliber team of Courts' professionals. I trust that the information contained in this Annual Report is informative and helpful. I also hope that you get a sense of the pride with which we approach our service to the citizens of Oakland County.

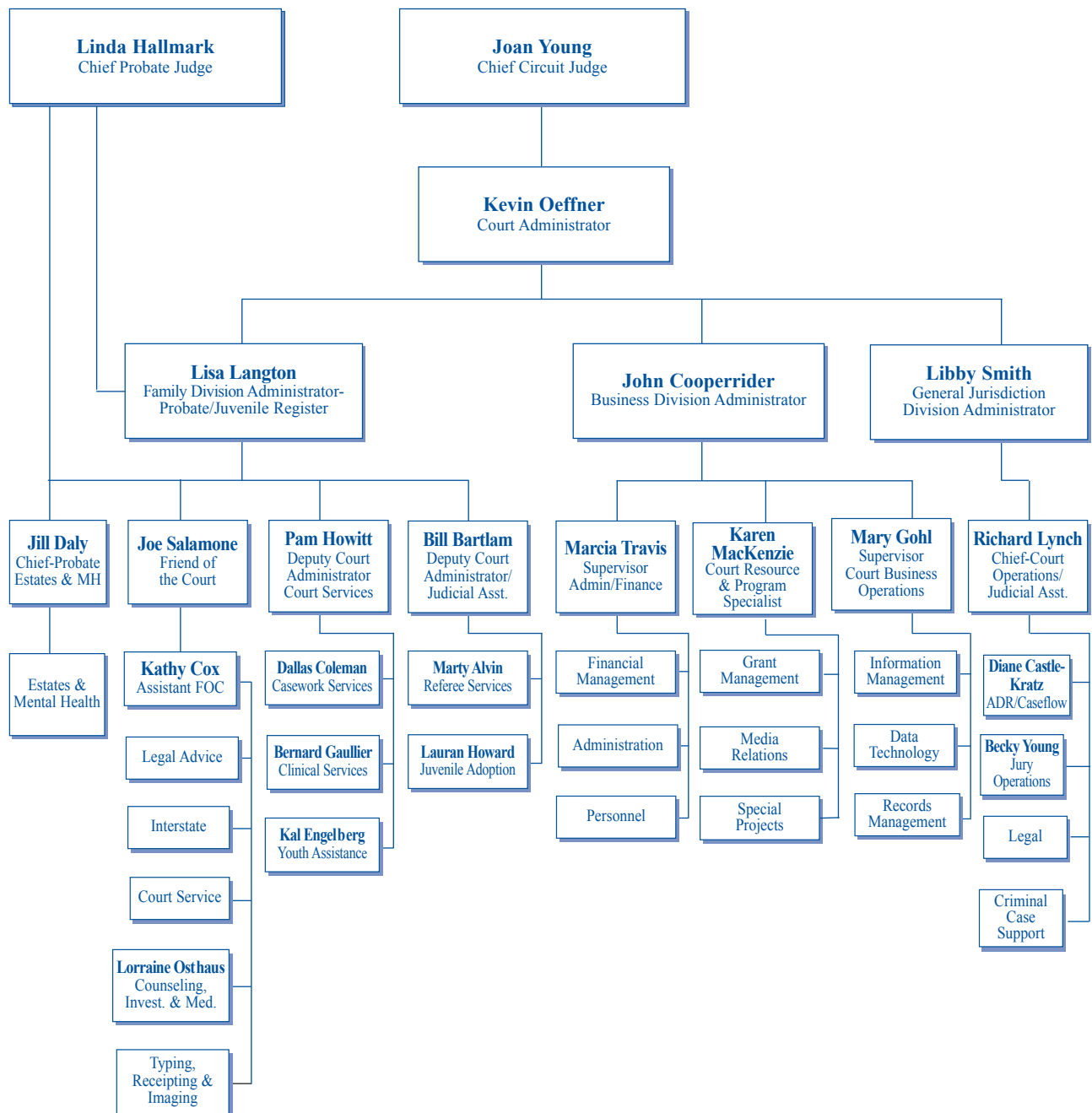
Sincerely,

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*

CIVIL SETTLEMENT WEEK A SUCCESS

In February of 2002, preparations began for a civil settlement week. Data from prior settlement weeks were analyzed to determine which case types could be expected to yield the greatest number of settlements. It was determined that all type “C” (contract) and type “N” (negligence) cases over 13 months would be included in the civil settlement week project scheduled for October 2, 3 and 4.

Under the direction of Judges Wendy Potts and Steven N. Andrews, court staff spent countless hours preparing for the 2002 Civil Settlement Week. In addition, general jurisdiction and family division judges offered the use of their courtrooms and jury rooms, 124 attorneys volunteered their time to serve as facilitators, and five visiting judges committed to conduct trials on unresolved cases during the months of October, November and December.

In August, orders to appear for mandatory settlement conferences were mailed out on the 723 targeted cases resulting in the settlement of 318 cases prior to their settlement conference date. In addition, facilitators settled 72 of the 343 cases appearing for settlement conference, and another 141 cases were disposed within 60 days of the settlement conference. In total, 531 or 73% of the cases targeted for settlement were disposed.

Of the 192 cases that did not settle by their settlement conference date, 86 were immediately set for trial before a visiting judge and 106 were returned to the originally assigned judge. At the close of 2002, the number of cases on the civil dockets over two years old was at an all-time low of 144 cases (1.3%).

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 2002, the Court 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 following departments:

- ♦ 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 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, Jury Office Leader; 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 Office Supervisor.

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 U.S., 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.



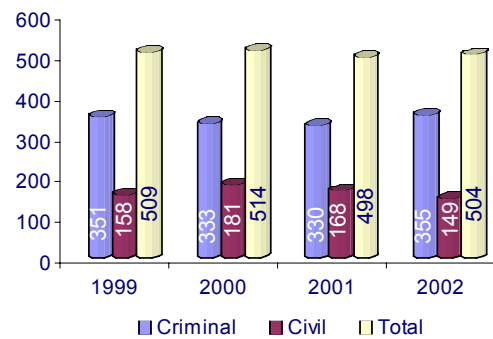
Jury Office staff answer questions and process panels of jurors for jury selection.

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

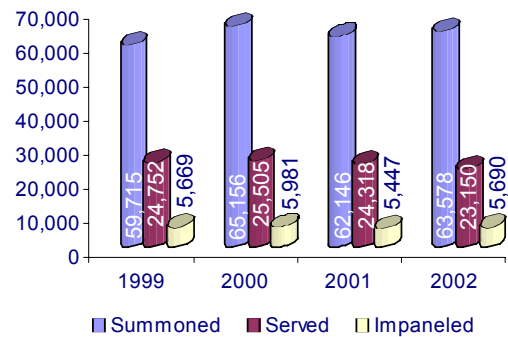
HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Provided jurors to courts for 149 civil trials, with an average trial duration of 3.4 days.
- ◆ Provided jurors to courts for 355 criminal trials with an average trial duration of 2.5 days. Of those trials, 77 were capital offenses.
- ◆ Summonses were issued to 63,578 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, 23,150 jurors were required to report. Of that number, 5,690 were selected to sit as jurors.

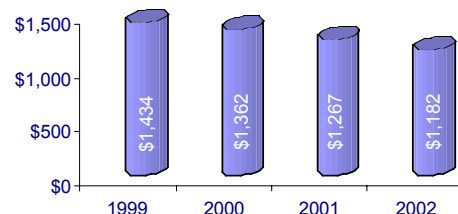
Juries Selected



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 sentencings. The Caseflow Division also docket miscellaneous motions. The ADR Division is responsible for the case evaluations 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.

In a coordinated effort with the Oakland County Bar Association, 124 volunteer attorneys and other county departments, the Case Management Office planned and implemented a very successful Settlement Week. Initially more than 800 cases were submitted to the program, with an emphasis on those cases over two years old. Using an Access database created for previous settlement weeks, information was entered and monitored for each case. As a result of settlements and dismissals, 466 cases were left

to attend the settlement week conferences. Cases that did not settle were given trial dates for as early as the week after their settlement conference. At 60 days after settlement week, a total of 531, or 73%, of cases entered into the program had been settled.

With the addition of a new general jurisdiction and a new family division judgeship and the retirement of a general jurisdiction judge, it was necessary to facilitate the creation of two new dockets and the reassignment of cases. There were 54,980 opened and closed cases reassigned. A total of 34,500 affected parties from open civil, criminal and juvenile, and active domestic cases were mailed orders informing them of the reassignment of judges. This project was coordinated with the Information Technology Department, the judges, the Clerk's Office, and Support Services.

The above-mentioned projects, as well as the day-to-day management of the judge's dockets, were handled admirably by the Case Management staff. They continue to provide friendly, efficient support to the Oakland County bench and bar, and to the public. The CMO staff should be commended on their hard work.



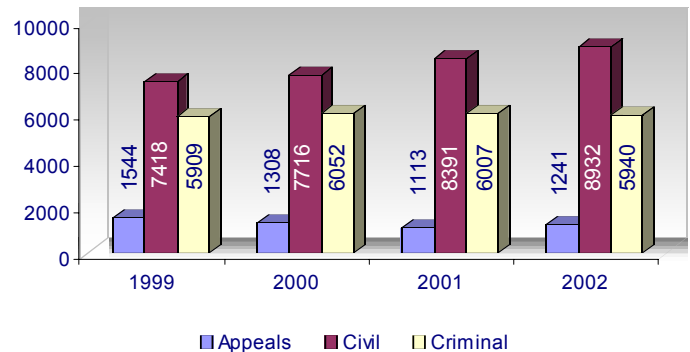
Attorneys and litigants check in with court staff for their facilitation session during Settlement Week 2002.

CIRCUIT COURT – GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION

CASEFLOW UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Processed and mailed 14,977 scheduling orders on new civil cases.
- ◆ Coordinated activities for the addition of three new judges and two new dockets. It was necessary to reassign the judge on 54,980 cases. This entailed mailing 34,500 orders to affected parties.
- ◆ Continued the coordination and, at year's end, concluded the dockets for multiple visiting judges. These judges handled cases from many different dockets, such as: drug, ≤\$15,000, miscellaneous, and probate disposing of over 700 cases.
- ◆ Monitored and scheduled 28,000 new cases, in addition to those existing previously on the docket.
- ◆ Scheduled approximately 41,302 praecipes.

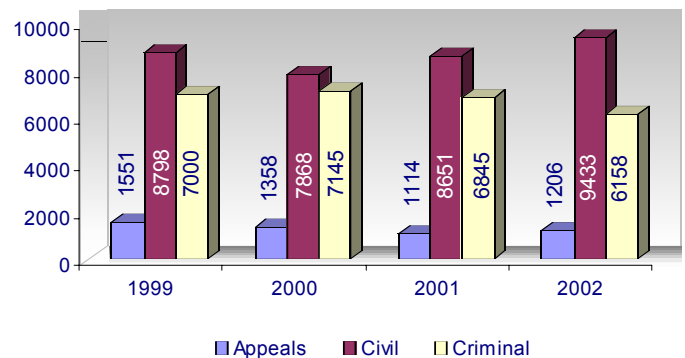
New Filings



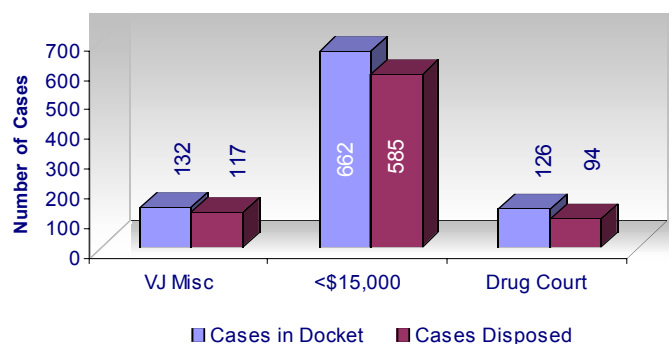
ADR HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Nearly tripled the number of civil mediators approved, under SCAO guidelines, eligible for court appointments. Monitored 242 cases submitted to the mediation program. Of those submitted 108, or 61%, settled, with 64 still in progress.
- ◆ Distributed \$170,055 to the law library from late fees assessed to case evaluation.
- ◆ Continued to work on the Domestic Relations Mediation Program. This included creating an application for mediators who wish to be on the court list and modifying a Local Administrative Order to be submitted to the SCAO for approval.
- ◆ Helped train 743 case evaluators at 17 sessions held at the Oakland County Bar Association. These trainings were mandatory for those case evaluators that wished to re-qualify and remain on the court list.

Dispositions



Visiting Judge Dockets



The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.

Abraham Lincoln

CIRCUIT COURT – DRUG TREATMENT COURTS

ADULT TREATMENT COURT

The change from storm and winter to serene and mild weather, from dark and sluggish hours to bright and elastic ones, is a memorable crisis which all things proclaim. It is seemingly instantaneous at last.

Henry David Thoreau.

Like the ice and snow that changed our lives this winter, substance abuse can abruptly interfere with the daily routine of individuals as well as communities. Whether through drug-related crime, abandoned, neglected, or abused children, rising health care costs, or lost opportunities, substance abuse buffets everyone in its path and on its periphery. Socially, we decry this demon that ravages so many. All too often, we ignore its icy presence in our own lives.

Punishment seems a natural companion to and rational retaliation for criminal acts in the minds of many citizens. Crime paired with treatment can seem soft, almost an incentive to retain the habits of misconduct. However, when a co-factor in a crime is an untreated substance abuse problem, can intense treatment really be construed as a soft response? And, if a positive, productive citizen emerges from the debris of addiction, aren't we all ultimately much better off? For any individual, is there anything more challenging than wrestling with and fundamentally revamping the forms and habits of one's entire life?

The Adult Treatment Court (ATC) accepted its first participants into the program in August 2001. In the sixteen months that followed, the ATC witnessed a great deal of "instantaneous" change, "at last." Like the slow, often staccato evolution of wintry days into spring, the changes participants made in their lives moved haltingly into a new order. And like the loosening grip of the final frozen fingers of winter, the realization of fresh freedoms, regained, generated an impetus to continue forward, even upward.

Over these past sixteen months, thirty-nine participants, all non-violent felony offenders facing a presumptive sentence to jail or prison, accepted the challenge to control the weather of their lives. Two participants successfully completed the ATC program in 2002, and an additional twenty-three continue to struggle toward graduation. The fact that fourteen participants left or were dismissed from the program, into jail or prison settings, challenges the dismissive theory that treatment is an easy out that cleverly and easily circumvents incarceration.

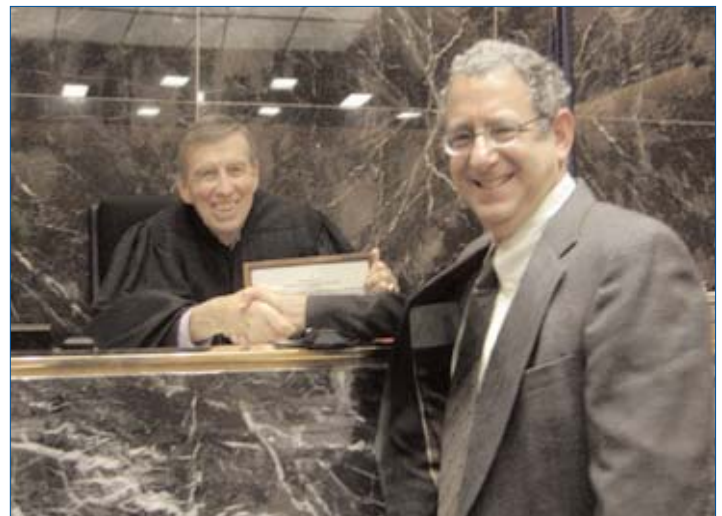
To be eligible for the ATC, candidates must have a clinically-demonstrated substance abuse problem, must qualify for community supervision under Oakland County's implementation of PA 511, have no convictions for an assaultive crime, live in Oakland County, and have access to a reliable means of transportation. In addition, candidates must agree to waive various rights, including the right to a preliminary examination at the district court, the right to file

motions contesting alleged defects in the prosecution, and the right to trial. Equally important, candidates must agree to wholeheartedly address the addiction that dominates their lives and precipitates repeated criminal conduct. Acceptance of this challenge is their season ticket to survival. It is up to them to use the ticket wisely.

The ATC consists of four separate stages designed to address the chemical, interpersonal, and emotional aspects of addiction. As a participant progresses through the program, treatment demands decelerate, while investments in productive work, education, repayment of debts, court costs and restitution increase, as a reality-based precursor to re-entry into an unsupervised social mainstream.

The rehabilitation process, like any seasonal transition, has no guaranteed trajectory. Relapse is part of treatment, and can often be characterized by returns to stormy, even dangerous behavior. The ATC addresses relapse on legal as well as therapeutic levels, decreasing the likelihood of future relapses by employing deterrents and rewards that support and condition mature pro-social responses. Each successive treatment stage expands freedoms and enhances skills until, by stage four, a successful participant enjoys a supervisory pattern similar to that of a defendant placed on standard probation.

A project like the ATC only succeeds through the collective efforts of its dedicated contributors. Oakland County Circuit Court ATC enjoys the full participation of the Prosecutor's Office, the Probation Department, Community Corrections, and the Office of Substance Abuse Services. Likewise, non-governmental groups like the defense bar, treatment providers, and employers extend the resources necessary for the ATC to evolve itself into an ever-more effective and efficient form. All this, with the hope of succeeding instantaneously, at last.



Visiting Treatment Court Judge David F. Breck congratulates Attorney Martin Reisig on his significant contributions to planning and implementation of the Adult Treatment Court.

CIRCUIT COURT – DRUG TREATMENT COURTS

JUVENILE TREATMENT COURT

Prior to admission to Options, the new name for the Oakland County Family Focused Juvenile Drug Court program, “Belinda” had virtually stopped attending school, was out of control at home, and her parents had given up on ever having a healthy relationship with her. She was consuming alcohol every day and had neither hope nor desire to quit. By age 16, “Charles” had been in and out of a number of substance abuse programs. He had worn out his welcome at school and had alienated most everyone with whom he had come in contact.



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

On October 1, 2002, “Belinda” and “Charles” became the first participants to graduate from Options. After a year of hard work on their part, and that of their parents, their lives had taken a dramatic turn. Both youngsters were now employed and thriving in school. Belinda had been honored at a Youth Assistance “Youth Recognition” ceremony for the many positive changes she had made during the school year. Both had set goals for themselves and expressed confidence that they would reach them. It is results such as these that help one appreciate the depth and capacity of juvenile drug court to change lives.

Juvenile Drug Court integrates drug treatment services with justice system case processing by including treatment providers on the drug court team. Prosecution and defense counsel work together using a non-adversarial approach.

Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program. Youths must be non-violent, repeat offenders who have been assessed as drug dependent or addicted. By December 2002, 23 youths were active in the program and 2 had graduated. One hundred percent of participants have received intensive (9 hours per week) drug treatment, as well as

relapse prevention and recovery group therapy and individual and family counseling.

During Phase I of the Options program, parents and participants are required to appear every Tuesday evening before Judge Edward Sosnick, the lead jurist in this program, to assure frequent judicial interaction. The relationship which develops between Judge Sosnick and each participant is proving to be key to retaining youths in this rigorous program. Participants are required to submit to frequent random drug testing and parents may also be required to test.

The drug court team was very pleased to contract with Evaluation Associates and Consultants, LLC, to complete a comprehensive evaluation of the Options program. The final report reflects that the juvenile drug court has met virtually all its objectives.

Incorporating all 10 key components of the Federal Drug Court Model assures that the Oakland County Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court remains faithful to its mission: to protect public safety and reduce the incidence of juvenile crime by helping youth and their families achieve drug-free lifestyles and healthy family relationships. With a recidivism rate of less than 15% percent, compared to 70% among comparable offenders in Oakland County, the Options program is making a difference in the lives of substance abusing youths and their families. Options gives participants hope and shows them that they do have “the power to choose” a clean and sober lifestyle.

The final evaluation report prepared by Evaluation Associates and Consultants concludes: “Because of the extremely high costs of incarceration and residential treatment for even a single juvenile, a program that keeps just a few youthful offenders out of these facilities can easily recover its costs. This fact, added to the profound social benefits that accrue if the juveniles become healthy and productive adults, is a powerful argument on behalf of programs such as Drug Court. The annual cost of incarcerating one juvenile in Children’s Village for one year exceeds the annual cost of providing Drug Court services to four juveniles. Moreover, those four juveniles have a much brighter future than the one incarcerated individual, and society will likely benefit as well.” Just ask Belinda and Charles.

Evaluators present the results of their program review to the Options Team. Pictured (left to right) are Corene Munro, Options Coordinator; Pamela Howitt, Juvenile Drug Court Project Director; Jackie Howes, Probation Officer; Megan Abraham, Probation Officer; Judy Lango, Evaluator; Dr. John Klemanski, Evaluator; and Richard Silber from Oakland Family Services.



CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION



Lisa Langton
Family Division Administrator
Probate/Juvenile Register

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM

During the week of September 24, 2001, the Oakland County Friend of the Court successfully converted to Michigan's statewide Child Support Enforcement System. 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. On the horizon even then was conversion to an upgraded system, which is referred to as the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES).

The goal of the "next generation" MiCSES system is to provide a comprehensive statewide automated system linking the FOC, FIA and the Prosecuting Attorney's office to share data and perform the work of collecting child support.

Implementation of this new system will be completed by July 2003. While the task is daunting for the staff, the system will provide increased functionality that proactively reviews cases for enforcement. It will also include many automated functions not currently available, such as credit reporting and passport denial on collection/disbursement across the state. Perhaps the most important function of this new system will be the ability to share the same data statewide, which is extremely helpful in locating parents, establishing child support orders, processing child support payments, and enforcing child support orders.

We are proud and pleased to have such dedicated staff at our FOC who continually strive to meet the needs of our Oakland County families.

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.

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

Alice Walker



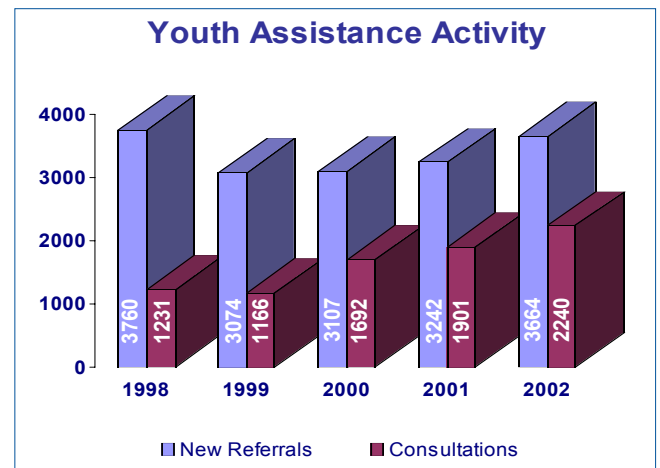
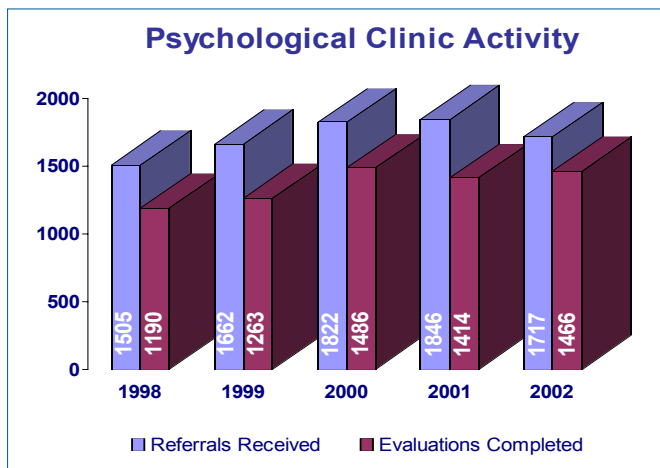
Family Division Management Team: (Front row from left) Joe Salamone, Friend of the Court; Dr. Pamela Howitt, Deputy Court Administrator/ Court Services; Kathy Cox, Assistant Friend of the Court; and Dr. Bernard Gaulier, Chief, Clinical Services. (Back row from left) Dallas Coleman, Chief, Casework Services; 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

| <u>NEW FILING ACTIVITY</u> | <u>1999</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2001</u> | <u>2002</u> |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Juvenile/Adoptions | | | | |
| Authorized Delinquency Petitions | 2,225 | 1,973 | 2,071 | 2,251 |
| Authorized CPP* Petitions | 306 | 339 | 333 | 309 |
| Unofficially Closed Delinquency Complaints | 3,089 | 2,845 | 2,197 | 1,879 |
| Unofficially Closed CPP* Complaints | 48 | 36 | 18 | 15 |
| Supplemental Delinquency Complaints | 296 | 296 | 260 | 266 |
| Juvenile Traffic Tickets | 645 | 531 | 539 | 482 |
| Authorized Adoption Petitions | 453 | 497 | 477 | 504 |
| Subtotal | 7,062 | 6,517 | 5,895 | 5,706 |
| Domestic Relations | | | | |
| No Children | 2,809 | 2,805 | 2,772 | 2,646 |
| With Children | 2,887 | 2,891 | 2,792 | 2,732 |
| Paternity | 848 | 913 | 851 | 830 |
| URESA | 398 | 409 | 411 | 359 |
| Support | 589 | 831 | 863 | 843 |
| Other | 220 | 200 | 187 | 190 |
| Subtotal | 7,751 | 8,049 | 7,876 | 7,600 |
| Personal Protection Orders | | | | |
| Domestic | 2,887 | 2,861 | 2,753 | 2,599 |
| Non-Domestic | 1,108 | 1,136 | 1,125 | 1,094 |
| Juvenile | 65 | 105 | 116 | 97 |
| Subtotal | 4,060 | 4,102 | 3,994 | 3,790 |
| Miscellaneous Family | | | | |
| Name Change | 410 | 412 | 430 | 481 |
| Other | N/A | N/A | N/A | 153 |
| Subtotal | 410 | 412 | 430 | 634 |
| TOTAL NEW FILINGS | 19,283 | 19,080 | 18,195 | 17,730 |

*Child Protective Proceedings



CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION



Front row, left to right: Supervisor of Family Counselors for Friend of the Court, Lorraine Osthaus, attends budget presentations at the Board of Commissioners Auditorium with co-workers Claudia Martello and Kathy Cox.

FRIEND OF THE COURT

The Friend of the Court Office assists the Family Division judges in domestic relations cases. When ordered to do so, the office investigates contested issues regarding custody, parenting time and support, and makes a recommendation to the Court. Once the Court enters its order regarding those issues, the Friend of the Court monitors and enforces the court order.

Friend of the Court offers a free program to persons involved in family law cases. SMILE (Start Making It

Livable For Everyone) is an educational workshop designed for divorcing and separating parents. The office also provides speakers to local groups.

The Family Counseling Unit assists families in domestic relations matters through mediation, counseling, and investigation of issues pertaining to custody and parenting time. Focus is on the best interest of the child, and the goal is to develop a parenting plan that meets the needs of the child and promotes parental involvement.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ Participated in the development of the Michigan Custody Guideline for use by court personnel and consumers to address issues associated with establishing and modifying child custody.
- ♦ Worked with the state to convert to the next generation computer system required for federal certification.
- ♦ Collected over \$630,000 from financial accounts of delinquent payors by working with the state Financial Institution Data Match Unit.
- ♦ Collected and processed over \$190 million in support payments, \$404,000 in statutory fees, and \$9,400 in court costs.
- ♦ Friend of the Court's Job Placement Program interviewed and assisted over 1,100 unemployed non-custodial parents. Through a collaboration with the Work First Program, Oakland Community College, and Oakland Family Services, FOC provided one-stop assistance in providing individual referrals not only regarding employment, but also to assist in personal issues that have caused barriers to employment.
- ♦ Partnered successfully with HAVEN to renew a federal/state grant to provide increased services for parenting time in special and difficult cases.
- ♦ Provided interventions regarding custody and parenting time to more than 5,000 families.

CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION



Friend of the Court Referees seated: (left to right) Patrick Cronin, Alisa Martin, Michelle Barry, Suzanne Bolton and Adrian Spinks

Standing: (left to right) Ron Foon, Betty Lowenthal, Dave Hoffman, Lorie Savin, Vince Wielecka, Libby Blanchard, Bob Kief, Traci Rink, Roy Jones and Ken Tolbert

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 resolution of sensitive and complex family law disputes.

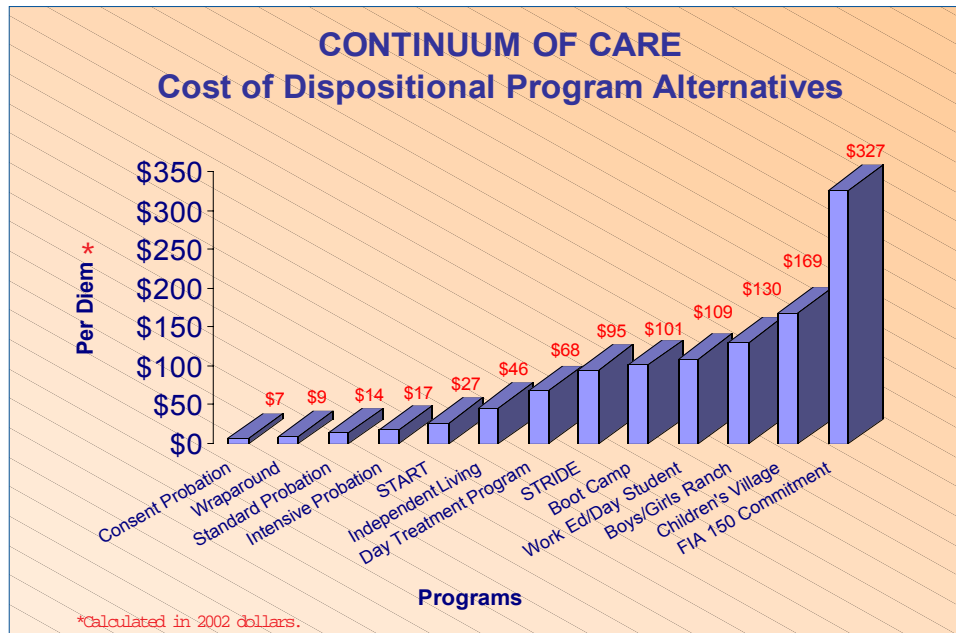
By an Order of Reference from the Family Division, referees act as the trier of fact in hearings involving complex legal issues of custody, parenting time and support, and interstate proceedings in pending and post-judgment actions. They refer many unemployed clients to the job placement/Work First Program 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.

Liberty is the possibility of doubting, the possibility of making a mistake, the possibility of searching and experimenting, the possibility of saying “No” to any authority – literary, artistic, philosophic, religious, social, and even political.

Ignazio Silone

| <u>Referee Activity</u> | <u>1999</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2001</u> | <u>2002</u> |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Motion/Oral Arguments Heard | 5,988 | 6,512 | 8,125 | 9,668 |
| Evidentiary Hearings Held | 4,140 | 5,115 | 6,205 | 5,565 |
| Total Orders Entered as a Result of Referee Recommendation | 8,327 | 6,591 | 6,961 | 6,163 |
| Number of Appeals to Family Division Judges | 420 | 457 | 465 | 489 |
| Show Cause Enforcement Hearings Scheduled | 18,272 | 19,736 | 20,895 | 21,338 |
| Early Intervention Conferences Scheduled | 2,893 | 3,014 | 2,831 | 2,427 |
| Job Placement/Work First Referrals | 496 | 800 | 988 | 1,240 |

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

development 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 adjudication 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 and counseling. 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

- ♦ Initiated a coordinated/cooperative venture with the Personnel Department to identify possible improvements in the selection process for the Youth and Family Caseworker I classification. The goal was to more efficiently identify top quality applicants while saving hundreds of interview hours. Personnel anticipates a reduction in hiring costs of approximately \$3,895, through an 83% reduction in the number of face-to-face interviews.
- ♦ Developed the IRAP program, which is designed to provide a community-based intensive aftercare program for high-risk youth completing Children's Village Treatment Programs. In the past, community-based programs have been used to monitor this pop-

ulation's return to the community. IRAP utilizes a skilled, highly-trained Intensive Casework staff to monitor participants through a four-phase program. The goal is to serve 24 youths in fiscal year 2003-2004, with an average length of program involvement of 180 days. A projected 10% decrease is anticipated in recidivism for program participants.

- ♦ Retitled the Child Welfare Worker classification to Youth and Family Caseworker to more adequately reflect the job responsibilities of this classification. The job class is utilized in four separate county units: Children's Village, Youth Assistance, Casework Services and Adoptions. Each unit requires unique skills for the casework staff employed therein.

CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION

CLINICAL SERVICES

The Clinical Services Unit, or Psychological Clinic, is responsible for aiding judges and referees in making informed dispositional decisions by providing clinic 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. The Clinic also conducts and coordinates training and research, including program evaluations and staff development programs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Received 1,717 referrals in 2002: 580, or 34%, were for delinquency matters; 567, or 33%, were for neglect-abuse matters; 64, or 4%, were for probate matters; and 506, or 29%, were for domestic matters.
- ◆ Continued to provide group therapy for adjudicated adolescents through the STAR program, parenting skills training through the CHOICE program, and post-divorce conflict-resolution training through the ADEPT program. In 2002 the referrals were: 131 cases, or 37%, for STAR; 196 cases, or 39%, for CHOICE; and 178 cases, or 35%, for ADEPT.
- ◆ ADEPT, or “After Divorce: Effective Parenting Together,” began in 2001. The eight-week educational and communication skills program trains divorced parents to co-parent through appropriate communication and peaceful conflict resolution, rather than by engaging in conflict and additional litigation. The program saw tremendous growth, with 178 individuals referred in 2002.
- ◆ Started the development of revised procedures for the Clinic in order to reflect the increased caseload and the addition of programs such as evaluations in domestic cases and ADEPT.
- ◆ Participated in the development of a website for the Court, and has been involved in developing material to be used on the website.
- ◆ Coordinated in-service training for clerical, casework, clinical and supervisory staff of the court. The following seminars were organized: Fathers, America’s Greatest Untapped Resource; Personal Safety Training; Marketing of Services and Volunteer Management (for YA staff); Juvenile Drug Court Training (for Juvenile Drug Court staff); Adolescent Psychopharmacology; and a two-part series on Adolescent Substance Abuse. In addition, 28 individuals were able to attend training seminars of their choice in the community with the use of Training Council funds.

YOUTH ASSISTANCE

As the primary prevention segment of the Court’s continuum of services, the mission is to strengthen youth and families and to prevent and to reduce delinquency, abuse, and neglect through volunteer involvement. Using a decentralized approach, staff work 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 cosponsored by the school district, municipalities therein, and the Court.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ New referrals to Youth Assistance increased by 13% over 2001 and represent the second highest total (3,664) in the program’s 49-year history. A total of 7,629 families were provided casework or information and referral services in 2002.
- ◆ The U-Turn jail tour program completed its second full year. One hundred and sixty casework youths, with a parent, attended one of twenty-four sessions offered. Of the evaluations returned, 83% of the parents reported a notable positive change in their child’s behavior at home and 80% of the parents noted a positive change at school, with 50% citing improved grades as one of the changes.
- ◆ Almost 7,200 parents and youths attended family education programs, an increase of 20% over 2001. Over 9,200 youths participated in summer and after-school recreation programs, more than twice the number of participants in 2001. Almost 1,400 youths received skillbuilding scholarships and another 1,728 youths were recognized for making positive contributions to their communities. Over 2,300 elementary and middle school youths attended shoplifting prevention education programs.
- ◆ In total, over 40,000 youths and families participated in one or more programs offered by Youth Assistance, an increase of 23% from 2001.



Mentors and their matches spend an afternoon at play.

CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION

JUDICIAL SUPPORT

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

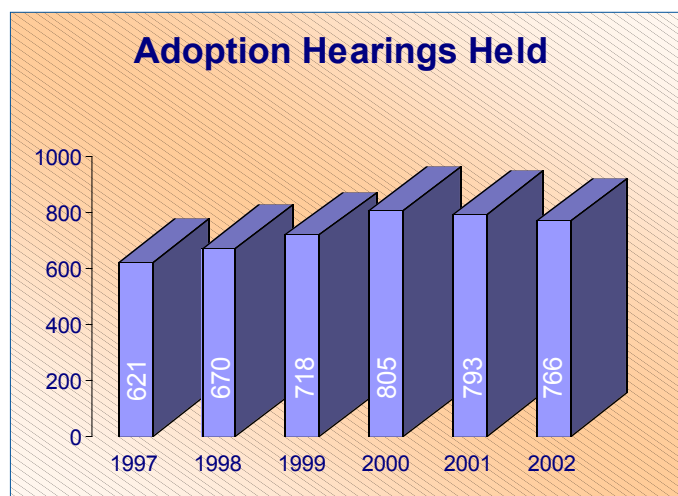
- ♦ Adoptions, including adoption records and confidential intermediary services;
- ♦ Child abuse and neglect cases;
- ♦ Juvenile delinquency and juvenile traffic cases;
- ♦ Juvenile Court intake;
- ♦ Personal protection orders;
- ♦ Safe delivery of newborns;
- ♦ Waiver of parental consent to abortion.

In these areas, support staff schedule cases, prepare files, create 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 and then make confidential recommendations to judges.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ Converted more than 18,000 adoption files for use in a new Adoptions database system accomplished by members of the Adoptions Unit over many Fridays and Saturdays in preparation for system implementation.
- ♦ Trained 50 police officers in the juvenile justice system at the Fifth Annual Police Orientation. This all-day session was held in November.
- ♦ Organized and conducted a special training session for nearly 100 private agency adoption caseworkers to explain changes to adoption court rules and the impact on their handling of adoption cases.
- ♦ Trained and qualified five new attorney-interviewers for personal protection order petitioner screening. These newly-certified interviewers join eight other individuals performing this vital function for the nearly 4,000 new cases presented each year.
- ♦ Developed and implemented the protocol for fingerprinting of juveniles, with cooperative assistance from the Sheriff's Department, Information Technology, and Children's Village staff. This responds to changes in the law for fingerprinting individuals who commit juvenile offenses.
- ♦ Assisted the Child Abuse & Neglect Council's Volunteer Advocates for Children program implementation through case identification and coordination with the program director, Charles Ludwig.
- ♦ Completed the written protocol for Deputy Register participation in orders for DNA testing of juveniles after adjudication.
- ♦ Participated in the compliance report of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.
- ♦ Completed a comprehensive birth family history form to use in all adoptions with advice from the Adoption Advisory Committee.
- ♦ Reorganized and restructured the workspace for the Deputy Registers, juvenile order clerks and order typists, and the juvenile file room by installing modular furniture and making other workflow improvements.
- ♦ Planned and drafted all adoption materials for placement on the court's website.
- ♦ Analyzed Family Division case assignment methods and reworked the Administrative Order designed to facilitate the "one family - one judge" concept.



- ♦ Developed a proposal for a Structured Integrated Referee Function, utilizing the referees at Friend of the Court and the Juvenile Court referees, for a possible pilot implementation with Judge Eugene Arthur Moore as a part of the Next Generation Court project.
- ♦ Assisted in the development and implementation of the Family Division Plan for reviewing cases involving children Absent from Court-Ordered Placements Without Legal Permission, including the Administrative Order, file review, docket coordination, and collaboration with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Family Independence Agency.

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.

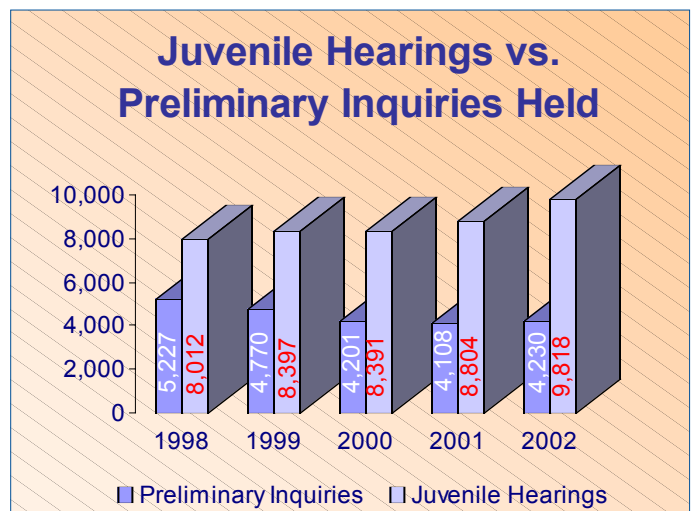
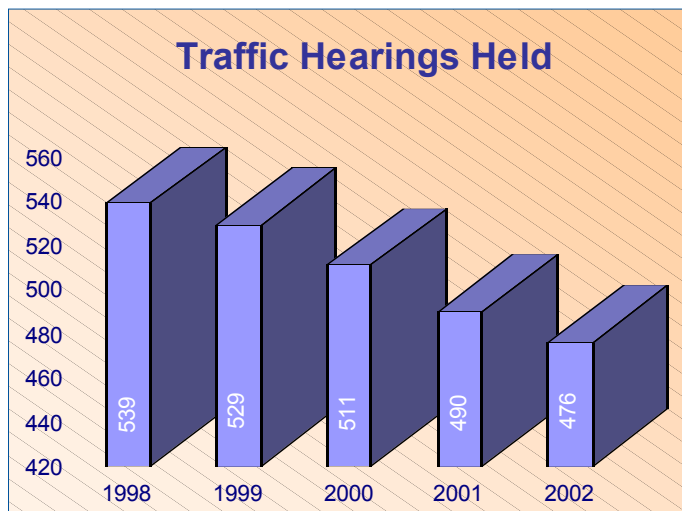
JUVENILE COURT REFEREES

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.

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

Abraham Lincoln



CIRCUIT COURT – BUSINESS DIVISION



*John L. Cooperrider
Court Business Administrator*

WEBSITE ENHANCEMENT

This year we embarked on the ambitious project of redesigning the Probate and Circuit Court websites. Our overall goal was to improve service delivery not only to the legal community, but to the community at large. With the help of the Information Technology Department, we launched our new websites in September of 2002.

We prepared for constructing this new site by asking some fundamental questions:

- 1) What is the focus of your unit?
- 2) Whom do you serve?
- 3) What services do you provide?
- 4) What are three important reasons someone might visit your site?
- 5) What are the top five most frequently asked questions?

The new website is a significant departure from the former site's structure. For instance, the left navigation categories include the following options: Home, About, Contacts, Calendars, Divisions, Forms and Applications, How Do I, Information and Publications, Links, Maps, Judges, Jury Services, Hints for Attorneys, Programs and Services and an Index. If that sounds like a lot, it is. Developers from IT have informed us that our portion of the county site is by far the most complex.

One significant advantage of the new system is that content changes can be made whenever warranted and can be made by our own court staff. Our division has six staff trained to create and modify web pages.

Although the initial work has been exciting and significant, we feel the best is yet to come.

BUSINESS DIVISION OVERVIEW

The Circuit Court and Probate Court 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

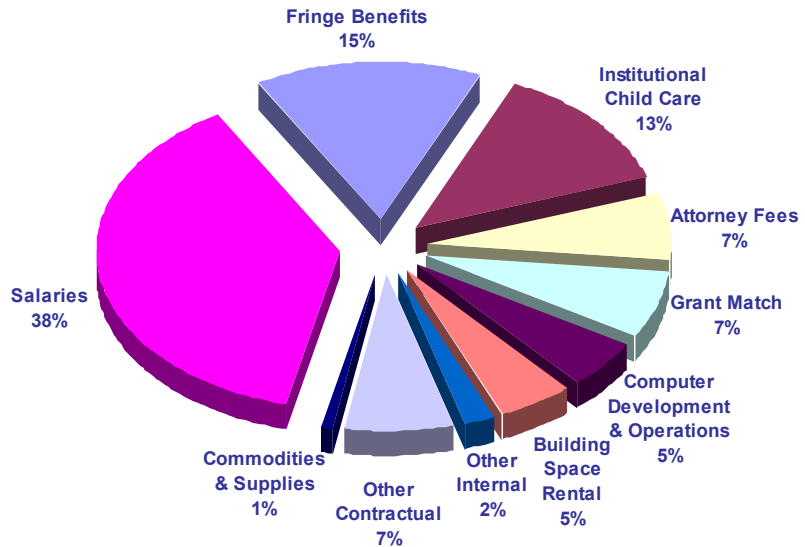
- ◆ Facilities: With the assistance of FM&O, constructed two new courtrooms, chambers, and judicial staff offices on the first floor of the West Wing Extension for two new Circuit Court judges. Renovated courtroom 2C for a new judge and staff. This courtroom was previously used for our visiting drug judge. Reconstructed visiting judge courtroom 2I for the Family Focused Drug Court staff.
- ◆ Technology: With the help of IT, redesigned the Probate Court and Circuit Court websites following the format of the County's newly launched website. It is our hope that the upgrades will make the site more interactive, with the overall goal of improving the service delivery to the legal community as well as the community at large. At the direction of the Michigan Supreme Court, implemented new caseload reporting requirements within the Circuit Court and Probate Court. These changes included identifying and programming each case type for new filings and case dispositional information. Implemented new drug court software for the both the adult and juvenile drug court programs. Participated in planning for the video arraignment pilot project initially to incorporate district courts and then the Circuit Court.
- ◆ Financial: Comprehensive monitoring of juveniles committed to the State of Michigan Family Independence Agency produced over \$150,000 in credit adjustments for Oakland County in 2002. Completed FY2002/2003 Child Care Fund Budget Plan as well as the FY2002 Circuit Court and Probate Court Budget Plan. Planned, acquired and installed two new video systems to bring the number of video courtrooms up to ten.
- ◆ Other: Implemented central monitoring of all video transcript requests in order to gain better control over the process. Implemented procedures to maintain court forms in a central directory for easy monitoring and updating. Coordinated various new events and produced new documents including: consolidated court picnic, annual report, employee annual awards, holiday party, *Full Court Press* newsletter, JIMS newsletter, court tours, and Bring Your Child To Work Day.



Never underestimate the generosity of Business Division Staff. Holiday gift donations and delivery are an annual event. This year, two families and forty children received gift bags from the Business Division. The team pictured (left to right) included Linda Russell, Cheryl Macias, Cindy Harper, Tina Sobocinski, and Pam Ferguson. The project was spearheaded by Cindy and Pam.

CIRCUIT COURT – BUSINESS DIVISION

CIRCUIT COURT AND PROBATE COURT FINANCIAL REPORT

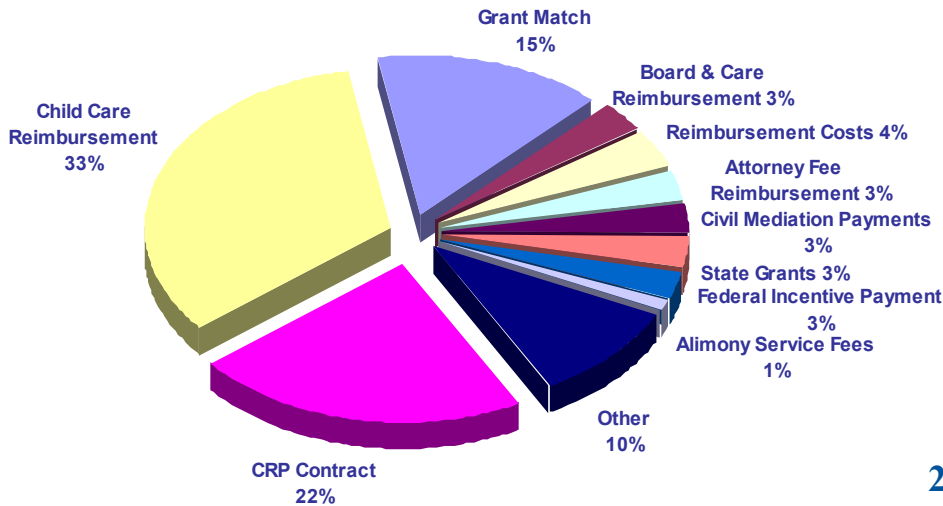


2002 Expenditures: \$62,792,699

| <u>Expenditures</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2001</u> | <u>2002</u> | <u>2001-02 % Chg</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Salaries | \$20,194,069 | \$21,483,370 | \$24,006,228 | 11.7% |
| Fringe Benefits | \$7,549,358 | \$8,017,930 | \$9,237,517 | 15.2% |
| Institutional Child Care | \$5,926,767 | \$7,009,340 | \$7,975,312 | 13.8% |
| Attorney Fees | \$4,884,194 | \$5,115,498 | \$4,363,856 | -14.7% |
| Grant Match* | \$0 | \$5,084,345 | \$4,336,621 | N/A |
| Building Space Rental | \$2,964,982 | \$3,127,390 | \$3,092,415 | -1.1% |
| Computer Development & Operations | \$4,071,150 | \$3,715,466 | \$2,961,680 | -20.3% |
| Indirect Costs | \$325,289 | \$1,075,838 | \$1,364,199 | 26.8% |
| Professional Services | \$1,116,238 | \$696,556 | \$777,173 | 11.6% |
| Mediator Fees | \$679,050 | \$690,625 | \$696,125 | 0.8% |
| Jury Fees & Mileage | \$744,176 | \$645,788 | \$587,863 | -9.0% |
| Other | \$328,490 | \$325,799 | \$469,708 | 44.2% |
| Postage | \$290,287 | \$280,686 | \$363,322 | 29.4% |
| Telephone Communications | \$434,218 | \$438,873 | \$312,117 | -28.9% |
| Visiting Judges | \$342,061 | \$460,074 | \$279,645 | -39.2% |
| Overtime | \$92,816 | \$133,732 | \$265,318 | 98.4% |
| Commodities/Supplies | \$186,949 | \$203,639 | \$229,795 | 12.8% |
| Mileage/Leased Vehicles | \$219,520 | \$214,587 | \$223,582 | 4.2% |
| Transcripts | \$241,691 | \$220,351 | \$202,324 | -8.2% |
| Furniture/Equipment Purchase | \$217,972 | \$194,209 | \$161,818 | -16.7% |
| Printing | \$94,216 | \$137,721 | \$158,627 | 15.2% |
| Copiers | \$76,703 | \$111,236 | \$143,514 | 29.0% |
| Equipment Rental | \$82,724 | \$51,246 | \$106,472 | 107.8% |
| Insurance | \$127,489 | \$129,811 | \$88,980 | -31.5% |
| Court Reporter Services | \$81,456 | \$104,665 | \$87,262 | -16.6% |
| Maintenance Charges | \$34,775 | \$78,192 | \$77,269 | -1.2% |
| Operating Transfer | \$0 | \$558,500 | \$70,000 | N/A |
| Interpreter Services | \$29,205 | \$46,409 | \$53,993 | 16.3% |
| Micrographics/Reproductions | \$59,611 | \$48,180 | \$48,784 | 1.3% |
| Computer Legal Research | \$38,359 | \$42,434 | \$45,580 | 7.4% |
| Software Rental/Lease | \$134,662 | \$0 | \$5,600 | N/A |
| Total | \$51,568,477 | \$60,442,490 | \$62,792,699 | 3.9% |

*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

2002 Revenues: \$29,727,926

| <u>Revenues/Sources of Funds</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2001</u> | <u>2002</u> | <u>2001-02 % Chg</u> |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Child Care Reimbursement | \$8,255,412 | \$8,952,720 | \$9,714,943 | 8.5% |
| CRP Contract | \$5,670,291 | \$5,831,064 | \$6,460,198 | 10.8% |
| Grant Match* | \$0 | \$5,147,821 | \$4,336,621 | -15.7% |
| Costs | \$1,041,539 | \$1,073,777 | \$1,181,697 | 10.0% |
| Federal Incentive Payment | \$722,051 | \$484,544 | \$1,028,738 | 112.3% |
| Board & Care Reimbursement | \$1,002,734 | \$1,116,262 | \$1,018,255 | -8.8% |
| Attorney Fee Reimbursement | \$1,003,790 | \$985,709 | \$1,003,633 | 1.8% |
| Civil Mediation Payments | \$816,715 | \$865,262 | \$815,045 | -5.8% |
| State Grants | \$606,272 | \$561,552 | \$531,444 | -5.4% |
| Alimony Service Fees | \$576,675 | \$339,213 | \$487,171 | 43.6% |
| Transfer - In | N/A | N/A | \$469,760 | N/A |
| Grants - Federal | N/A | N/A | \$456,250 | N/A |
| CRP State Supplement | \$0 | \$422,549 | \$422,549 | 0.0% |
| Probate Estate Fees | \$278,106 | \$302,050 | \$279,707 | 7.9% |
| Probation Service Fees | \$204,043 | \$161,485 | \$186,387 | 15.4% |
| Mediation Fines | \$162,405 | \$178,200 | \$185,345 | 4.0% |
| Reimbursement - State County Agent | \$176,993 | \$183,157 | \$180,455 | -1.5% |
| Reimbursement - Salaries | N/A | N/A | \$166,924 | N/A |
| Family Counseling Fees | \$121,305 | \$121,755 | \$123,060 | 1.2% |
| Psychological Clinical Evaluation Fees | \$94,820 | \$88,013 | \$117,174 | 33.1% |
| Other | \$188,606 | \$149,844 | \$101,272 | -32.5% |
| Probate Certified Copies | \$102,806 | \$99,799 | \$98,486 | -1.3% |
| ADC Incentive Payment | \$138,373 | \$141,494 | \$93,365 | -34.0% |
| FOC Filing Fees | \$100,440 | \$89,820 | \$84,240 | -6.2% |
| Other Probate Filing Fees | \$80,710 | \$71,426 | \$73,276 | 2.6% |
| Processing Fees | \$64,917 | \$35,813 | \$62,481 | 74.5% |
| FOC Judgement Fees | \$30,080 | \$29,360 | \$27,600 | -6.0% |
| Probate Will Deposits | \$25,125 | \$19,400 | \$21,850 | 12.6% |
| Prior Years Revenue | \$0 | \$227,125 | \$0 | N/A |
| Total | \$21,464,208 | \$27,679,214 | \$29,727,926 | 7.4% |

*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 the administrative functions of the Probate Court have been merged with Circuit Court, and much of the Probate Court's jurisdiction has been shifted to the Circuit Court, the constitutionally-mandated Probate Court maintains jurisdiction over estates, trusts, guardianships, conservatorships and mental health proceedings. The Honorable Linda S. Hallmark presides as Chief Probate Judge and the Honorable Barry M. Grant is Chief Probate Judge Pro Tempore. The Probate bench also includes the Honorable Eugene Arthur Moore and the Honorable Elizabeth Pezzetti.

The Oakland County Probate Court Estates Division has jurisdiction over decedent estates, which includes probating wills and the administration of testate estates (with a will) and intestate estates (without a will) by personal representatives. It is also the Court's task to interpret wills and trusts in the event of uncertainty or conflict and to determine the heirs in intestate estates. The Estates counter is the bustling center of activity as staff processes the necessary paperwork, sets court hearings as necessary and directs files into court for motion call.

There were 41,809 customers served at the Probate Court in 2002. Besides decedent estate and trust matters, this unit also handles the paperwork and oversight of guardianships and conservatorships of adults and minors, manages the guardianship review process, and files wills for safekeeping. All legal records of the department are a matter of public record and are available for review by the general public.

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ Scanning (or Imaging) of all documents filed with the court was implemented January 2, 2002. Every single document that is filed with the Probate Court is now scanned and available for review on staff computer screens. This innovation has brought great efficiencies to the operation, in that staff no longer need to retrieve court files to view file documents or to answer questions about proceedings. It allows staff to retrieve information quickly and accurately. The Court's goal is within 48 hours after a document is presented for filing, it should be processed, scanned, and filed in the official court file.
- ♦ Internal Reorganization - The Probate Court received approval and implemented a significant internal staff reorganization in 2002. Four positions were upgraded to the position of Probate Specialist. Five positions were upgraded from Clerk III to Deputy Probate Register, and countywide efforts resulted in the reclassification of the entire clerical staff from typists and clerks to office assistants. This reorganization resulted in a revitalized use of staff resources and a commitment to serve the public in new and improved ways. The new probate specialist unit now lends its considerable expertise and problem-solving skills to the most complicated filing issues, thus allowing the more routine matters to be handled more expeditiously.
- ♦ Website - If you have not viewed it yet, be sure to check out the new Probate Court website at www.co.oakland.mi.us/probate. It is chock-full of information that will help in navigating the probate court process. Included are information sheets, forms and links to forms, frequently asked questions, a plain English glossary, electronic versions of the popular (and updated) brochures, as well as practical information, such as telephone numbers, court business hours and highlights. The site continues to be updated, augmented and refined. All comments and suggestions are encouraged! The goal is to make the site useful and user friendly and to provide everything the public needs to know so that they may avoid any unnecessary trips to the courthouse.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



Barb Henderson from Probate Court utilizes the new scanner system installed in 2002.

| <u>NEW PETITIONS FILED</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2001</u> | <u>2002</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Small Estates | 632 | 676 | 679 |
| Deceased-Supervised | 135 | 0 | 0 |
| Deceased-Independent | 495 | 0 | 0 |
| EPIC-Supervised | 53 | 79 | 53 |
| EPIC-Unsupervised | 1,193 | 1,877 | 1,955 |
| Trust Intervivos | 120 | 130 | 169 |
| Adult Guardianships | 1,074 | 980 | 1,073 |
| Minor Guardianships | 618 | 599 | 712 |
| Adult Conservatorships | 399 | 409 | 415 |
| Minor Conservatorships | 216 | 214 | 181 |
| Mentally Ill | 984 | 1,338 | 1,378 |
| Other | 114 | 126 | 119 |
| Total | 6,033 | 6,428 | 6,734 |
| | | | |
| <u>ACTIVE CASES</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2001</u> | <u>2002</u> |
| Deceased-Supervised | 857 | 8 | 1 |
| Deceased-Independent | 1,581 | 25 | 0 |
| EPIC-Supervised | 80 | 671 | 484 |
| EPIC-Unsupervised | 1,289 | 3,159 | 3,381 |
| Adult Guardianships (LIP) | 3,249 | 3,119 | 3,144 |
| Adult Guardianships (DDP) | 1,458 | 1,460 | 1,451 |
| Minor Guardianships | 2,756 | 2,681 | 2,723 |
| Adult Conservatorships | 1,544 | 1,538 | 1,559 |
| Minor Conservatorships | 1,699 | 1,664 | 1,626 |
| Other | 2 | 233 | 208 |
| Total | 14,515 | 14,558 | 14,577 |

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, budgets 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 2002:



| | |
|--|---|
| 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 |
| Citizens Alliance for the Circuit and Probate Courts | Oakland County Human Services Department |
| Common Ground/Sanctuary | <i>Oakland County Legal News</i> |
| Community Programs Inc. | Oakland County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney |
| Crossroads for Youth | Oakland County Personnel Department |
| Easter Seals Collaborative Solutions | Oakland County Purchasing Division |
| Family Independence Agency | Oakland County Reimbursement Division |
| FISH of Oakland County | Oakland County Resource Library |
| HAVEN | Oakland County Sheriff's Department |
| Havenwyck | Oakland County Support Services |
| JAMS | Oakland County Treasurer's Office |
| Jewish Home for Aging Services | Oakland County Youth Assistance Coordinating Council |
| Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System | Oakland Family Services |
| Michigan Court of Appeals | Oakland Intermediate School District |
| Michigan State Court Administrative Office | Oakland Mediation Center |
| Oakland County Bar Association | Perspectives of Troy |
| ADR Committee | Plante & Moran |
| Circuit Court Committee | State Appellate Defenders Office |
| Criminal Assignment Committee | United Way of Oakland |
| Juvenile Law Committee | Women's Survival Center |
| Oakland County Board of Commissioners | |
| Oakland County Children's Village | |
| Oakland County Clerk-Register of Deeds | |
| Oakland County Community Corrections | |

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Citizens Alliance enjoyed its thirteenth year of activity supporting the Court in 2001-2002.

Standing members (left to right): Dr. James O'Neill, Phil Fabrizio, Dan Nover, Marge Huggard, Micheline Sommers, Renee Mahler, William Penner, Sandra Plumer-Dickens, Jill Koney Daly, Dave Wolf, Jan Doliittle, Suzanne Dreifus, Jim Perlaki, Monica Lee, Karen MacKenzie, Gloria Truss and Michael Hughes. Seated (left to right) are: Mary Schusterbauer, Philip Roller, Helene Phillips, Christine Piatkowski and Lisa Langton.



CITIZENS ALLIANCE FOR CIRCUIT AND PROBATE COURT

The Citizens Alliance enjoyed its thirteenth year of activity supporting the Court in 2002. Members represent a cross-section of the community. Under the distinguished leadership of Mr. Philip Roller, retired senior vice president of operations from Midwest Benefit Corp., the Alliance created or supported the following activities:

- ♦ The court tour initiative was continued, including visits to juvenile, adult felony and drug court proceedings, and other presentations. Thirty-four tours served 754 children in 2002.
- ♦ Removing the Mysteries of Probate Court was continued. Informational workshops were held in a record number of communities, including Rochester Hills, Pontiac, Huntington Woods, Madison Heights, and Holly, and served over 100 seniors.
- ♦ In collaboration with the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, the Citizens Alliance Guardianship Task Force identified issues pertinent to adult guardianships and began advocating for constructive change.

YOUTH ASSISTANCE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the backbone of Oakland County Youth Assistance. In 2002, almost 1,000 volunteers joined in the effort to strengthen families in order to reduce and prevent delinquency, neglect and abuse in this county. Their dedication resulted in 44,602 hours of service to youth and families.



Annual Mentors Plus events excite and entertain volunteers and their matches.

- ♦ Marion Smith, a Waterford Youth Assistance Board member for 27 years, was honored for her exemplary volunteer service as a 2002 Governor's Service Awards semi-finalist. In the same year, she received the Oakland County Hometown Hero Award for Volunteer Direct Service, sponsored by United Way and *The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*.
- ♦ Volunteers from our local Boards of Directors devoted over 14,712 hours to administrative functions in order to have well functioning programs to serve youth and families.

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 1,387 guardianships reviewed in 2002, almost 28% (381), 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 68 new and 161 established minor guardianship cases for the court.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Judge Alexander treats his staff to some holiday cheer. Pictured (left to right) Paul Klenczar, Judge Alexander, Donna LaBelle, Santa, Bea Stitt, Sarah Mason and Bob Zivian from the Prosecutor's Office.



From the "fort" team at the Court Administrator's Office, you can always expect smiles and M+M's. Pictured (left to right) are Cheryl Macias and students, Kristen Gustafson and Jenn Higdon.



Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Weaver in the Board of Commissioner's Auditorium enlightens staff regarding emerging issues for Michigan courts.



Options Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Coordinator, Corene Munro, administers alcohol screening tests to our children on Bring Your Child to Work Day.



In transit between meetings, Youth Assistance staff Julie Berz, Supervisor Al Kaczkowski, Paul Scobi and Hank Szlenkier flash grins outside of the West Wing Extension.

A YEAR IN REVIEW



Proud father Vladimir Vandalov, Youth Assistance Caseworker, brings his beautiful children to the Courthouse for Bring Your Child to Work Day.

Kameshia Gant, Judge Gilbert's clerk, receives the Judge Richard and Sally Kuhn Scholarship for the 2002-2003 Academic Year from Judge Richard D. Kuhn.



In cooperation with Information Technology, Circuit and Probate Courts websites were designed and implemented in 2002. Web team members pictured are (left to right) Terry Castiglione, Christina Bujak, Kathy Shu (IT), Chris Papendrea (IT), Karen MacKenzie (Web Content Manager and Editor), Mary Gohl and Porferia Mellado. Missing are Linda Russell and Michelle Blaszczyk.



The county courthouse was the scene of a September 11th remembrance in 2002. County staff, community members and their children paid their quiet respects.

COURT EMPLOYEES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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

**Diane Castle-Kratz,
Supervisor of Case
Management Office**

"Thank you for the lovely card and gift basket - it definitely was a surprise. Thank you for all the opportunities you have given me over the last 6 months. I enjoyed my time with the visiting judges and I owe most of it to you. Thanks again for everything."

**Andy Cain - Juvenile
Caseworker**

"Thank you so much for your support today and for listening to our concerns. I am sure that Bill is going to get through this in a positive way and you with the compassion that you have shown, will have played a big role in helping him get his life back on the right track.

You possess a perfect combination of firmness and understanding.

Thanks for being 'you'! As the experience impacted (our son's) life, so did our brief acquaintance with you."

**Cassandra Goulding - Youth
Assistance Caseworker and
Richard Klapko, L.L.P. -
Volunteer for Youth
Assistance**

"I want to thank you for all the help you have gave to me. I think you guys will make a difference on every kid that is in your groups for now and the future."

**Donna Weinstein - Youth
Assistance Caseworker**

"Madison Heights Youth Assistance has offered counseling to many of our most needy families. In addition, by presenting to classrooms, conducting support groups, obtaining banners for our schools, creating placements for our students, and talking with a variety of groups, you have touched the lives of the majority of our students.

Because of your work, Madison Heights Youth Assistance has become synonymous with fighting fair, eliminating bullying, and increasing respect. Thank you for your dedication to our students and enthusiasm for your work. Many students are benefiting from your efforts."

**Stacy Pasini - Youth
Assistance Caseworker**

"Stacy is a wonderful person to deal with the diversion program here in the South Lyon district. With Stacy communicating well with the officers, it makes them understand the process better and want to refer more juveniles that need it."

**Candy Hlivka
Garry Pullins - Youth
Assistance Caseworkers**

"You guys did it. Your first year of Free Seedlings was a great success. I want to thank you and your staff very much."

**Claudia Walter - Youth
Assistance Caseworker**

"As a department, we have found Ms. Walter to be very conscientious, compassionate, and judicious while carrying out her professional duties. I strongly believe that Ms. Claudia Walter is a valuable member of our community and a vital component of Novi Youth Assistance."

**Chris Cook - Probate Deputy
Register**

"Our law firm primarily handles workers' compensation and personal injury claims. We do not ordinarily handle Probate matters. However, we had an occasion to handle the estate of a minor involving a personal injury. In our dealings with the Court, I spoke to Chris Cook on three occasions asking for his guidance. I would like to commend Mr. Cook on his assistance. He was at all time courteous and extremely helpful. He helped me through what I thought was going to be a very difficult situation."

COURT EMPLOYEES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Karen Koshen - Secretary to the Honorable Edward Sosnick

"I would like to thank you for setting this up and making this possible for us to be able to come to the courtroom. It was very informational. I learned a lot from it."

James Windell - Psychologist, Psychological Clinic

"Are you sitting down? John T. and Andrea C. were just here in my office because they were scheduled for a hearing. They got here early and called me from the lobby that they have worked out an agreement and would like to help me by drafting an order. They worked together beautifully and seemed to get along great. I have never ever seen them remotely close to this behavior before. Andrea did mention ADEPT and said you were wonderful. I think she got A LOT out of the class. Bless you."

Alisha Stites - Probate Deputy Register

"Thank you very much for the update I requested. Your kindness was very much appreciated. It is so nice when we can count on people when we need them."

Thank you for helping get this guardianship transfer through so quickly. We've been blessed with some special guardian angels in the ordeal, and you are one of them."

ADOPTION DEPARTMENT

"Thank you to your wonderful staff there for assisting me in obtaining and understanding the Delayed Registration of Foreign Birth established by court order paperwork. On the few occasions that I've had to call your office, I've always had the pleasure of speaking with very personable and helpful staff. In Feb/Mar 1999, my husband and I adopted our first son from Bogota, Colombia."

Carol Larie - Probate Deputy Register

"I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the professionalism and helpfulness of Ms. Larie. I frequently have to file for guardianship and have requested notification of the GAL when appointed on each of my cases. My experiences with the court previously have been less than pleasant and Ms. Larie was not only efficient and friendly, but she also called me when she discovered who the GAL is going to be on a current case of mine. Just want you to know that her respect and follow-up is greatly appreciated and more employees of her caliber would serve the Probate Court very well."

Joan Hutchinson - Secretary to the Honorable Richard Kuhn's Secretary

I really appreciate you taking the time to get my outdate corrected. Everyone else I talked to gave me the run around and didn't even listen to what I had to say. Thanks for listening and treating me like a person, not an Inmate.

Patrina Anthony - Deputy Probate Register

"I recently had to visit the Probate Court regarding a guardianship matter. It was a very stressful time for me and the matter in question needed to be addressed in an urgent time frame. Luckily for me, I had the opportunity to work with your employee, Patrina Anthony. What an incredible lady! She was extremely helpful and made what could have been a difficult situation, wonderful."

Patrina welcomed me with a great big smile and a positive attitude. Patrina was extremely helpful and professional and I walked out of your building with a smile on my face.

You are very lucky to have Patrina as an employee. She made a difference in my day, as I'm sure she does often for many others and she should be recognized for her efforts."

Kameshia Gant and Ayanna Jordan - Clerks to the Honorable Alice Gilbert

"I wanted to correspond with you with respect to the competence and professionalism of your court clerks, Kameshia Gant and Ayanna Jordan. In all my dealings with your chambers, Ms. Gant and Ms. Jordan have shown themselves extremely competent and are excellent county employees."

ANNUAL AWARDS

On December 11, 2002, the Third Annual Employees of the Year ceremony was held honoring several employees of the Circuit and Probate Courts. These employees were recognized for their dedication and distinguished public service to the Courts. The following seven individuals were selected as the 2002 Employees of the Year:



(Left to right) Corene Munro, Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator; Carol Esher, Probate Deputy Register; Janet Myers, Child Support Specialist; Nicole Bennett, Judicial Support; Francine Snyder, Judicial Staff Attorney for Judge Mester; Cheryl Macias, Business Division Receptionist; and Anne Modelski, Clerk for Visiting Judge David Breck.

Court Services – Corene Munro

As the Coordinator for the Options Juvenile Drug Court program, Corene Munro immediately gained the respect of the Juvenile Drug Court team. She has a thorough understanding of juveniles, is effective as a problem solver, has natural abilities as a supervisor and is always eager to tackle a vast array of duties. Corene's enthusiasm, dedication and timeliness were highlighted by her nominator, as well as her courtesy, dignity and adaptability.

Probate Employee – Carol Esher

Having worked at the Probate Court for 15 years, Carol Esher is described as being a pleasure to work with because she always gives her best. This year she served in a dual role as Deputy Register II and as probate representative to the court technology project before being promoted to Case Management Coordinator. She shared her technology training with fellow staff members and embraced her new duties with enthusiasm and professionalism. Carol was complimented for her hard work and dedication.

Friend of the Court – Janet Myers

Janet Myers is a Child Support Specialist for Friend of the Court. She is described as always being positive and extremely conscientious, and is noted to be thorough in her explanations to clients and colleagues alike, as well as being patient with disgruntled clients. Due to her attention to detail, the county recovered most of this year's misapplied

child support payments. Janet is known to track account concerns to their resolution and to make herself available even on her days off.

Judicial Support – Nicole Bennett

Nicole Bennett is an office assistant for Judicial Support Services and is energetic and upbeat about her responsibilities. No matter what the task, Nicole has the ability to make her job look fun. She is described as a "team player" who is always willing to assist her colleagues, other units and supervisors. She is known for her friendliness and enthusiasm and always does what is needed, when it is needed. As the leader on the court technology project, Nicole took on added demands, which she treated with balance and professionalism.

Judicial Staff – Francine Snyder

As staff attorney for the Honorable Fred Mester, Francine Snyder is described as a truly exceptional member of the chambers. As staff attorney, she reviews, researches and makes recommendations on complex and sophisticated issues. Her expertise, dedication and promptness have enabled numerous complicated cases to receive timely resolution. Francine's work product is described as thorough and precise, enabling fair and effective rulings on sensitive and important issues.

ANNUAL AWARDS

Business Division – Cheryl Macias

Known as "Sherry" to those who work with her, Cheryl Macias is the receptionist in the Business Division and is well respected by her colleagues. Sherry's enthusiasm is infectious and her willingness to take on responsibilities beyond her job description is legendary. She is a highly motivated individual and is an inspiration to those she oversees. Her gentle words, warm smile and her willingness to help others has earned her the status of "office mom" in Court Administration.

General Jurisdiction – Anne Modelski

Anne Modelski has served in many capacities for the Circuit Court, most recently in the position as Court Clerk for the Adult Treatment and Felony Drug Courts. She was recognized for her enthusiasm, professionalism and her ability to be fully knowledgeable about the court docket. She provides efficient and effective services in a reliable and trustworthy manner, and treats everyone with dignity and respect. Anne is known to inconvenience herself so as not to enhance the workloads of colleagues.



At the Annual Awards ceremony, several employees were nominated as Employee of the Year for their service and dedication to the Court. Pictured are: (left to right) Calvin Engelberg, Angie Ramirez, James Windell, Marcia Travis, Angelina Sharon, Lisa Cysz, Paula McDonald, Peggy Hoffmeyer, Pam Stoddard, Dr. Pamela Howitt, Kathy Shoemaker, Debbie Bevan, Louise Strehl, Donna Weinstein, John Range, Mary Gohl, Becky Young, Diane Castle-Kratz, Carol Gray, Fred Morden, Shelly Hollingsworth and Julie Ritter.

STAFF RECOGNITION

SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Circuit Court

35 Years

Judge Eugene Arthur Moore

30 Years

John Chatley
Allen Kaczkowski
Richard Stasys
Suzanne Lehsten
Cathy Zahn

25 Years

Michael Amshay
Debra Beck
Elaine Bryant
Dallas Coleman, Jr.
Deborah Hool
Susan Jansson
Robert Proudfoot
Pamela Voll
Lorie Willing

20 Years

Michael DeSantis
Joan Hutchinson
Carole Perry-Burrell
Donald Smith

15 Years

Pamela Green
Bruce Brakel
Kathryn Doebel
Linda Fleischer
Claudia Gooden
Shari Griesmer-Toth
Bonnie Hagewood
Tamrica Hanser
Armethyst Lucius
Angela Martini
Martha McCann
Tori Petway
Beth Schrott
Julie Tillotson
Deborah Thompson

10 Years

Vilisa Carson-Johnson
Joseph Fisher
Kathryn Galetto
Judith Martin
Mary Neumann
Shelly Tryles
Rodney Yeaker

Probate Court

25 Years

Mary Batchelor

15 Years

Shonna Rymar

PAST EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR RECIPIENTS

Circuit Court

- 2001 Deborah Fahr, Jury Clerk for the General Jurisdiction Jury Office
Michael Hand, Juvenile Referee, Judicial Support
Tracey Howden, Court Services Caseworker
Karen Koshen, Judicial Secretary for Judge Edward Sosnick
Kristy Slosson, Business Division Employee Records Specialist
Rhonda Taber, Friend of the Court Supervisor
- 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

Probate Court

- 2001 Yvonne Zerba, Deputy Probate Register
- 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

RETIREES FOR 2002

Circuit Court
Gwendolyn Dillworth
Claudia Gooden
Nancy Ketchum
Willam Posey, Jr.
Wanda Yungton

Probate Court
Joan Connelly
Yvonne Zerba

JUDICIAL RETIREMENT



Judge Alice Gilbert

After 25 years on the Circuit Court bench, Judge Gilbert retired from the Oakland County Circuit Court in December 2002. During her tenure with the Court, she served as Chief Judge Pro Tempore and was a member of the Court of Appeals by assignment. Judge Gilbert also served as a district judge for the 48th District Court for eight years, during this time she served as Chief Judge.

Judge Gilbert is a graduate of Wellesley College and obtained her Juris Doctor degree from Northwestern University. She has completed postgraduate work at Harvard University, University of Michigan, Wayne State School of Law, University of Detroit, University of Kansas, National Judicial College and University of Nevada. Judge Gilbert was a member of several governing boards, including the State of Michigan Board of Ethics and American Hospital Association Task Force. She was past-president of the Michigan District Judges Association and past-chair of the Oakland County Corrections Advisory Board and Providence Hospital Advisory Board. She is currently director and trustee of the Karmanos

Cancer Institute, National Crime Foundation and trustee of the United Health Organization. During her long and illustrious career, the judge received several honors and special recognitions.

Judge Gilbert recently returned to the private sector where she provides arbitration and mediation services. Since her retirement, she has been appointed to the Michigan Film Commission and is vice president of an independent film company in California. She is working on a number of writing projects, both fiction and nonfiction, which are largely based upon her experiences on the bench. Judge Gilbert will be remembered as a trailblazer for women in the legal profession.

*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

ANNUAL REPORT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Cooperrider

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Our appreciation to *Oakland County Legal News* photographer John Meiu for providing the special events photographs, and photographer Tom Thompson for the accompanying photographs used throughout the annual report.

Special thanks to Tom Nahas of Information Technology for our cover design.

In addition, our thanks to Phil DeBarr, Mariell Klick, and Karen MacKenzie for their pictorial contributions.