

We the People

of the United States, in Order to provide for the common Defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing and establish this CONSTITUTION for the United States of America.

ANNUAL REPORT 2009



“The administration of justice is the firmest pillar of government.”

George Washington
1st President of the United States

Sixth Judicial Circuit Court
Oakland County Probate Court

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Acknowledgments

The Circuit Court and Probate Court would like to thank the following persons and organizations for their role in the preparation of this annual report:

Marcia Travis, for managing the project and Karen Koshen, for her editing expertise.

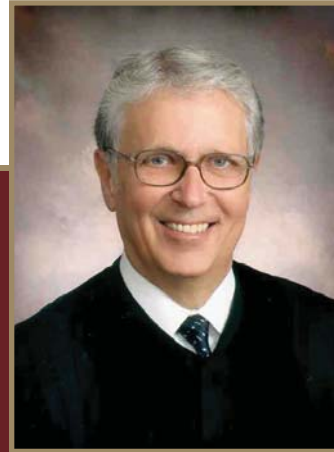
The managers and supervisors of the offices highlighted in this report for their input with regard to office functions and accomplishments.

Beth Sayles, of Sayles Studio, John Meiu, of the Detroit Legal News Publishing LLC, and Phill DeBarr, of the Business Division Data Tech Unit for their pictorial contributions.

Message from the Chief Judges



Nanci J. Grant
Circuit Chief Judge



Eugene Arthur Moore
Probate Chief Judge

On behalf of our judges and employees, we are pleased to present the 2009 Annual Report of the Circuit and Probate Courts. As Chief Judges, we are responsible for the administration of our respective courts, including budgetary oversight and financial management. Oakland County, like most other governmental jurisdictions in Michigan, has been dramatically affected by a beleaguered economy and declining revenues. Not only must we preside over cases and mete out justice in our roles as judges, we must administer justice unscathed by the realities of budget shortfalls and declining resources.

It has been said that necessity is the mother of invention. Never before, in our courts' histories, has necessity required so much of us. Budget shortfalls meant the courts had to resolve cases and handle their workload with fewer dollars and employees. And so it was necessity, in the wake of declining resources, that paved the way to several innovations.

We implemented business practices to provide attorneys, litigants, and the public with immediate access to information. We instituted technology to provide for virtual court appearances, saving parties and attorneys time and money. We conducted proceedings and test hearings via audio and video links to the Department of Corrections and Michigan Center for Forensic Psychiatry, thereby saving taxpayer money and enhancing security and safety for courthouse users. We automated operations that used to require labor. And we reorganized our offices and pooled resources to create efficiencies and drive down costs.

Just as importantly, the Courts worked to maintain important services despite a reduction in staffing and budget levels. For example, the Probate Court continued to support training sessions for guardians and conservators, trained new Children's Advocate volunteers to assist with complex minor guardianship cases, and recruited and trained volunteers to perform mandatory guardianship reviews. In addition, the Circuit Court continued its award-winning SMILE program to help parties, including children, deal with issues present in high conflict divorce cases and reshaped its nationally-recognized Youth Assistance program to divert at-risk youth from the formal juvenile justice system.

Declining budgets create challenges, but they also present opportunities. We are confident that we will seize upon the opportunities that lay ahead, thanks to the creativity and resolve of our judges and employees. We have a talented judiciary and staff who view public service as a privilege and who strive daily to fulfill their duties with care and professionalism. We will continue to do so with an abiding respect for the law and the administration of justice in Oakland County.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nanci Grant".

Nanci J. Grant
Chief Circuit Judge

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eugene Arthur Moore".

Eugene Arthur Moore
Chief Probate Judge

Judges of the Circuit Court

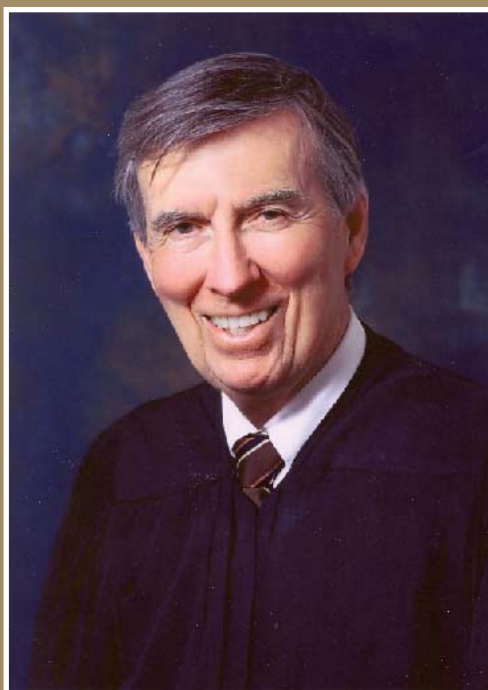


Left to right, front row: Judges Nanci J. Grant, Rudy J. Nichols, Edward Sosnick, Denise Langford Morris, and Joan E. Young. Middle row: Judges Cheryl A. Matthews, Martha D. Anderson, Mark A. Goldsmith, Colleen A. O'Brien, Mary Ellen Brennan, and Michael Warren. Back row: Judges Wendy Potts, Rae Lee Chabot, Shalina D. Kumar, Lisa Gorcyca, Leo Bowman, Daniel Patrick O'Brien, and James M. Alexander.

Judges of the Probate Court



Left to right: Judges Elizabeth Pezzetti, Eugene Arthur Moore, Linda S. Hallmark, and Daniel A. O'Brien.



Remembering Judge David F. Breck

(1982 - 2000)

On April 20, 2009, former Oakland County Circuit Court Judge David Breck passed away at the age of 78. Judge Breck was appointed to the circuit bench in 1982 where he served for 18 years. He worked in private practice and as an assistant Oakland County prosecutor prior to becoming a circuit judge. He was then appointed by Governor William Milliken to serve as judge in the 48th District Court. Judge Breck was known as a compassionate, fair, and understanding judge by members of the bar.

*“The reason that he went into the law
was to help those who needed it.”*

Kevin Breck, son

He graduated from the University of Michigan Law School, Michigan State University, and was awarded the Certificate of Achievement from Harvard’s American Academy of Judicial Education. Judge Breck was an active member of the community. In 1963, he was elected to the Birmingham city commission, where he served two terms as mayor. He was a life member of the NAACP and recipient of its Presidential Award for Judicial Service. He received the Leon Hubbard award from the Oakland County Bar Association for “Fostering Awareness of Cultural Diversity and Enhancing the Quality of Life for all People.” Judge Breck was Director for Horizons Upward Bound, a program for underprivileged high school students to attend college, and helped develop Oakland County’s Adult Treatment Court for nonviolent drug offenders.

“He was a very good colleague to many of us who are still on the bench,” stated Circuit Judge Wendy Potts. “He was a very dedicated, caring person, who had a special sensitivity for everyone.”

We the People

insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defence,
and our Posterity, We ordain and establish this Constitution

1787

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

Representatives and original Members of the House of Representatives shall be a Representative who shall, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and original Members of the House of Representatives shall be chosen in each State in the Manner prescribed by the Legislature thereof, but the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

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"To live under the American Constitution is the greatest political privilege that was ever accorded to the human race."

Calvin Coolidge
30th President of the United States

Letter from the Court Administrators



Kevin M. Oeffner
Circuit Court Administrator



Rebecca A. Schnelz
Probate Court Administrator

Elected Officials and Citizens of Oakland County:

The pages of the Annual Report that follow are designed to provide the public with general information about the courts and their programs, projects, and accomplishments. Also included is statistical information on caseload volume and trends. We welcome your comments and invite you to make suggestions regarding other information you would like to see available here.

The Courts have not remained unaffected by issues in the economy. We are exceptionally proud to have worked with the Judges and employees of the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts in facing the challenges that arose during 2009. Without their commitment to the public, as well as their ingenuity and hard work, the programs and accomplishments described in this report would not have been possible. We look forward to meeting 2010 with the same dedication and professionalism.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Oeffner".

Kevin M. Oeffner
Circuit Court Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca A. Schnelz".

Rebecca A. Schnelz
Probate Court Administrator

In Review



In 2009, Lady Justice, the symbol of justice and local government, was restored. Judges and other elected officials gathered for a ceremony to unveil the new bronze casting. The original 1904 statue (right) will be displayed in the courthouse lobby.

ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY

In 2009, the Oakland County Circuit Court reaffirmed its commitment to efficiency in several ways through technology.

First, the Court chose to expand its popular e-filing project to include additional judges. This project, which began in 2007, has been a cooperative effort between the Oakland County Clerk's Office, the Department of Information Technology, and the Circuit Court. E-filing is mandatory for litigants with civil cases before Judges Michael Warren, Rudy Nichols, Mark Goldsmith, Martha Anderson, Wendy Potts, Nanci Grant, Colleen O'Brien, and Shalina Kumar. In 2010, it is anticipated to include even more judges and case types.

The e-filing project has received praise from both the judiciary and members of the bar. It allows for the savings of time and money for litigants as well as court staff. Not only can users file the necessary court documents from anywhere, but they may also choose to serve all case parties at the same time. This ensures timely and

well-documented service. Oakland County also received national recognition for this program from both the NACM (National Association for Court Management) and NACO (National Association of Counties).

The e-filing project has been key in allowing for the creation of electronic court records and a truly paperless court.

Behind the scenes, court staff use electronic routing of documents with a workflow product developed by Oakland County's Information Technology Department. This has already saved more than 500,000 pieces of paper and the ink used to print the documents. It also saves on the processing time of important court documents. Some notices and scheduling orders are now delivered via email to attorneys, allowing the court to save postage and paper expense while improving the timely delivery of documents.

In addition to e-filing, the JOL (Judge On-Line) program was expanded this year to the entire circuit and probate benches. For a nominal fee, parties may request to be heard via telephone conferencing for various court events. The

In Review

program was designed especially for scheduling, status, pretrial, and settlement conferences, as well as motion hearings; however, other court proceedings are eligible at the discretion of the presiding judge.

The JOL program has helped citizens pursue important legal matters while continuing to work, receive medical care, attend important life functions, and even serve in our military overseas. The program has increased access to justice and improved court efficiency. Many court matters will no longer require adjournments until a later date now that this alternative to in-court appearances is available.



The Judge On-Line program has helped connect participants from across the United States as well as those in other countries with court proceedings. Dots on the map represent callers across the globe who have used Judge On-Line services.

In 2010, the JOL program is expected to include interactive video conferencing. This option should reduce travel expense for the parties, including expert witnesses, while providing a viable alternative to live presence.

If you would like additional information on e-filing or JOL, please contact the Circuit Court Business Office at 248-452-2159 or visit us online. All necessary protocols and forms for JOL, as well as help for frequently asked questions, are available at www.oakgov.com/courts/jol. E-filing information, including the training schedule, may be found at www.oakgov.com/clerkrod/efiling/index.html.

EMBRACING INTERNSHIPS

When one considers the role of a judicial clerk, the first thought that comes to mind is that of “Bull,” the bailiff from “Night Court” but certainly without the gun or uniform. Then again, a “clerk” has been described as “the person who sits beside the judge and pushes a lot of paper.” Others may view some of the duties of a clerk as being comparable to the infamous “Steve” of the Jerry Springer Show.



Over the past few years, the role of a judicial clerk has drastically changed. No longer does the clerk just “push paper.” Process and functionality changes within the court have led to a shift in responsibility. Real-time entries, video courtrooms, e-filing, and new docket management practices have revitalized the duties of the judicial clerks. To ensure an efficiently run docket for the judge, clerks must receive, process, and forward information and orders to the Court, parties and other support offices within the court with real-time efficiency. Communication is imperative within all departments so that proper work and procedural flow is maintained.

As the role of the clerk evolves, so does the idea of an intern in chambers. Circuit Court Administration is working with local universities and law schools to create an internship/externship program to assist judicial staff with daily office functions. Until recently, interns mainly observed court proceedings and provided minimal assistance in chambers. With this newly created program, we anticipate that participants will be fully deputized and able to perform functions similar to a judicial clerk: administering oaths, maintaining an accurate record of courtroom proceedings with JAVS equipment and real-time entries, and preparing motion call for chambers. These are just some of the duties the Court hopes to include.

The expectation is that program participants will provide valuable support to chambers while gaining a working knowledge of court operations that will benefit them in the future.

In Review

IMPROVING SERVICES

During 2009, the Oakland County Probate Court completed plans for a pilot project that allows mental health commitment hearings for patients at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry to be held using video conferencing technology. Working together with the county's Information Technology Department, the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, and the Center for Forensic Psychiatry (CFP), the Probate Court was able to utilize existing technology to improve services.

In the past, the Oakland County Sheriff's Office was responsible for transporting mental health patients from the CFP in Ann Arbor to the Probate Court for hearings on mental health commitment petitions. Patients at the CFP are those individuals that have been found not guilty by reason of insanity or incompetent to stand trial in a criminal matter. Petitions to commit these individuals for treatment are under the jurisdiction of the Probate Court. Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti is taking on the pilot project as part of her docket. The video hearings will be held twice a month.



CFP patients will now appear for the hearings by video from a courtroom located at the CFP. The defense attorney will be located at the CFP with the patient, as well as any doctor whose testimony is needed regarding the petition. The Oakland County Probate Court judge and the county's Assistant Prosecuting Attorney or Assistant Corporation Counsel will appear from the Oakland County probate courtroom.

The use of video is expected to have strong benefits. For the patients, disruptions to their treatment and routines are minimized when they do not have to be transported back and forth to the Oakland County Courthouse. In addition, the Oakland County Sheriff's Office will not have to schedule a transport for the patients. In the past, this has been a difficult task due to the timing requirements

for the hearings, the weather, and various other factors. The necessity of adjourning hearings due to transport difficulties should also ease the burden on the court in relation to scheduling and paperwork preparation.

Preparations and testing for the hearings involved participation from Judge Pezzetti, the Court's Data Tech Unit, and the Information Technology Department's OakVideo staff, as well as CFP staff. As the pilot gets into full swing, the court will be monitoring the effectiveness of the program to determine where improvements might be made and to ensure that the full benefits of the program are being realized.

EXPANDING PROGRAM

This year has brought many enhancements and positive reinforcements to the Adult Treatment Court (ATC). Most notably, the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) contracted NPC Research, an independent evaluator, to conduct an Outcome and Cost Evaluation of the program. The results of this study were very favorable to the ATC's efficacy.

- ◆ It was noted that: "Overall, drug court participants had significantly fewer re-arrests than the comparison group in the three years after drug court entry: an average of 0.5 re-arrests (half the number of re-arrests) for drug court participants versus 1.1 re-arrests for the comparison group."
- ◆ The study also found that participation in the ATC program reduced levels of substance abuse (even after the participants had completed the program) by at least half that of the non-drug court comparison group.
- ◆ Finally, it was found that the program has a significant cost savings and a return on the cost invested in the program. NPC Research reported that the criminal justice system costs were 96% less for the ATC participants during their time in the program compared to non-drug court offenders.

Realizing the majority of individuals who have a substance abuse disorder are also challenged with mental health dis-

In Review

orders, the Oakland County ATC implemented a Mental Health Track in collaboration with Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority. SCAO also provided funding for this mental health component through its MI Mental Health Court Grant Program. Oakland's ATC was one of the few courts in the state to receive this funding stream. As a result of this grant, Alexander Hadzagas, LLPC, NCC, joined the ATC team as the Mental Health Liaison. Mr. Hadzagas is instrumental in the assessment process and facilitates appropriate dual treatment of participants with co-morbid (co-occurring) disorders. It is the goal of the ATC to facilitate effective treatment, thereby utilizing limited criminal justice and mental health resources more effectively. The goal of the ATC is to alleviate incarceration and/or homelessness of those with co-morbid disorders while increasing public safety.

the Probate and Circuit Courts, along with all other county departments, have already identified additional budget reduction measures for 2011 and 2012 and may have to be ready for additional budget reduction measures in 2013 and beyond. It is important to memorialize these reductions in budget allocations and resources for our readers.

The Circuit Court FY2009 and FY2010 cost-saving measures included: video equipping three courtrooms, downsizing the Business Division, downsizing the Psychological Clinic, downsizing the Civil/Criminal Division, downsizing Youth Assistance, generating additional revenue by establishing new fees, as well as including reimbursement of Family Counselors' personnel costs in the Friend of the Court Cooperative Reimbursement Program (CRP). These cost cutting measures generated enough cost savings to meet the budget tasks of \$355,433 (FY2009) and \$3,663,548 (FY2010).

MEETING BUDGETS

For the past few years and into the foreseeable future, both the Circuit Court and Probate Court have been asked to make budget cuts to help Oakland County meet its budget shortfalls due to the poor economic climate and the further deterioration of its revenue base. For your information and edification, provided is a summary of budget reduction measures for both the Probate Court and Circuit Court, which was approved in 2009 by the respective benches and adopted by the County Executive, and the Board of Commissioners to meet the required budget tasks for FY2009 and FY2010.

The Probate Court FY2009 and FY2010 cost-saving measures included: implementing a new defense attorney appointment system for mental health matters to control costs, utilizing a larger number of volunteers to perform required guardianship reviews, video equipping one courtroom, and eliminating two student positions, one court reporter position and one clerk position. These measures generated enough cost savings to meet the budget tasks of \$43,463 (FY2009) and \$447,107 (FY2010).

As you can imagine, this was not an easy task for anyone. However, it was an important and necessary step for the courts to do their part in meeting the difficult financial situation the county is facing over the next several years.

Unfortunately, it appears we have not seen the end of these necessary cost-saving measures. Under the current poor economic picture, driven in large part by job losses and the negative trend in the real estate market, a trend of declining property values will continue to have a severe negative impact on Oakland County's tax base into the foreseeable future. Consequently,

SUMMARY OF COST SAVING MEASURES BY COURT/DIVISION	2009	2010	Full-Time Eligible Position Reductions
Circuit - Judicial Admin Division	\$ 81,183	\$ 228,704	3.5
Circuit - Civil/Criminal Divison	\$ 0	\$ 412,043	4.0
Circuit - Family Divisoion	\$ 206,041	\$2,059,665	23.0
Circuit - Business Division	\$ 91,861	\$ 465,270	5.5
Circuit - Add'l Revenue Identified		\$ 517,050	
Total Circuit Court	\$ 379,085	\$3,682,732	36.0
Total Probate Court	\$ 166,314	\$ 229,831	2.0

Budget tasks were determined based upon individual court's general fund budget as a percentage of the overall county general fund budget. For Circuit Court the percentage was 13.95% and for Probate Court the percentage was 1.71%.

Circuit Court Civil/Criminal Division

The Civil/Criminal Division of the Circuit Court is composed of fourteen judges elected for a six-year term in nonpartisan elections. The judges hear civil cases with damages in excess of \$25,000 and criminal cases involving felony charges and high misdemeanors. Civil/Criminal Division judges also preside over appeals from the district courts and administrative agencies as well as some appeals from Probate Court. Assisting the judges are sixty judicial staff. They include judicial staff attorneys, judicial secretaries, court clerks, and court reporters. Support is also provided by the following departments:

Administrative Support Staff – Richard Lynch serves as Manager of the Civil/Criminal Division and supervises the division’s legal support staff, administrative staff, and works with judicial staff to ensure the effective and timely resolution of cases. Handling a variety of legal matters, attorneys prepare opinions for judges and research issues that provide the basis for procedure and policy. Under his direction, Gwynne Starkey, Chief Civil/Criminal Division, manages the criminal case support and clerk support staff. Ms. Starkey also oversees case management and jury operations for the Court.

Case Management Office – This office is primarily responsible for coordinating alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs for the Circuit and Probate Courts. It works closely with the State Court Administrative Office, Oakland County Bar Association, and Oakland Mediation Center on program development and implementation. In addition, it assists with scheduling cases at initiation through disposition. Diane Kratz serves as the Caseflow/ADR Supervisor. She is assisted by Andrea Bayer, Caseflow Coordinator, and nine additional staff.

Clerk Support – This unit is responsible for the training and development of the judicial and floating clerks. It also provides support by scheduling visiting judges and tracking those cases assigned to the visiting judge dockets. Laura Hutson is the Court Clerk Supervisor. She is assisted by Brenda Beiter, Court Clerk Coordinator.

Criminal Case Support – This unit, supervised by Lisa Czyz, handles assignments of judges on all criminal cases. It appoints counsel for indigent defendants at case initiation and any post-conviction matters on appeal. It works with the Oakland County Sheriff’s Office and other county and state agencies on effective management of the jail’s inmate population.

Jury Office – The Jury Office coordinates jury operations and obtains jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts. It tracks juror utilization rates to ensure sufficient numbers of jurors are available for trials while imposing the least hardship on those summoned for jury duty. Rebecca Young serves as the Supervisor and is assisted by Deborah Fahr, Office Leader, and three other staff.



An average of 100 to 180 citizens are summoned to the Jury Office per day to serve as possible jurors. The number of jurors scanned into attendance is determined by the number of courts requesting jury panels on a specific day. Jury Office staff include Michelle Glover (right, back), Office Supervisor Becky Young (right, middle), and Office Leader Deb Fahr (right, front).

Circuit Court Civil/Criminal Division

Jury Office

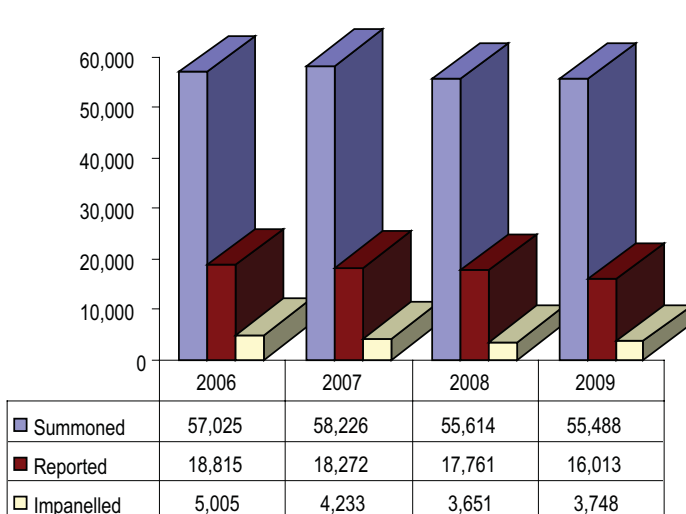
The Jury Office is responsible for obtaining jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts in Oakland County. Jurors are mailed a summons/questionnaire that schedules them for jury selection. In accordance with the one day/one trial jury system, jurors must be available for selection for one day. If selected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

Except for persons exempted from jury service by statute, the courts expect all persons, regardless of status or occupation, to serve when summoned. The only persons legally

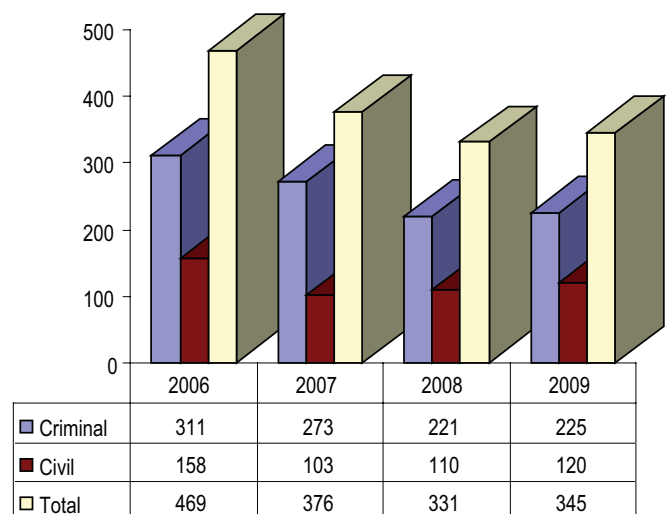
exempt from jury service are those who do not reside in Oakland County, are not a citizen of the U.S., have served as a juror within the past 12 months, are not physically able to serve, have been convicted of a felony, or are not conversant in the English language. Persons over the age of 70 are exempt upon request.

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

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT



JURIES SELECTED



Accomplishments

- ◆ Processed jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 120 civil trials, with an average trial duration of 3.29 days.
- ◆ Processed all jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 225 criminal trials with an average trial duration of 2.57 days. Of those trials, 81 were capital offenses.
- ◆ Summoned 55,488 citizens for jury duty. That number was reduced after excusals for legal exemptions. After determining the number needed to accommodate the daily requirements of the courts, 16,013 jurors were required to report for jury service.

Circuit Court Civil/Criminal Division

Case Management Office

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

The Caseflow unit tracks cases from the initial filing of the lawsuit through final disposition of the case. Within that function, cases are scheduled for pretrial hearings, motion calls, Civil Early Intervention Conferences, settlement conferences, trials, and sentencings.

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

Parties are now able to file their motion praecipe electronically. The e-praecipe process was introduced in early 2008 allowing users to complete a praecipe form and submit it for approval from a web link: <http://courts.oakgov.com/e-praecipe/>.

The Case Management Office reviews the e-praecipe for appropriateness and approves it to the register of actions and motion call docket. This process is required on all e-file cases and is voluntary on all other cases. Users have expressed satisfaction with the convenience of e-praecipes.

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

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

Mediation is another form of settling cases. Upon a case being selected for mediation, the parties and their attorneys meet with independent mediators to discuss their conflicts. With the assistance of the mediator and the attorneys, the parties work to fashion a possible settlement to the dispute.



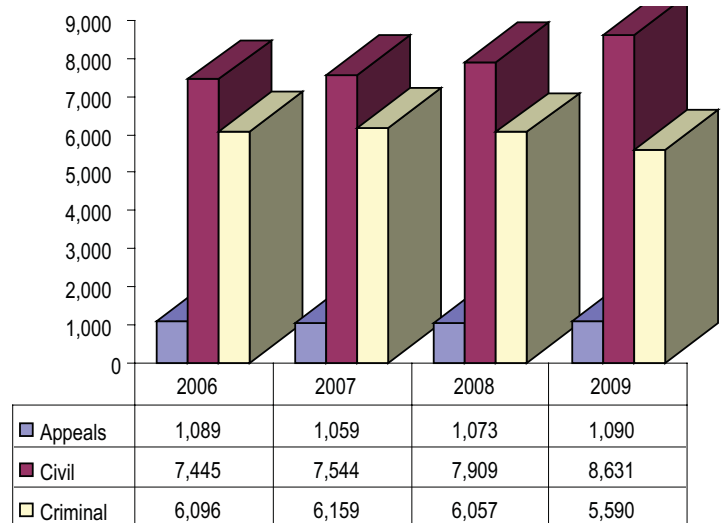
There were 5,008 civil cases ordered into case evaluation in 2009 with 1,834 cases actually evaluated largely due to dismissals before case evaluation. Case evaluators meeting with parties are (facing front, left to right): Attorneys Otis Underwood, Leo James, and Timothy Belanger.

Circuit Court Civil/Criminal Division

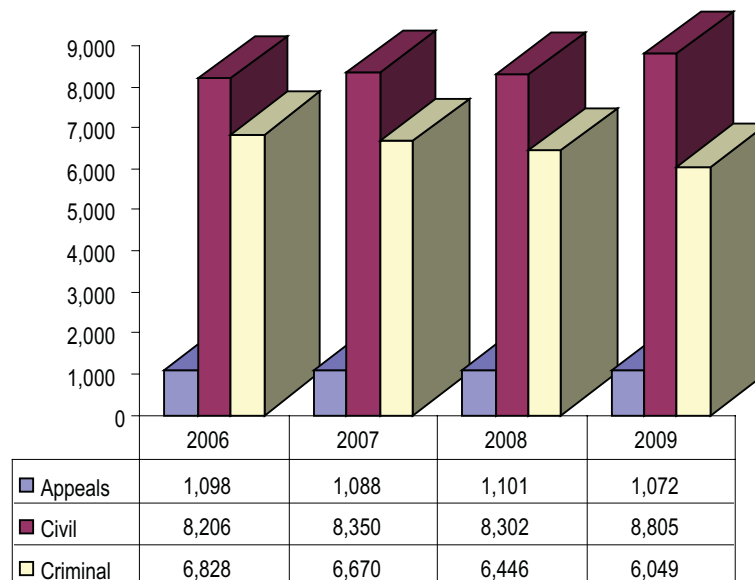
Accomplishments

- ◆ Processed nearly 28,000 scheduling orders on civil cases.
- ◆ Scheduled over 37,350 praecipes to be heard on Wednesday motion calls.
- ◆ Disposed 73% of the 392 cases submitted to the civil mediation program. Also disposed 70% of the 397 cases submitted to the mediation program for civil cases evaluated for \$25,000 or less and in which the evaluation was rejected.
- ◆ Resolved 86% of the 1,482 cases scheduled for mediation, with the help of the domestic relations mediation program. The Court uses the program to help resolve divorce cases with children (DM cases) short of trial. All divorce cases with minor children receive mediation information when the case is filed. This allows parties to be prepared with the selection of a mediator when they meet with the judge and the scheduling order is prepared.
- ◆ Disposed 34% of the 893 cases submitted to the Civil Early Intervention Conference Pilot Program. Cases with the case codes CH, CK, and CZ are submitted to the program. Parties meet with a volunteer attorney to identify key issues and determine the most appropriate method of alternative dispute resolution for their case.
- ◆ Distributed \$136,800 in late fees assessed for case evaluation to the Oakland County Law Library.
- ◆ Received over 37,000 praecipes for miscellaneous motion calls.

NEW FILINGS



DISPOSITIONS



Circuit Court Family Division

The Circuit Court Family Division, overseen by Lisa Langton, Deputy Court Administrator, includes the Friend of the Court operations, the Judicial Support unit, and the Court Services unit.

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

Judicial Support – This unit is headed by William Bartlam, Manager of Judicial Support/Judicial Assistant, and consists of the Juvenile Referees, Juvenile Intake, and Juvenile Adoption areas. In Mr. Bartlam's role as Judicial Assistant, he is also the lead legal advisor for the Probate and Family Division areas.

Court Services – Led by Pamela Davis, Manager of Court Services, this unit provides juvenile and intensive probation casework services, clinical services through the Court Psychological Clinic, community diversion efforts through the Youth Assistance program, and also includes both the Juvenile and Adult Drug Treatment Court programs.

Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court – Also known as OPTIONS (Owning the Problem - Trusting In Our New Skills), this court integrates drug treatment services with juvenile justice system case processing by including therapeutic intervention to substance using youth and their families. The team, comprised of a judge, court staff, defense counsel, substance abuse and mental health professionals, works together using a non-adversarial approach. As of December 2009, 96 youth had graduated from the program and 328 youth and family members had been served.

Adult Treatment Court – This court offers alternative sentencing for non-violent adult felony offenders who have a history of drug and/or alcohol dependence. Judge Joan Young presides over the male participants in the program. Judge Colleen O'Brien presides over the female participants. As of December 2009, 78 participants had graduated from the Adult Treatment Court. Jacqueline Howes-Evanson serves as the supervisor for both the Adult and Juvenile Drug Treatment Court programs. Created in 2008, the RESTORE Foundation was established to financially support the Oakland County Circuit Court Drug Court programs. Since its inception, over \$150,000 has been raised.



Eligible drug court participants complete a substance abuse program supervised by a judge. The ATC has graduated 78 participants since it began. Judge Joan Young is shown congratulating an ATC graduate.

Circuit Court Family Division

Friend of the Court

The Friend of the Court (FOC) is responsible for assisting in domestic relations cases by investigating and enforcing issues involving custody, support, and parenting time. Forms to assist parties in making requests of the Friend of the Court are available on the website at www.oakgov.com/foc.

Friend of the Court referees hold hearings to enforce and modify Family Division orders regarding child support, custody, and parenting time. Early Intervention Conferences conducted by FOC referees offer divorcing clients an opportunity to

meet with the referee assigned to their case early in the divorce process. This service is unique to Oakland County.

In 2009, the Friend of the Court began offering Early Intervention Conferences on all cases initiated by private parties and not just those that are filed as divorce actions. Immediately following the Early Intervention Conference, parties are directed to the SMILE program (Start Making It Livable for Everyone) where FOC Family Counselors offer skills to reduce conflict for the benefit of children.



Friend of the Court Family Counselors (first row, left to right): Jane McCarron, Brian Gallant, Kathleen Doan, Mary Kaye Neumann (Supervisor), Joseph Rzepceki, and Angela Miller. Second row, left to right: Sandy Binder, Jody LaPointe, Sue McCoy, Terry Oppenheim, Vicki Rupert, and Lori Klein-Shapiro. Back row, left to right: Katie Dopke, Katherine Stahl, Beverly Green, Heidi Fletcher, Tracey Stieb, and Judi Rise. Not present: Jany Lee-Warren and Elaine Bryant.

Accomplishments

- ♦ Implemented changes to the SMILE program for separating/divorced parents with minor children. Judges Sosnick and Alexander, attorney Richard Victor, Friend of the Court Suzanne Hollyer, and Family Counselor Supervisor Mary Kaye Neumann began meeting in August to change the program's concept, create a new video to be used in conjunction with the SMILE program, and offer the program four days a week on site at the FOC office to meet the needs of parents' work schedules.
- ♦ Answered 79,473 calls by the FOC switchboard, provided case-specific information at the front desk to 35,785 clients, and met with 141,914 clients in person. Interviewed 1,976 non-custodial parents for Job Placement/Work First referrals. Job placement services are available to all non-custodial parents who are ordered to pay support and who are unemployed or under employed.
- ♦ Conducted 831 custody investigations and 872 parenting time investigations and resolved 31,098 disputes involving parenting time and custody.
- ♦ Held 2,778 Early Intervention Conferences (EIC) with parties going through the divorce process. These conferences allow parties to a divorce access to the FOC referee early in the divorce process. The referee uses the EIC to assist in the settlement process and provide information about services available at the Friend of the Court.

Circuit Court Family Division

Judicial Support Services

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

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

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

Juvenile referees assist judges by conducting hearings and recommending decisions in these actions. Juvenile referees represent the Court 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. They authorize the detention of juveniles and removal

of children due to risk of harm. Referees review all complaints and petitions referred to the Court. They evaluate each matter and make decisions involving diversions or authorizations of petitions. Referees act as the trier of fact in cases involving delinquency and involving abuse and neglect of children. They recommend treatment plans for children and parents and monitor delinquents and children in foster care, which may include recommendations for the termination of parental rights.

The attorney appointment specialist maintains a database of attorneys qualified by education and experience for representing indigent parties. The specialist matches eligible attorneys to requests made for appointed counsel in Family Division and probate cases and then processes all pertinent documents relating to the appointment. In 2009, 2,402 attorney contacts were made resulting in 2,331 appointments. The decrease in numbers is due to a change in the way appointments were made.

SUMMARY OF FAMILY DIVISION ACTIVITY

NEW FILING ACTIVITY

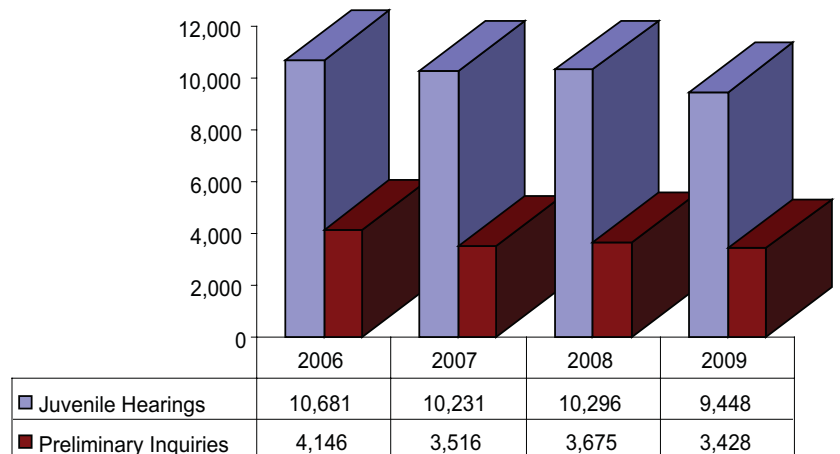
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Juvenile/Adoptions				
Delinquency	3,660	3,636	3,574	3,179
Child Protective Proceedings	546	490	483	299
Juvenile Traffic Tickets	374	348	268	213
Adoption Petitions	425	444	435	428
Subtotal	5,005	4,918	4,760	4,119
Domestic Relations				
No Children	2,629	2,515	2,357	2,520
With Children	2,402	2,371	2,268	2,428
Paternity	1,002	1,007	1,019	978
URESAs	315	284	353	74
Support	1,112	1,583	1,554	1,415
Other	239	269	189	252
Subtotal	7,699	8,029	7,740	7,667
Personal Protection Orders				
Domestic	2,058	1,875	1,853	1,886
Non-Domestic	999	896	841	791
Juvenile	71	57	56	57
Subtotal	3,128	2,828	2,750	2,734
Miscellaneous Family				
Name Change	454	437	444	486
Other	33	47	47	47
Subtotal	487	484	491	533
Total New Filings	16,319	16,259	15,741	15,053

Circuit Court Family Division

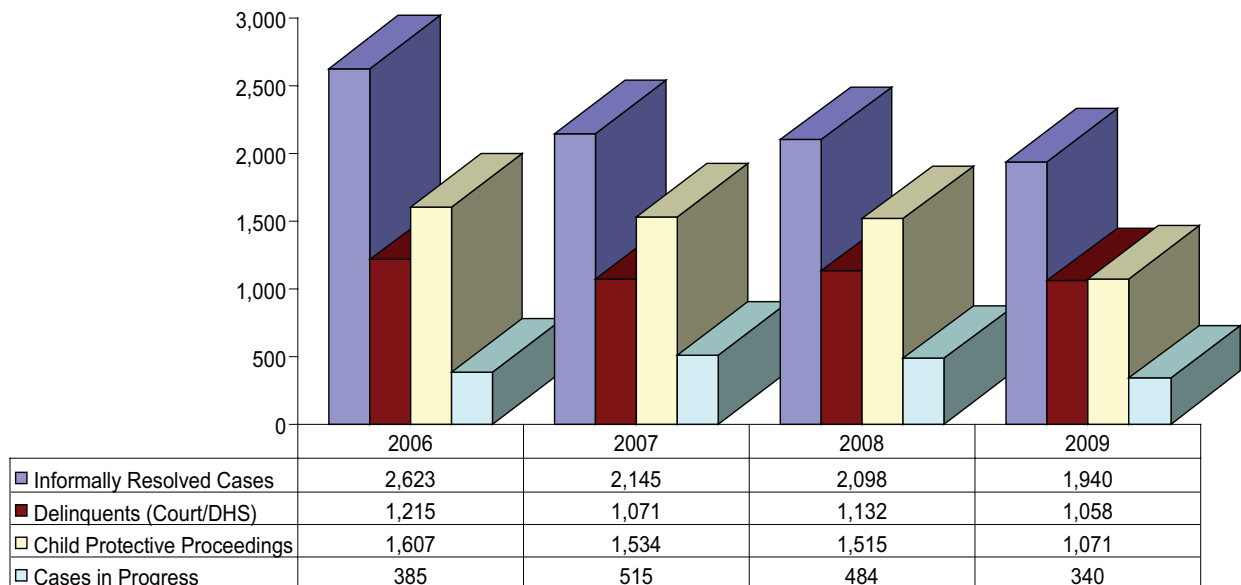
Accomplishments

- ◆ Received the “Honorable Robert E. Weiss Award for Excellence in Court Improvement” from the Michigan Supreme Court. The award was one of three presented at the 2008-2009 Adoption Forum.
- ◆ Collaborated with both the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney and Department of Human Services to plan for personal service of summons on defendants and respondents in delinquency and child protective proceedings.
- ◆ Provided support to the Sixth Annual Michigan Adoption Day celebration. Judge Martha Anderson was the recipient of the “Arthur Eugene Moore Champion of Children Award.”
- ◆ Worked together with the Office of the Prosecutor to present the 12th Annual Training for Police Officers on procedures in Juvenile Court.
- ◆ Developed a simplified system of referral to a confidential intermediary for post adoption proceedings.

JUVENILE HEARINGS vs PRELIMINARY INQUIRIES HELD



CHILDREN IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



Circuit Court Family Division

Court Services

The Court Services operation is comprised of the Casework Services unit (Juvenile Probation), Psychological Clinic, Youth Assistance, the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court Program, and the Adult Treatment Court. Over 90 employees are responsible for providing direct services to clients, performing case management, conducting research and program development, providing education, developing community resources through volunteer coordination, and promoting public awareness.

Casework Services – The Casework Services Juvenile Probation unit is responsible for all delinquency cases authorized for the Court by the Intake Department and assists cases through the adjudication process when necessary. Upon adjudication, the Casework unit is responsible for making recommendations regarding disposition. During post-disposition, it assists in implementing court orders, including the monitoring of probation, restitution, community service, restorative justice, parent education, and counseling.

Psychological Clinic – The Clinical Services unit, also known as the Psychological Clinic, is responsible for aiding jurists in making informed decisions by providing forensic evaluations of children and families who are involved with the Court. The clinic offers specialized treatment services to clients, and clinicians are available for case consultation with Court staff and others. It also conducts and coordinates training and research, including program evaluations and staff development.

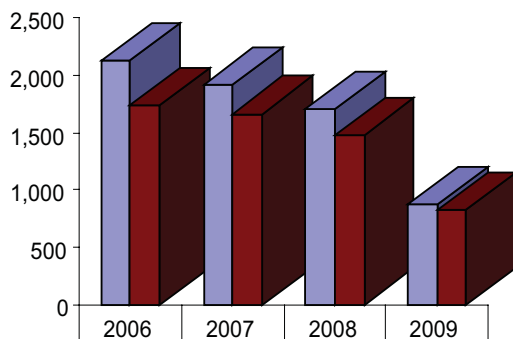
Youth Assistance – As the prevention arm of the Court’s continuum of services, Youth Assistance uses a

two-pronged approach to strengthen youth and families. Professional staff placed in 26 field offices throughout the county provide family focused casework to at-risk youth referred by the police, schools, and the intake unit of the Court. Staff also work with a volunteer board of directors in each community that identifies needs, plans, and implements primary prevention programs. Youth Assistance has a unique tri-sponsorship structure where staff is hired by the court, but each local program is also sponsored by the school district and municipalities.

Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court Program – The Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court program is also known as OPTIONS, an acronym for Owning the Problem, Trusting In Our New Skills. The program’s mission is to “promote public safety and reduce juvenile drug crime rates by helping substance abusing juvenile offenders and their families achieve drug-free lifestyles and healthy family relationships.” The OPTIONS program is a joint effort between the justice and public health treatment systems. Various incentives and sanctions (penalties) and frequent random drug screening are utilized to ensure compliance with program guidelines.

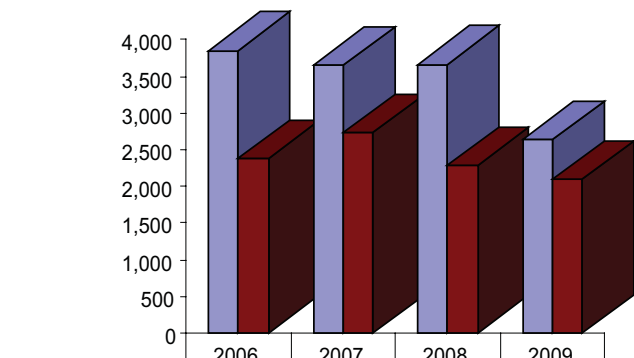
Adult Treatment Court – Like the Juvenile Drug Court program, the Adult Treatment Court is a positive alternative of intensive probation and substance abuse treatment instead of long terms of incarceration for non-violent, felony offenders whose substance abuse leads them to commit crimes. The ATC seeks to break the cycle of recidivism and enhance public safety and the lives of its participants.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC



Referrals Received	2,135	1,920	1,704	872
Evaluations Done	1,738	1,667	1,480	822

YOUTH ASSISTANCE



New Referrals	3,848	3,650	3,662	2,633
Consultations	2,381	2,734	2,283	2,091

Circuit Court Family Division

Accomplishments

- ◆ The Casework unit continued successful collaboration with Easter Seals (JJ Team), Oakland County Sheriff's Office (Jail Tour), Oakland University, Michigan State University, Central Michigan University, Ferris State University, Wayne State University (Intern Program), Oakland Family Services (Re-Entry Program), Crossroads for Youth (STRIDE Weekend Program), Waterford Schools (Safe Schools Program), and Oakland Intermediate Schools (Truancy Task Force) to provide needed treatment services to youth under the Court's jurisdiction.
- ◆ The Casework unit achieved a 3.9% recidivism rate with over 959 youth placed on probation during the year. To recidivate, a youth would have returned to court on a subsequent criminal (non-status) charge during this time period. Thanks to the efforts of the Casework staff, only 37 youth fell into this category during the year.
- ◆ The Psychological Clinic transitioned from full-time clinic staffing to PTNE (Part Time Non-Eligible) and contractual staff with three full-time support positions, thereby assisting the Court to meet budget tasks. Many of the staff were able to be placed in other county positions and stability within the clinic has been realized. The Clinic remains a viable resource to jurists when making dispositions.
- ◆ The Psychological Clinic provided a Court Training Program for Certified Court Language Interpreters utilized by the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts. In addition, the clinic provided a clinical psychology practicum training program for Ph.D. students from Wayne State University and University of Detroit-Mercy.
- ◆ Youth Assistance established a collaboration with the Oakland County Bar Association in order to offer free legal aid clinics for families in Oakland County. In 2009, clinics were offered in Holly, Waterford, and Oxford/Lake Orion.
- ◆ In an effort to meet budget tasks, Youth Assistance instituted a fee structure which includes charging families an intake fee as well as charging for the U-Turn Jail Tour and for administering the ACDI (Adolescent Chemical Dependency Inventory) assessment.
- ◆ The Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) removed some of the barriers to participation in the court. The JDC now holds bi-weekly court sessions and the NA/AA meeting attendance was also reduced to one mandatory meeting per week. Youth are still expected to perform community service, obtain gainful employment, or engage in other extra-curricular activities during the week; however, by reducing the number of court hearings and support group meetings and increasing in-home services, families are more able to comply with conditions of the JDC in these tough economic times.
- ◆ The JDC implemented a mandatory admission process in an effort to increase the population it serves. In the past, parents would be presented with the program requirements and given the option to participate. Now, if families are deemed appropriate, their participation is mandatory via a court order.

CASEWORK UNIT ACTIVITY					
	Beginning Cases	New Cases	Closed/Dismissed	Ending Cases	Total Served
Standard Probation	621	421	526	516	1,042
Consent Probation	275	545	596	224	820
Intensive Probation	87	139	112	114	226
Early Offender Program	6	11	12	5	17
Status Offender Program	31	18	30	19	49
Others *		406	91	315	406

*Others include: No Shows, Courtesy Supervision, Pending Adjudications, Under Advisement, and cases where No Disposition (or Adjudication) had been entered.

Probate Court Estates and Mental Health

The Oakland County Probate Court maintains jurisdiction over estates, which includes the probating of wills and the administration of testate estates (with a will) and intestate estates (without a will) by personal representatives. The Court interprets wills and trusts in the event of uncertainty or conflict and determines the heirs in intestate estates. The Court also handles trusts, guardianships, conservatorships, mental health proceedings, and civil matters related to estates.

In 2009, the Probate Bench included: The Honorable Elizabeth Pezzetti, Chief Judge; the Honorable Linda S. Hallmark, Chief Judge Pro Tem; the Honorable Eugene Arthur Moore, Presiding Judge of the Estates Division; and the Honorable Daniel A. O'Brien. Within the Probate Court, much of the activity takes place in the clerk's office as staff processes paperwork, sets court hearings, and directs files into court for hearings. Aside from decedent estate and trust matters, the Probate Court 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 Probate Court are a matter of public record and are available for review by the general public.

Another important function performed by the Probate Court is the handling of proceedings under the Mental Health Code, including involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill persons and petitions for assisted outpatient treatment (also known as "Kevin's Law"). The Mental Health Unit also handles cases involving minors in need of substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services. Staff is frequently called upon to assist petitioners requesting emergency court orders for immediate transport of an individual to a preadmission screening unit for examination and possible hospitalization for mental health treatment.

The Probate Court also provides informational brochures (both printed and online) that explain basic information regarding guardianships, conservatorships, decedent estates, and mental health petitions, as well as information on some of the required duties for fiduciaries. Information and forms are available online at www.oakgov.com/probate. The Oakland County Probate Court is the second largest Probate Court in the state of Michigan, staffed by Probate Court Administrator Rebecca A. Schnelz, Probate Register Jill Koney Daly, and over fifty employees.



The Probate Service Counter and vault combined provided service to over 47,000 people in 2009. Probate employees shown assisting at the counter are (front to back): Carol Gray, Charlene Woods, and Maura Hodits.

Probate Court Estates and Mental Health

Accomplishments

- ◆ Continued presenting the free program “Removing the Mysteries of Probate Court.” This informational series, presented by the Oakland County Probate Court Citizens Alliance for the Oakland County Probate and Circuit Courts, is held throughout the year at various locations within Oakland County. The Probate Register joins with a local attorney and trust officer to educate attendees on various probate proceedings.
- ◆ Trained 10 new Children’s Advocates volunteers to assist with minor guardianships. The Children’s Advocates aid the Court by performing many of the mandatory annual reviews for children in guardianships. In addition, the Children’s Advocates make home visits and work with families to assist the court with complicated minor guardianship cases.
- ◆ Updated and continued to present, with the support of the Citizens Alliance for the Oakland County Probate and Circuit Courts, free monthly Basic Training classes for guardians and conservators. The classes focus on teaching the basic statutory responsibilities and allow the appointees the opportunity to ask questions about issues they will face. The classes are taught by a volunteer attorney and public administrators.
- ◆ Continued efforts to enhance Probate Court operations through involvement with outside resources. Some of these efforts included speaking at Oakland County Bar Association training sessions for new attorneys, participation in the State Court Administrative Office’s workgroup on case flow standards, presenting at the Institute for Continuing Legal Education’s Annual Probate and Estate Planning Institute, and participation in the State Bar of Michigan’s Probate and Estate Planning Council, the Michigan Probate and Juvenile Registers Association, and the Oakland County Bar Association Probate and Estate Planning Committee.

SUMMARY OF PROBATE COURT

NEW FILES OPENED	2006	2007	2008	2009
Small Estates	610	660	675	611
Supervised Estates	32	33	14	21
Unsupervised Estates	1,821	1,766	1,738	1,713
Trust-Intervivos	206	200	225	270
Adult Guardianships	791	830	844	873
Minor Guardianships	724	687	732	607
Adult Conservatorships	377	387	350	351
Minor Conservatorships	177	155	153	134
Mentally Ill	2,389	2,569	2,507	2,733
Guardianships (Developmentally Disabled)	236	213	360	329
Reopened Estates and Trusts	191	211	238	217
Protective Orders	44	46	42	39
Civil and Other Matters	108	88	95	94
Total	7,706	7,845	7,973	7,992
ACTIVE CASES as of December 31	2006	2007	2008	2009
Estate and Trust Cases	3,992	3,959	3,908	4,063
Adult Guardianships	3,276	3,350	3,400	3,497
Adult Conservatorships	1,590	1,641	1,643	1,620
Minor Guardianships	3,248	2,923	2,765	2,571
Minor Conservatorships	1,730	1,538	1,509	1,436
Guardianships (Developmentally Disabled)	1,653	1,673	1,694	1,682
Civil and Other Matters*	79	68	65	57
Total	15,568	15,152	14,984	14,926

* 2008 and 2009 include Protective Orders.

Business Division of the Courts

The Business Division, managed by John Cooperrider, is responsible for the development and delivery of business and administrative support services for both the Circuit and Probate Courts. This division is divided into two primary units of operation in order to effectively manage its diverse and complex responsibilities.

Administrative/Financial Unit – Under the supervision of Tina Sobocinski, this unit is responsible for developing and monitoring the Courts' \$70 million budget, processing payments for services, such as court appointed attorney payments and personnel transactions, recording attendance and mileage, managing courthouse and satellite office facilities, handling capital improvements, special project requests, and equipment needs of the courts.

Data/Technology Unit – Chris Bujak oversees the responsibilities of this unit, which include the advancement of court automation, handling day-to-day computer and network issues, managing each of the 19 video courtrooms and 6 video referee hearing rooms, and implementing new court technology initiatives. This unit also provides word processing support, including the typing of court documents necessary for the functioning of the court (i.e., court, psychological, and referee reports). In addition, it provides court reporter services for the Court's juvenile referees, creating records of courtroom proceedings, and producing transcripts.

The last area of general responsibility in this division is that of the Court Resource and Program Specialist. Marcia Travis directs the Circuit and Probate Courts' efforts in this regard. Her responsibilities are coordinating special projects and events, public information management, grant writing, and improvement studies on all aspects of court operations to find alternative ways to perform court functions more efficiently and effectively.



The Financial Unit of the Business Division is responsible for processing payments for the Courts. During fiscal year 2009, staff processed 12,500 attorney payments, 760 transcript payments, and 650 interpreter payments, among others. The Financial Unit consists of employees Angela Garrett (standing), Amy Vineyard, and two other full-time staff.

Business Division of the Courts

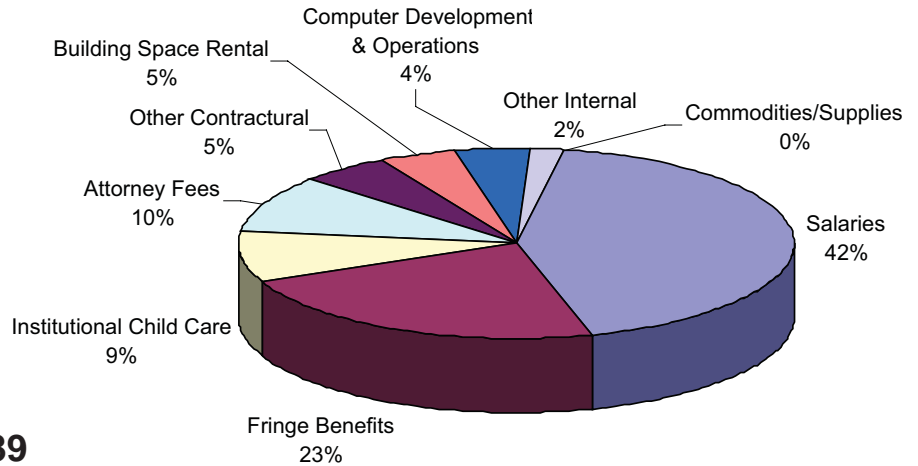
Accomplishments

- ◆ Expanded e-filing pilot program to seven judges on October 1, 2009, with the addition of Judge Nanci Grant's court. Also, expanded the program to include appeals and civil case types on November 2, 2009.
- ◆ Implemented new on-hold message system October 13, 2009, which highlights important court information as well as court accomplishments for people to listen to while on hold.
- ◆ Prepared and submitted FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012 budgets, which included budget tasks of \$1,357,000, \$1,395, 577, and \$1,395,576 respectively for a total of \$4,148,153 in cuts over the next three years.
- ◆ Established and produced the court's new quarterly newsletter called the *Full Court Press*. The Business Division will use this newsletter as a communication tool to keep staff more informed on the happenings of the Probate Court and Circuit Court.
- ◆ Developed, prepared, submitted, and monitored five different grants in excess of \$400,000 for the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court and Adult Treatment Court.
- ◆ Developed, prepared, submitted, and monitored four different JAG (Justice Assistance Grant) grants used for purchasing various equipment for the Court including video conferencing equipment and other courtroom equipment used to improve courtroom proceedings.
- ◆ Coordinated various court events including Constitution Day, Adoption Day, State of the Court address, several investitures, Champion of Children Award Ceremony, Court Picnic, Holiday Party, Family Division Summit, Take Your Child To Work Day, and many others.



"Take Your Child To Work Day" on April 23 was organized by the Business Division and a committee representative of staff from both the Circuit and Probate Courts. One of the many courthouse activities included a search for illegal narcotics made by Pontiac Police Officer Ian Kershan's trained narcotics detector dog.

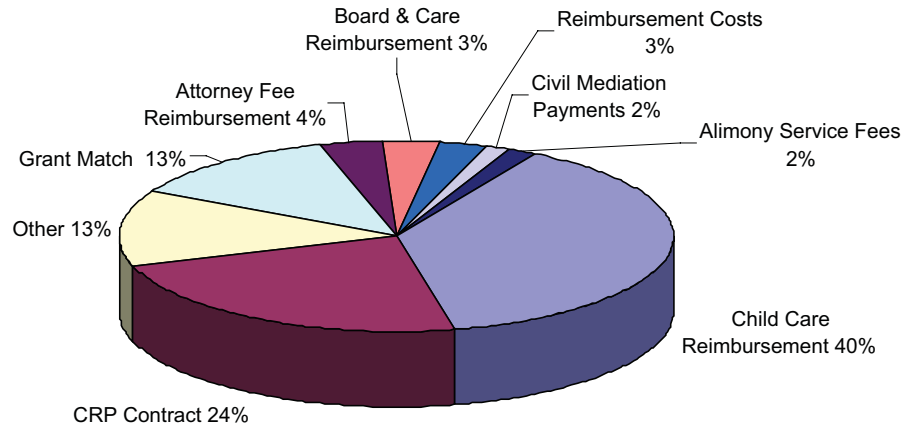
Circuit Court and Probate Court Financial Report



2009 Expenditures: \$67,780,789

<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008-09</u> <u>% Chg.</u>
Salaries	\$27,349,740	\$27,834,013	\$27,195,396	-2.3%
Fringe Benefits	\$14,610,742	\$15,220,112	\$14,070,093	-7.6%
Institutional Child Care	\$10,085,425	\$9,769,263	\$9,555,651	-2.2%
Attorney Fees	\$5,794,253	\$5,825,179	\$5,259,250	-9.7%
Building Space Rental	\$2,935,157	\$3,123,488	\$3,336,155	6.8%
Computer Development & Operations	\$2,793,950	\$2,909,274	\$2,940,703	1.1%
Indirect Costs	\$773,986	\$1,128,355	\$1,179,238	4.5%
Professional Services	\$758,815	\$681,623	\$676,610	-0.7%
Jury Fees & Mileage	\$645,860	\$661,291	\$614,569	-7.1%
Mediator Fees	\$560,350	\$588,825	\$544,900	-7.5%
Telephone Communications	\$379,697	\$383,157	\$374,328	-2.3%
Postage/Mailroom	\$203,596	\$235,498	\$242,021	2.8%
Commodities/Supplies	\$248,801	\$272,711	\$212,651	-22.0%
Transcripts	\$268,248	\$214,753	\$201,969	-6.0%
Printing	\$204,947	\$198,702	\$194,624	-2.1%
Visiting Judges	\$119,205	\$157,690	\$173,828	10.2%
Other	\$462,501	\$196,152	\$166,834	-14.9%
Mileage/Leased Vehicles	\$123,093	\$187,502	\$165,821	-11.6%
Equipment Rental	\$101,227	\$107,892	\$110,687	2.6%
Maintenance Charges	\$110,650	\$82,603	\$107,264	29.9%
Library Materials	\$125,899	\$104,287	\$104,071	-0.2%
Interpreter Services	\$102,635	\$122,192	\$91,586	-25.0%
Furniture/Equipment Purchase	\$172,585	\$130,232	\$58,239	-55.3%
Computer Legal Research	\$74,210	\$54,990	\$57,470	4.5%
Copiers	\$68,957	\$72,413	\$64,677	-10.7%
Insurance	\$115,619	\$58,767	\$47,360	-19.4%
Overtime	\$44,696	\$47,357	\$31,019	-34.5%
Court Reporter Services	\$14,950	\$1,050	\$3,775	259.5%
Operating Transfer/Adjust Prior Years	\$34,025	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Micrographics/Reproductions	\$21,552	\$27,082	\$0	-100.0%
Software Rental/Lease	\$125	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Grant Match	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Total	\$69,305,494	\$70,396,452	\$67,780,789	-3.7%

Circuit Court and Probate Court Financial Report



2009 Revenues: \$33,839,409

<u>Revenues/Sources of Funds</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008-09 % Chg.</u>
Child Care Reimbursement	\$13,081,481	\$13,381,535	\$13,425,433	0.3%
CRP Contract	\$6,995,732	\$6,191,629	\$8,158,717	13.4%
Grant Match (Transfer In)	\$3,958,154	\$4,533,549	\$4,306,231	-5.0%
Federal Incentive Payment	\$2,440,565	\$2,611,489	\$1,554,267	-40.5%
Attorney Fee Reimbursement	\$1,388,590	\$1,436,761	\$1,298,167	-9.6%
Board and Care Reimbursement	\$1,043,967	\$1,140,489	\$1,153,946	1.2%
Costs	\$872,489	\$1,089,579	\$914,394	-16.1%
Civil Mediation Payments	\$708,550	\$633,825	\$563,117	-11.2%
Alimony Service Fees	\$543,143	\$564,512	\$543,192	-3.8%
Jury Fees	\$350,520	\$316,265	\$284,715	-10.0%
FOC Judgment Fees	\$271,590	\$267,830	\$262,980	-1.8%
Probate Estate Fees	\$280,342	\$243,178	\$232,840	-4.3%
Reimbursement State County Agent	\$180,533	\$180,533	\$180,533	0.0%
Probation Service Fees	\$124,084	\$150,601	\$176,232	17.0%
Other	\$122,114	\$142,224	\$141,358	-0.6%
Probate Certified Copies	\$130,324	\$129,223	\$116,927	-9.5%
Family Counseling Fees	\$210,600	\$101,700	\$100,635	-1.0%
Mediation Fines	\$116,300	\$108,388	\$96,750	-10.7%
Other Probate Filing Fees	\$75,115	\$79,716	\$80,407	0.9%
Psychological Clinical Evaluation Fees	\$97,155	\$83,316	\$75,566	-9.3%
Processing Fees	\$71,436	\$71,366	\$69,321	-2.9%
CRP State Supplement	\$113,152	\$63,246	\$66,507	5.2%
E-Filing Fees	\$0	\$0	\$25,848	N/A
Probate Will Deposits	\$14,500	\$14,350	\$11,325	-21.1%
Total	\$33,190,435	\$34,535,303	\$33,839,409	-2.0%

We the People

insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defence,
and our Posterity, We ordain and establish this Constitution

Section. 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section. 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

Representative who shall have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and seven Years shall be a Representative who shall, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when elected, have seven Years Residence in that State, and no Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, have been born in the United States, and no Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, have been born in the United States, and who shall not, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, have been born in the United States.



"In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same."

Albert Einstein
Theoretical Physicist/Scientist

Employee of the Year Awards



Honorees for “Employee of the Year” are (left to right): Nicole Shelton, Tom Swieboda, Bobby McLaughlin, and Chris Cook. Congratulating the employees were (back row, left to right): Circuit Judge Cheryl Matthews, Probate Judge Linda Hallmark, Circuit Judge Rae Lee Chabot, Circuit Judge James Alexander, and Probate Chief Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti.

The Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts “Employee of the Year” ceremony was held on December 16, 2009. Nominees for the award have characteristically demonstrated service that far exceeds their written job description and have made significant contributions to their individual departments. In 2009, four employees were recognized:

Nicole Shelton, Friend of the Court Office Assistant II

- ◆ Earned respect for accuracy, timeliness, and completeness.
- ◆ Put together an effective proposal regarding how the office could save time and money using email and e-filing.
- ◆ Planned and launched events to enhance camaraderie and team building at the Friend of the Court.

Tom Swieboda, Youth Assistance Caseworker II

- ◆ Helped solidify the X-tend mentoring program that matches high school students to younger children to help address the issues that the younger children are facing.
- ◆ Worked with volunteers in raising funds for programming to help ensure the long-range viability of Youth Assistance and the diversion services it provides to at-risk youth.
- ◆ Assisted in recruiting new volunteers and establishing a dynamic tutoring program for area kids.

Bobby McLaughlin, Court Administration A/V Equipment Tech

- ◆ Described as a self-motivated, tireless, dedicated, positive employee who looks forward to a challenge.
- ◆ Inspired co-workers and other court employees to excel at their work.
- ◆ Troubleshoots audio/video issues, gets things done, approaches work with pleasantness and a sense of humor.

Chris Cook, Estates/Mental Health Deputy Probate Register II

- ◆ Helped co-workers handle confrontational situations with clients; known to have a knack for putting clients at ease.
- ◆ Worked with pride in his position and was always ready to step in to assist when there was a tough issue to resolve.
- ◆ Assisted throughout the year on court committees for events and fundraising.

A Look Back . . . “2009”



The Constitution Day program on September 17 began with a Presentation of Colors by the Oakland County Veterans Honor Guard. The event was organized by Civil/Criminal Division Judges Michael Warren, Edward Sosnick, and Visiting Judge Fred Mester for over 200 high school students.



“Take Your Child To Work Day” in April brought 64 children to the Court to spend the day with their parents. One activity included a lesson on “Stranger Danger” by Farmington Hills Police Officer Ron Goosen.



On September 3, the Circuit and Probate Courts hosted a “Dunk Tank Fundraiser” to benefit the charity “The Brookside Way.” Juvenile Court Referee Joe Racey braces himself for a dive into the tank.



Pro Bono lawyers were honored for their volunteer work at a “Pro Bono Volunteer Appreciation” reception hosted by the Circuit and Probate Courts on October 28. On hand to thank the attorneys for their service to help those less fortunate were (front row, left to right): Probate Chief Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti, Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly, Circuit Chief Judge Wendy Potts, and (far right) Circuit Judge Mark Goldsmith.



New Lawyers Admission Ceremonies were held in the Commissioners Auditorium in June and November of this year. Eighty-six law school graduates took the oath and were officially sworn into the practice of law.



Judges volunteered to grill at the Annual Circuit/Probate Court Employees Picnic held in June. Probate Judges Daniel A. O'Brien and Elizabeth Pezzetti prepare hot dogs for Circuit Court employees (from center to right) Pam Davis, Julie Fabrizio and Chris Bujak.



Basic Training classes for guardians and conservators were continued by the Probate Court. Volunteer attorney Mike Hughes leads the guardianship class.



In November, Michigan Adoption Day was held with Family Division judges finalizing six adoptions in the Commissioners Auditorium. Probate Chief Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti congratulates the Wojcik family who adopted three children that day.



Circuit and probate staff enjoy a delicious holiday luncheon in December set up in the Jury Assembly Room. Pictured (left to right) are Juvenile Division employees: Bethany Jackson, Alex Valdez, Bailey Castiglione, and Danielle Chiappelli.

*We the People
of the United States
in Order to form a more
perfect Union, establish
Justice, insure domestic
tranquility, provide for
the common defence,
promote the general
welfare, and secure the
Blessings of Liberty to
ourselves and our posterity,
do ordain and establish
this Constitution for the
United States of America.*