

2011
Annual Report



Oakland County



*Sixth Judicial Circuit Court
Oakland County Probate Court*

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Oakland County
Sixth Judicial Circuit Court
Oakland County Probate Court
1200 North Telegraph Road
Pontiac, MI 48341
248-858-1000 - Circuit Court
248-858- 0260 - Probate Court
www.oakgov.com/circuit
www.oakgov.com/probate

HISTORICAL ROSTER OF THE COURTS

Historical Roster of the Circuit Judges of Oakland County

Sanford M. Green 1848–1852	James S. Thorburn 1963–1988	Barry L. Howard 1989–2001
Joseph Copeland 1852–1858	William R. Beasley 1966–1976	Deborah G. Tyner 1991–2007
James S. Dewey 1870–1874	Farrell E. Roberts 1967–1982	Rudy J. Nichols 1991–Present
Levi B. Taft 1873–1876	Daniel C. Devine 1966–1966	Denise Langford Morris 1992–Present
Aug C. Baldwin 1876–1880	Robert L. Templin 1967–1996	John J. McDonald 1993–2010
Silas B. Gaskill 1880–1882	William P. Hampton 1970–1976	Nanci J. Grant 1997–Present
William Stickney 1882–1888	Richard D. Kuhn 1973–2004	Joan E. Young 1997–Present
Joseph B. Moore 1888–1896	John N. O'Brien 1973–1993	Wendy L. Potts 1998–Present
George W. Smith 1896–1908	Robert B. Webster 1973–1982	Colleen A. O'Brien 1998–Present
Kleber P. Rockwell 1917–1921	Steven N. Andrews 1976–2008	Patrick J. Brennan 2000–2004
Frank L. Covert 1919–1933	Alice L. Gilbert 1978–1992	Rae Lee Chabot 2001–Present
Glenn C. Gillespie 1923–1934	Alice L. Gilbert 1995–2002	James M. Alexander 2001–Present
Frank L. Doty 1928–1965	Francis X. O'Brien 1977–1997	Michael Warren 2002–Present
Goodloe H. Rogers 1935–1935	Hilda R. Gage 1978–1996	Daniel P. O'Brien 2003–Present
George B. Hartrick 1935–1958	Bernard L. Kaufman 1979–1979	Martha D. Anderson 2003–Present
H. Russel Holland 1935–1963	Gene Schnelz 1979–2007	Mark A. Goldsmith 2004–2010
Clark J. Adams 1956–1973	George LaPlata 1979–1985	Cheryl A. Matthews 2005–Present
William J. Beer 1958–1980	Robert C. Anderson 1981–1998	Leo Bowman 2007–Present
Theodore Hughes 1959–1959	David F. Breck 1982–2000	Shalina D. Kumar 2007–Present
Stanton G. Dondero 1959–1965	Fred M. Mester 1982–2008	Mary Ellen Brennan 2008 –Present
Frederick C. Ziem 1959–1986	Norman L. Lippitt 1985–1989	Lisa Gorcyca 2008 –Present
Arthur E. Moore 1963–1976	Jessica R. Cooper 1987–2000	Phyllis C. McMillen 2010 –Present
Philip Pratt 1963–1970	Edward Sosnick 1989–Present	

Historical Roster of the Probate Judges of Oakland County

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 1966–2010
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 1977–2008
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	Daniel A. O'Brien 2008 –Present
Zephaniah B. Knight 1863–1868	Arthur E. Moore 1938–1963	Kathleen A. Ryan 2010 –Present



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUDGES

This country is grounded in the rule of law and the courts are the vehicle by which its application is ensured. While it is our primary charge to apply the law fairly and justly, we are, at our most fundamental level, public servants who are accountable to the citizens whom we serve. Courts do not operate in a vacuum and so we must ever strive to fulfill our mission in an environment that fosters access and openness.

These objectives have been pursued in many ways. For example, this annual report is an important part of our efforts to keep the public apprised of what is happening in the court system. We routinely distribute press releases to give media organizations information about court operations, functions, and events. Judges and administrators frequently appear before government, education, and community organizations to provide them with information about court programs, functions, and performance. And for several years, judges have authored articles about the Courts that regularly appear in local newspapers.

Our websites have been revamped and are routinely updated to provide our constituents with useful information on accessing the court system. A “Court News” section is emphasized on our home pages to provide notice of the latest activities and events. The register of actions for both Courts is now available online as are court calendars searchable by judge and date.

Technology has been a useful tool in assisting the courts to improve access. In 2007, the Circuit Court instituted eFiling to enable parties and attorneys to file civil cases and documents electronically from their homes and offices. This program was expanded in 2011 to include certain Probate Court cases and domestic cases. The use of audio and video conferences was also expanded to provide for virtual court appearances, saving time and money. Anyone – parties, attorneys, the media, and the public – may come in to court to view video recordings of court proceedings at no cost and at their convenience.

These represent but a few of the efforts undertaken by our Courts to cultivate a climate of access and openness. These accomplishments are not a destination but merely landmarks along a journey. We hope that this report is helpful and informative. More importantly, we trust that it leaves you with an appreciation of our devotion to unsurpassed public service.



Nanci J. Grant
Circuit Court Chief Judge



Linda S. Hallmark
Probate Court Chief Judge



*The Honorable
Nanci J. Grant
Circuit Court Chief Judge*



*The Honorable
Linda S. Hallmark
Probate Court Chief Judge*

JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



Front row (left to right): Judges Nanci J. Grant (Circuit Court Chief Judge), Rudy J. Nichols, Edward Sosnick, Denise Langford Morris, and Joan E. Young
Middle row: Judges Wendy Potts, Cheryl A. Matthews, Mary Ellen Brennan, Colleen A. O'Brien, Phyllis C. McMillen, and Martha D. Anderson
Back row: Judges Rae Lee Chabot, Michael Warren (Presiding Judge - Civil/Criminal Division), Daniel Patrick O'Brien, Lisa Gorcyca, Leo Bowman, James M. Alexander, and Shalina D. Kumar (Circuit Court Chief Judge Pro Tempore)



JUDGES OF THE PROBATE COURT



*Front row (left to right): Judges Linda S. Hallmark
(Probate Court Chief Judge) and
Elizabeth Pezzetti (Probate Court Chief Judge Pro Tempore
and Presiding Judge - Family Division)
Back Row: Judges Kathleen A. Ryan
and Daniel A. O'Brien (Presiding Judge - Probate Estates)*

*"The administration of justice is the firmest pillar of government."
George Washington
1st 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.

During 2011, the judges and employees of the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts continued their commitment to meeting both economic and non-economic challenges head on. As detailed in this report, they have met those challenges with new ideas and hard work, resulting in benefits to all those who require access to the court system. We look forward to meeting 2012 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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011

FOC Clients Benefit from New Technology

The Oakland County Friend of the Court (FOC) has a long history of leading the way in the Michigan child support program through the use of technology. This year was an exceptional example. The year 2011 brought many new services to Friend of the Court customers.

Families who experience the difficulty of a divorce or single parenting are required to use the court system to manage the sensitive issues of child support, parenting time, and custody. The Friend of the Court has implemented tools to make this process easier



Justin Quick, User Support Specialist for the FOC, developed a custom user interface application for the new kiosk in the FOC lobby. Justin is showing FOC employee Gretchen Starr how to navigate the newly installed kiosk.

accessing new technologies as they become available. Most notably, in the spring of 2011, a self-help kiosk was installed in the FOC lobby.

FOC clients can use the kiosk while they wait for hearings and appointments to obtain general information about the FOC, forms, and instructions. A printer allows clients to complete forms and submit them to the office immediately.

The FOC also began testing the use of eFiling on a small subset of domestic relations cases. Through careful planning and testing of this new process, it is expected that eFiling will be a valuable timesaver for the families that are served by the FOC.

The year 2011 brought many exciting enhancements to the FOC website. The website provides a wealth of information to FOC clients. Links to forms, legal assistance clinics, program information, and state-level

programming are provided online. The website is continually updated with new information.

An example of a recent update came when it was recognized that the economy has made it difficult for families to survive, especially when faced with the financial challenges of a divorce. The FOC job placement office now offers a listing of job opportunities that will be sent automatically to clients' email every time it is updated. To sign up for the job listings on the home page, please visit www.oakgov.com/foc.

Another recent development that can be found on the FOC website is a list of health insurance providers, many of which offer low-cost insurance alternatives for children. As a result of health care reforms that are taking place at the national level, the FOC was invited to participate in discussions about how to assist families in providing insurance for their children. Contact information for Michigan health care coverage providers for children is also available on the website.

An exciting development for parents who seek up-to-the-minute information about payments came along in 2011. Through a partnership with the state-level child support program, clients of the FOC may now access their payment information online through a secure website at: www.michigan.gov/micase. A link to this website is provided on the FOC home page.

In recognition of the fact that the younger generation finds much of its information online, the FOC has produced two audiocasts and a videocast. Listeners can download information about the Early Intervention Conference, general FOC information, and correct use of the Uniform Child Support Order. Check out the podcast link on the FOC home page.

Although it is difficult for the FOC to communicate with its clients by email due to issues with confidentiality, it is able to establish an outbound email system that

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011

allows it to send forms and general information electronically. This “no reply” email is available upon request for those who wish to receive forms and general information only. Case specific information must still be sent through the postal service.

The Friend of the Court has a highly-skilled staff supporting its systems. It looks forward to applying new technologies as they become available for the benefit of the families it serves.

Efforts in eFiling

The Michigan Supreme Court authorized the current eFiling project for the Sixth Circuit Court on June 19, 2007. The pilot began operations in August with a single pilot judge, Judge Michael Warren, and was limited to newly filed cases with either “C” or “N” case types. Since that time, all 13 Civil/Criminal Division judges have joined the pilot. The scope of the pilot was expanded in January 2009 to include Civil/Criminal Division cases with case types beginning with either “A” or “P.” This year, the Supreme Court approved a proposal that permits plaintiffs to file their cases electronically. Electronic case initiation becomes the standard on May 1, 2012.

The implementation of these changes permits the Court to move from traditional paper case processes to a streamlined, nearly paperless case process. More importantly, it provides a reliable division-wide standard for attorneys and parties appearing before the Court. As all Civil/Criminal Division judges participate in the eFiling pilot, and participation is required unless a party is excluded following a motion, stakeholders can rely upon eFiling as the standard rather than as an exotic pilot.

The pilot expanded to the Family Division in 2010 beginning with divorce cases without children (DO). Following the initial success with DO cases, the Family Division moved in 2011 to include divorce cases with

children (DM). To ensure that the rights of parties are protected, the Court has moved slowly with the pilot. The steps seem to be working as the feedback regarding this expansion is positive.

Finally, while many people accept electronic communication as a given in their lives, stakeholders in this pilot recognize that computer technology can be very intimidating to some potential users. While some appreciate the technology, others simply lack access to a computer or the internet. From the beginning of the pilot, access to the court was a concern and efforts were made to ensure that all court users could electronically file documents with the court. In October, the County Clerk’s Office took these efforts a step further when it opened the E-Services Center.

Now, in addition to resources like Wireless Oakland, which provides a wireless internet connection across the campus and the computer facilities in the Oakland County Library, individuals may go to the E-Services Center to scan and file documents or receive assistance with eFiling. Thus, through the ongoing collaboration of stakeholders, all court users may enjoy the benefits and convenience of eFiling.



Oakland County Clerk Bill Bullard Jr. and Circuit Court Chief Judge Nanci Grant open the new E-Services Center to assist the public with eFiling.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011

Probate Court eFiling

On November 1, 2011, the Oakland County Probate Court also initiated an eFiling pilot project. As approved by the Michigan Supreme Court, the Oakland County Probate pilot provides for mandatory eFiling of documents for certain decedent estates, trusts, and civil cases. The pilot project began with the docket of Judge Daniel A. O'Brien for all included cases filed on or after November 1, 2011.

Over the course of 2011, Probate Court staff worked with the Courts' Data Technology unit, Circuit Court staff, and staff from the office of County Clerk Bill Bullard to create an effective eFiling system for the Probate Court. This system merged the existing eFiling system for the Circuit Court with the needs of Probate Court.

Working together with the vendor, Tyler Technologies, it was possible to blend the Probate Court's needs with the established Oakland County system in a way that made the addition of probate cases seamless for users of the system. Registered users now need to become familiar with only one eFiling system for the Probate Court and Circuit Court cases that are required to be eFiled.

It is anticipated that eFiling will provide benefits in multiple ways. A time and cost savings is expected to result from the reduction in time necessary to process documents into the court files.

With standard paper filing, a document must go through several steps to make it into the legal file after it has been accepted for filing, each step requiring staff involvement. With eFiling, the document becomes a part of the electronic legal file as soon as it is accepted for filing. For those filing documents, eFiling can mean a reduction in trips to the courthouse and a simplified method of serving documents on other parties.

The Probate Court looks forward to expansion of the eFiling project and continued improvement of service to the public.

Casework Services

The Casework Services unit experienced a number of significant changes in 2011. As a result of these changes, the unit accomplished much in 2011. Beginning late in 2010, it began planning a cooperative effort with Youth Assistance, Oakland County Children's Village, and Crossroads for Youth to implement a Youth Re-Entry process in Oakland County. This process was designed to assist youth who have been placed in residential treatment at Oakland County Children's Village and Crossroads for Youth and their families to successfully re-integrate to the community upon release from residential treatment.

This effort came to full fruition during 2011. Several trainings were held to familiarize staff with the protocols of the process and expectations that each of the participating organizations would fulfill. At midyear, youth selected for the process began to return to their communities with an abundance of support services in place to facilitate their successful return.

Melding all these moving parts together required an exceptional effort on everyone's part. It has proven to be quite successful for those youth and families who choose to participate. While the changes wrought by involvement in the re-entry process were voluntary, other accomplishments were dictated by fiscal issues.

As part of fiscal realignment, the decision was made to reduce the number of supervisors in Casework Services from four to three. Along with this reduction came the news that Oakland County was planning to sell the building at 1010 E. West Maple in Walled Lake.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011

This facility housed a group of caseworkers, a supervisor, and a part-time clerical staff. Beginning in May 2011, planning began for relocating those staff to the courthouse and reorganizing the unit into three casework groups. This required a shift in how cases are assigned, the elimination of the traditional one worker/one school district assignment pattern, and the communities served by each casework group. It was also an opportunity to reassign staff to different groups and/or responsibilities in order to enhance the delivery of services by the Court.

These two tasks were scheduled to coincide. With some good planning, excellent effort on the part of casework staff, and in cooperation with the Data Technology unit of the Courts, the Department of Information Technology, and FM&O, they were accomplished with a minimum of disruption to the Courts, community, and clients served.

Adoption Permanency Project Wins National Award

In May 2011, the National Association for Court Management notified the Court that the Adoption Permanency Project and Study had been selected for the National Justice Achievement Award. The goal of this award was to nationally recognize a successful court program and to share it with other jurisdictions. Only one such award is given each year.

This two-year pilot project from April 2008 through April 2010 and subsequent study demonstrated the effectiveness of multiple strategies to help legally-free children promptly achieve finalized adoptions. The Court and its collaborative partners helped bring about systemic change and reintroduced a sense of urgency to the post-termination/pre-adoption process.

By using a specialized docket and single judge, together with expedited early review, scheduling orders, standardized data-specific court reports, case review by

court staff, pre-hearing casework staffing, summary data sheets, checklists, draft orders, and a specialized database, the Court took a much more proactive and involved role in expediting and removing barriers to adoption permanency. The progress of the 146 children on the specialized docket was contrasted to a control group of 203 children, both in the time to attain significant milestones and to achieve adoption finalization.

This project addressed inadequate communication between the court and the parties other than at hearings; clarified and documented the court's expectations of agencies, workers, attorneys, and prospective adoptive parents; provided independent evaluators of case progress; and captured specific data that could be later structured and analyzed.

Project results include a finalization rate in the pilot group that was 150% of the control group and a pilot group finalization rate for children nine years or older that was nearly 2 1/2 times the rate of the control group. In addition, children in the pilot group stayed on track for adoption, while several children in the control group experienced a permanency goal change when adoption was deemed impracticable. Cases on the specialized permanency docket were rarely adjourned, intermingled with other cases on a generalized docket, or allowed to languish. The judge became highly knowledgeable in this very specialized area and set high expectations for all. The Court realized efficiencies in docket management and in financial expenditures.

This project and study were accomplished within existing resources and can be replicated in other jurisdictions. The project showed that significant savings in foster care cost can be realized and children can reach "forever families" earlier as a result of these methods. The full study and sample documents are available from the Court at www.oakgov.com/circuit/permanencyproject.

CIRCUIT COURT - CIVIL/CRIMINAL DIVISION



*The Honorable
Michael Warren
Presiding Judge -
Civil/Criminal Division*

The Civil/Criminal Division of the Circuit Court is composed of 13 judges who are 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 and high misdemeanor charges. Civil/Criminal Division judges also preside over appeals from the district courts and administrative agencies as well as some appeals from the Probate Court. Assisting the judges within the division are judicial staff attorneys, judicial secretaries, court clerks, and a court reporter. Support is also provided by employees in the Administrative Support Staff, Case Management Office, Clerk Support, Criminal Case Support, and the Jury Office.

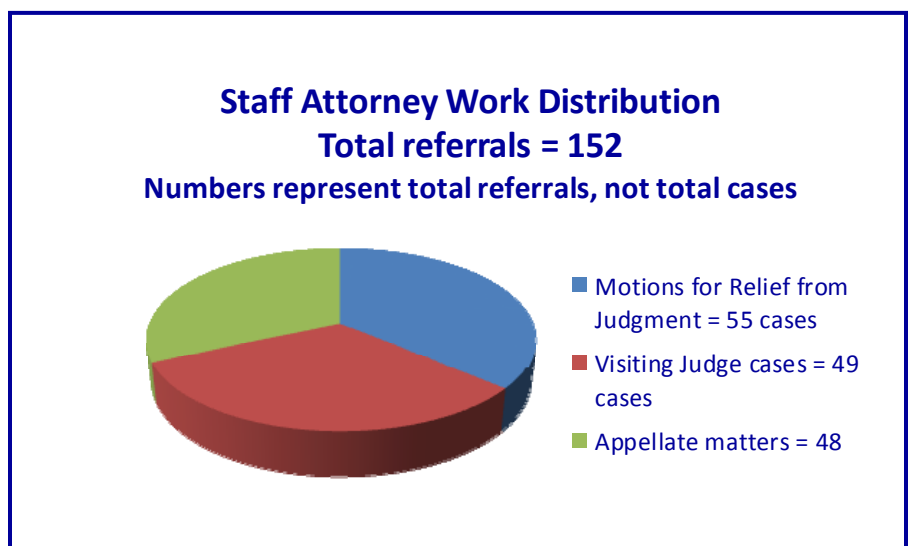
In January 2011, pursuant to 2009 PA 228, the Circuit Court reduced the number of judges in the Civil/Criminal Division from 14 to 13 judges. This temporary reduction, which coincided with the retirement of Judge John J. McDonald in December 2010, was part of the Court's ongoing commitment to resolve the budget challenges confronting the Court and Oakland County. By pursuing 2009 PA 228, the Circuit Court acknowledged the importance of shared sacrifice among stakeholders in the budget process and the judges agreed to preside over a proportionally higher number of cases. In return, the Court realized a savings of over \$270,000 and avoided more dramatic budgetary changes throughout the Court.

Despite the reduction of one judge, the Civil/Criminal Division continued to reduce the total number of pending cases. The Court benefited from an active Visiting Judge Trial Court program and an enhanced floating clerk program. The Case Management Office refined the scheduling of case evaluations resulting in a financially and procedurally more efficient operation. Electronic filing or eFiling expanded to all civil case types within the jurisdiction of the division, including cases within the appellate jurisdiction of the Court. The division also participated in a statewide case evaluation study. Finally, Court Administration staff attorneys assisted the division with research for 48 appellate cases, 55 post-conviction motions for relief from judgment, and 49 cases referred to the visiting judge docket.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Administrative staff offer legal and administrative support to the Court, particularly the Civil/Criminal Division. Addressing issues as diverse as legal research, court interpreters, and bar liaison, staff work to ensure access to the Court and effective and timely resolution of cases.

Of particular note are two attorneys in Court Administration, Pam Hamway and Maureen Hudson Smith, who support the Civil/Criminal Division and the visiting judge program. For 2011, they processed 152 referrals on 143 cases. In addition, they regularly address informal legal and procedural questions arising out of cases before the Court. Working out of the spotlight and drawing upon their experience with the Court of Appeals and in private practice, Ms. Hamway and Ms. Hudson Smith provide specialized legal research focused on appellate and post-conviction criminal issues.



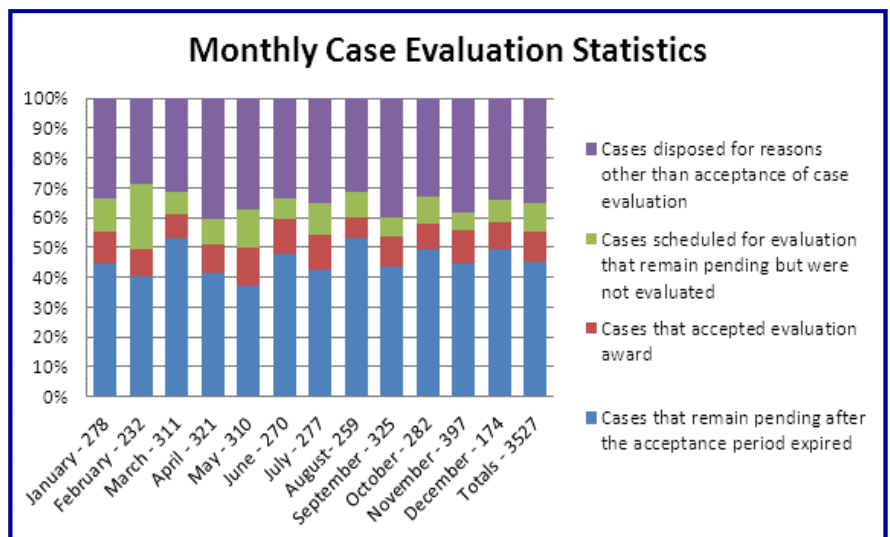
Working out of the spotlight and drawing upon their experience with the Court of Appeals and in private practice, Ms. Hamway and Ms. Hudson Smith provide specialized legal research focused on appellate and post-conviction criminal issues.

CIRCUIT COURT - CIVIL/CRIMINAL DIVISION

CASE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

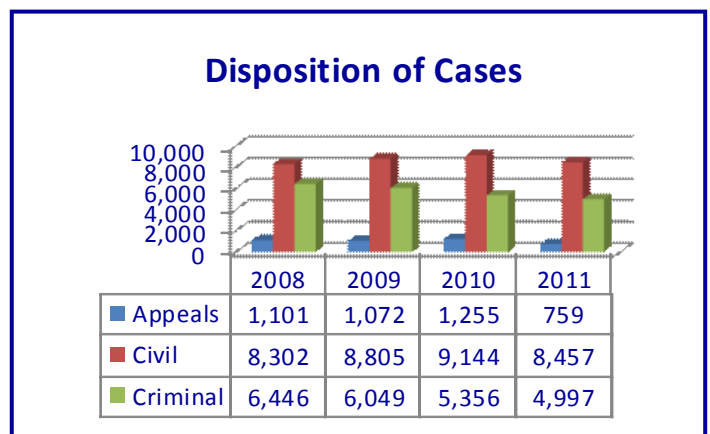
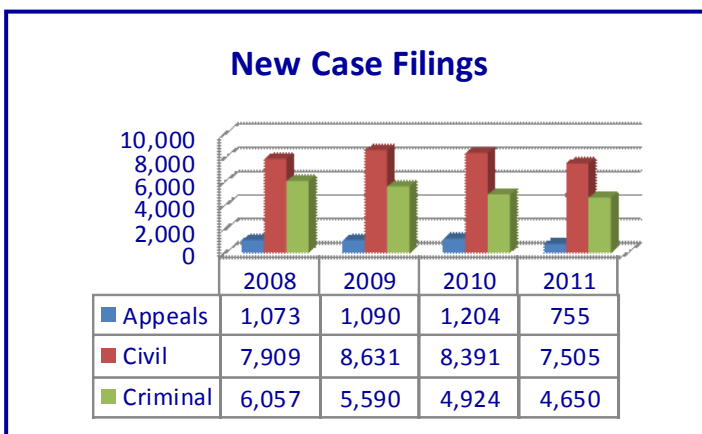
The Case Management Office (CMO) is primarily responsible for coordinating Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programs for the Circuit and Probate Courts. The office works closely with the State Court Administrative Office, Oakland County Bar Association, and Oakland Mediation Center on program development and implementation. Case evaluation and mediation are two common ADR processes the Court uses to settle cases prior to trial. The CMO provides support by scheduling cases and evaluators at the appropriate time in the life of the case. The CMO also supports the Discovery Master program. Discovery masters are volunteer facilitators who meet with attorneys during the miscellaneous motion call to resolve discovery disputes.

The CMO modified the manner in which it scheduled cases for case evaluation and case evaluators. The changes began with the recognition that many case evaluation panels were not fully utilized. For example, a contract panel can hear 32 cases, but often had only six to ten cases on the hearing date. In an effort to better utilize the talents of the evaluators and prevent lengthy gaps between hearings, the CMO reduced the number of panels scheduled each month. By reducing the total number of panels and drawing on data reflecting ongoing case trends, the CMO has improved the overall efficiency of the case evaluation process.



CMO personnel perform a number of administrative duties to ensure the efficient processing of cases. Duties include reassignment of cases, receipt and processing of praecipes for the weekly motion call, and requests for the Judge On-Line program. In addition, staff track caseloads, prepare docket and program reports, and assist as needed with special dockets.

Because the Bench worked aggressively to address the resulting increased case volume, the average docket size increased by only four cases over the previous year and the number of docket dispositions kept pace with those of 2010.



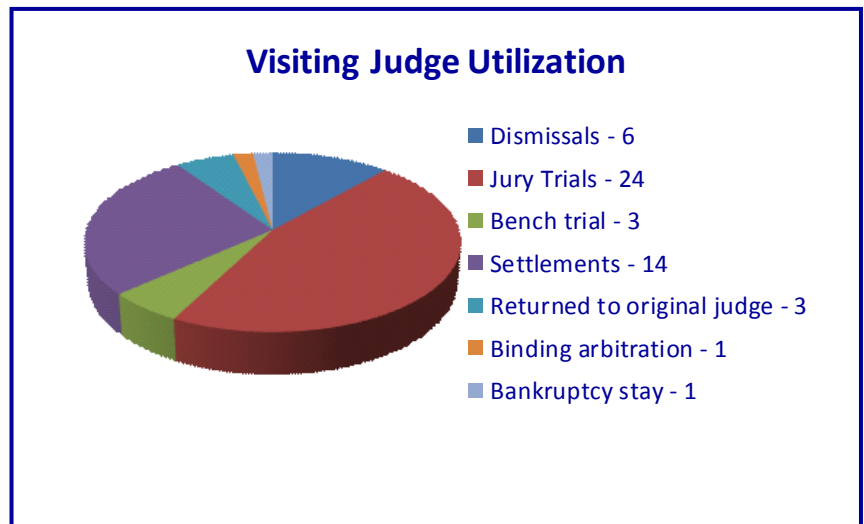
CIRCUIT COURT - CIVIL/CRIMINAL DIVISION

CRIMINAL CASE SUPPORT

This unit handles the assignment of judges on all felony criminal cases. It is responsible for the appointment of counsel for indigent defendants at case initiation and for post-conviction or appellate matters. The unit also works with the Oakland County Sheriff's Office and other county and state agencies on effective management of the jail's inmate population. It also works with the Michigan Department of Corrections to ensure the timely processing and receipt of pre-sentence referrals and the Reimbursement Division regarding the payment of fines, fees, and costs.

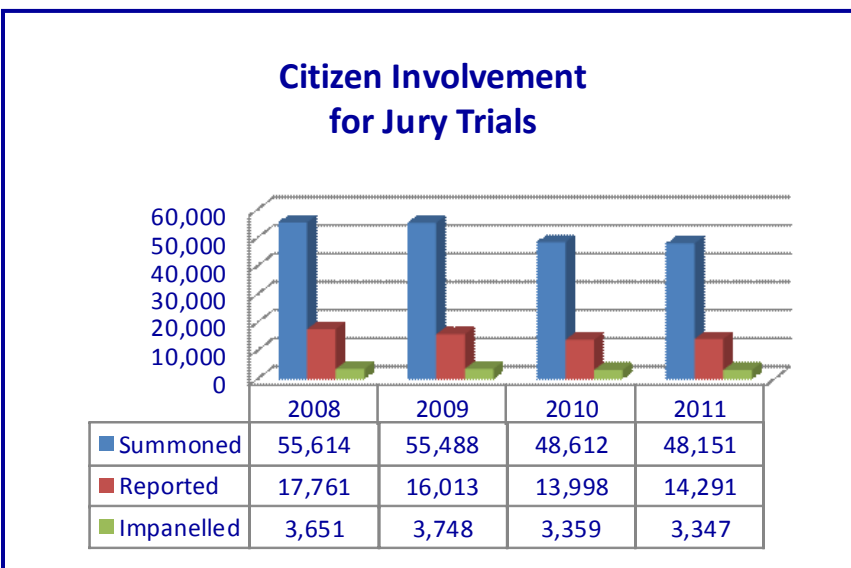
CLERK SUPPORT

This unit oversees the training and development of the judicial and floating clerks. In addition to assisting court staff, Brenda Beiter and Katherine Siebenaler work closely with area law schools and paralegal programs on internship programs that provide valuable service to the Court and experience for the students. The unit also supports the visiting judge program by coordinating the scheduling of judges, tracking cases assigned to civil and family division visiting judges, and ensuring that each visiting judge receives adequate staffing.



JURY OFFICE

The Jury Office coordinates jury operations and obtains jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts. Rebecca Young serves as the supervisor of the office and is assisted by Deborah Fahr. The office tracks juror utilization rates to ensure a sufficient number of jurors are available for trials while imposing the least hardship on those summoned for jury duty. All persons, regardless of status or occupation, are expected to serve when summoned.



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

Orientations are conducted in the morning for new jurors outlining what can be expected during the course of their service. Several of the judges participate in this orientation to welcome the jurors and explain courtroom procedures.

CIRCUIT COURT - CIVIL/CRIMINAL DIVISION

CIRCUIT COURT - CIVIL/CRIMINAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Processed jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 101 civil trials, with an average trial duration of 3.83 days as well as 204 total criminal trials, with an average trial duration of 2.46 days. Of the criminal trials, 67 were capital offenses; 15 of those capital trials were murder/homicide cases.
- Summoned 48,151 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, 14,291 jurors were required to report for jury service. Of that number, 3,347 were selected to sit as jurors.
- Total juror fees and mileage paid - \$604,312.
- Average cost per jury - \$1,981.
- Scheduling orders set 3,527 cases for case evaluation. Ultimately 1,948 cases completed the evaluation process before 208 panels. While most evaluated cases resolve short of trial, 354 cases accepted the evaluation award within the 28-day acceptance/rejection period.
- Felony cases bound over for trial from the district courts - 4,864 cases.
- Felony cases resolved by trial - 224 cases.
- Felony cases in which the defendant requested and received court-appointed counsel - 4,153 cases.
- Petitions for pre-sentence investigation reports for sentencings - 4,750 cases.
- Felony cases in which the defendant requested and received appointed appellate counsel - 365 cases.
- Total number of bench and jury civil trials - 135 cases.
- The Court appointed 375 interpreters for individuals with limited English proficiency, including 295 appearances by Spanish interpreters.
- The Court appointed 70 interpreters for the deaf or hard of hearing.

Long-time Caseflow/ADR Supervisor Diane Kratz retired in April of 2011 after nearly 29 years of service with the Court. While her presence and knowledge will be missed, the Court wished her a happy, healthy retirement. General supervision of the Case Management Office transitioned to Michelle Kase, who was promoted to Office Supervisor II.

(Pictured at right) Diane Kratz is wished a fond farewell by Judge Colleen O'Brien (right) and Gwynne Starkey (left) at her Bon Voyage Retirement Party in April.



CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION



*The Honorable
Elizabeth Pezzetti
Presiding Judge - 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, and investigators work in teams to assist the litigants in the management and enforcement of complex family law matters.

JUDICIAL SUPPORT - This unit, headed by William Bartlam, Manager of Judicial Support/Judicial Assistant, consists of the Juvenile Referees, Juvenile Intake, Juvenile Adoption, and the Personal Protection Order Office. In Mr. Bartlam's role as Judicial Assistant, he is also the lead legal advisor for the Family Division.

COURT SERVICES - Led by Pamela Davis, Manager of Court Services, this unit provides juvenile probation, casework services, clinical services through the Court Psychological Clinic, community diversion and re-entry services 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 Presiding Judge Mary Ellen Brennan, court staff, defense counsel, and substance abuse and mental health professionals, works together using a non-adversarial approach. As of December 2011, 117 youth had graduated from the program and 233 youth and 394 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 and Judge Colleen O'Brien presides over the female participants. As of December 2011, 109 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.



The Family Division Management Team works together to meet the needs of the Family Division.

(Pictured at left) The Family Division Management Team is comprised of (front row, left to right): Suzanne Hollyer, Friend of the Court; Lisa Langton, Deputy Court Administrator; Mary Schusterbauer, Chief, Youth Assistance; Marty Alvin, Senior Juvenile Referee; Pamela Davis-Drake, Manager of Court Services. (Back row) Lauran Howard, Chief, Adoptions and Juvenile Support Services; William Bartlam, Manager of Judicial Support/Judicial Assistant; and Bill Hamilton, Chief, Casework Services.

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. The Friend of the Court also assists parties with the registration of their court orders as they are moving into and out of the state of Michigan. Further, the Friend of the Court is responsible for enforcement of medical provisions in court orders. Both unpaid medical bills and requirements that parents insure their children are handled by the Friend of the Court.

Friend of the Court referees hold hearings to enforce and modify Family Division orders regarding support, custody, and parenting time. Referees conduct Early Intervention Conferences when a divorce is initiated to help divorcing clients understand the FOC and the divorce process. FOC family counselors provide the SMILE program (Start Making it Livable for Everyone) to help parents understand the impact of divorce on their children. Forms to assist parties in making requests for assistance by the Friend of the Court are available on the website at www.oakgov.com/foc



Justin Quick, User Support Specialist for the Friend of the Court, developed a custom user interface application for the new kiosk in the FOC lobby. Clients can make payments, print forms, and access general information at the kiosk.

FRIEND OF THE COURT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Held 2,647 Early Intervention Conferences (EIC) with parties going through the divorce process in 2011. These conferences allow parties to a divorce access to the Friend of the Court referee early in the divorce process. The referee uses the EIC to assist in the settlement of a divorce and to provide information about services available at the Friend of the Court.
- Answered 71,731 calls by the Friend of the Court switchboard.
- Provided 37,631 customers with case specific information at the front desk.
- Interviewed 1,456 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 are unemployed or underemployed. As a direct result of the FOC partnership with Work First, \$389,746 was paid in support of families.
- Addressed 26,938 complaints regarding parenting time by FOC Family Counselors.
- Held 22,771 hearings by FOC referees to enforce custody, parenting time, and support.

SUMMARY OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS ACTIVITY

New Filing Activity

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Domestic Relations				
Without Children	2,357	2,520	2,544	2,425
With Children	2,268	2,428	2,495	2,356
Paternity	1,019	978	1,058	986
Interstate	353	74	77	94
Support	1,554	1,415	1,387	1,095
Other	189	252	255	256
Total New Filings	7,740	7,667	7,816	7,212

CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION

JUDICIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

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

- Adoption 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
- Adoption Permanency Coordination

In these areas, support staff schedule cases, prepare files, create documents, maintain both public and confidential records, 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

SUMMARY OF JUDICIAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY

New Filing Activity

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Juvenile/Adoptions				
Delinquency	3,574	3,179	2,714	2,611
Child Protective Proceedings	483	299	325	314
Juvenile Traffic Tickets	268	213	112	100
Adoption Petitions	435	428	419	407
Subtotal	4,760	4,119	3,570	3,432

Personal Protection Orders

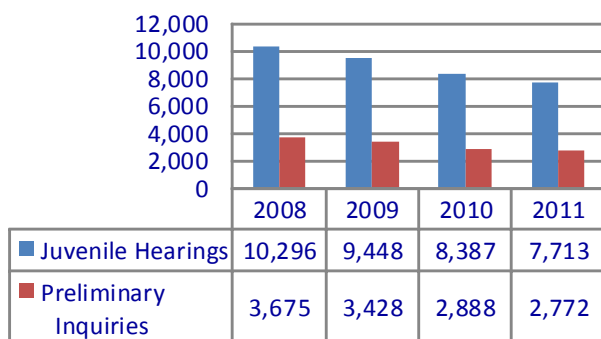
Domestic	1,853	1,886	1,892	1,692
Non-Domestic	841	791	830	682
Juvenile	56	57	35	40
Subtotal	2,750	2,734	2,757	2,414

Miscellaneous Family

Name Change	444	486	478	509
Other	47	47	31	50
Subtotal	491	533	509	559

Total New Filings **8,001 7,386 6,836 6,405**

Juvenile Hearings vs Preliminary Inquiries Held



Family Division and probate cases and then processes all pertinent documents relating to the appointment.

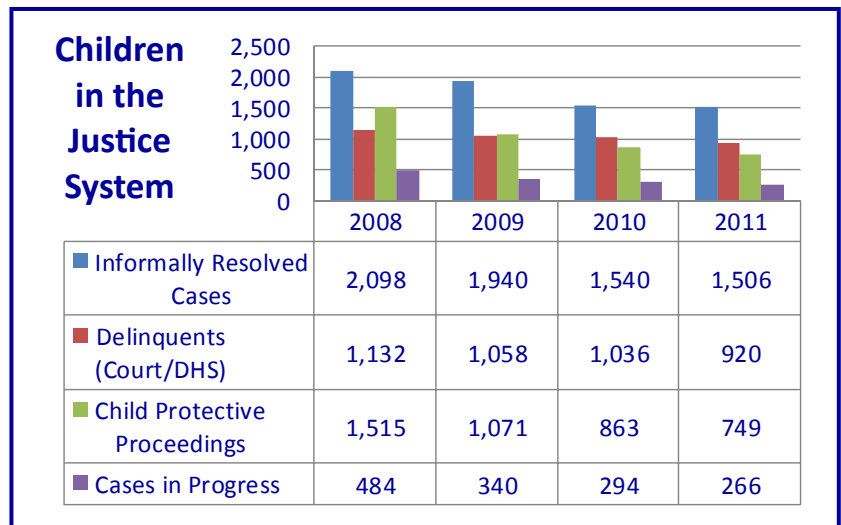
The permanency coordinators also maintain a database to track those children whose parents' legal rights have been terminated but who have not yet been adopted. They coordinate four special dockets and work with the DHS and private agencies to expedite permanency for children, review the progress of each child's case, provide expert advice, and identify resources for adoption and foster care case workers for these children. They craft scheduling orders and case summaries for the judges and referees and assist in the distribution of real-time orders. They meet with agency and DHS executives to review overall performance and court concerns.

CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION

JUDICIAL SUPPORT SERVICES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Court was awarded the 2011 Justice Achievement Award from the National Association for Court Management recognizing its outstanding achievement for the Adoption Permanency Project and Study. The lessons from this pilot project then became part of our best practices, as detailed below:

- Judicial Support Services applied for and was awarded an Adoption Incentive Grant to institutionalize court wide the Adoption Permanency process. The Court, Oakland County, and the State of Michigan signed a Memorandum of Understanding in August 2011 covering a period ending December 31, 2012. The Adoption Incentive Grant provided funds for two Permanency Coordinators (hired in September), equipment, training, and additional lawyer-guardian ad litem costs.



- The department secured offices, equipment, computers, telephones, and software for the Permanency Coordinators who use the Mainframe computer system, the Access© database (containing information regarding the children on the permanency docket), EDMS (electronic document imaging), and JAVS video (which allows viewing of court hearings) from their work computers.
- The Permanency Coordinators updated the Access© database to ensure data integrity and will continue updating the database as cases come before the Court. Staff reviewed all adoption permanency cases court wide, developed four specialized Permanency Dockets, transferred cases to the respective dockets, and established hearing dates for 2011 and 2012 for each docket. They also prepared orders transferring cases, for hearing purposes only, to Judge Linda S. Hallmark, Judge Cheryl Matthews, Senior Referee Martin Alvin, and Referee Scott Hamilton, who each hear the consolidated, specialized docket cases at dedicated times biweekly. Each week a special permanency calendar is issued.
- The Permanency Coordinators created or amended existing scheduling orders for all cases. They help prepare orders that are issued after permanent custody review or permanency planning hearings that are signed in “real time” and presented to the DHS and purchase-of-service worker before the parties leave the courtroom.
- The department piloted the electronic receipt of court reports with Oakland Family Services and will implement the electronic reporting requirement for all agencies and DHS on January 1, 2012. Using Microsoft’s SharePoint™ application calculator, the Court will monitor timeliness of reports and statistics for the agency and each individual adoption caseworker. These performance statistics will be reviewed on an agency-by-agency basis in later periods.
- Caseworkers from private agencies were educated on the use of the standardized court report templates and scheduling orders. In conjunction with the Oakland County Bar Association, trained lawyer-guardian ad litem on the specifics of the Permanency Docket and the increased court expectations.
- Fifty-six children who were “legal orphans” achieved adoption permanency with their “Forever Family” between August and December 2011.

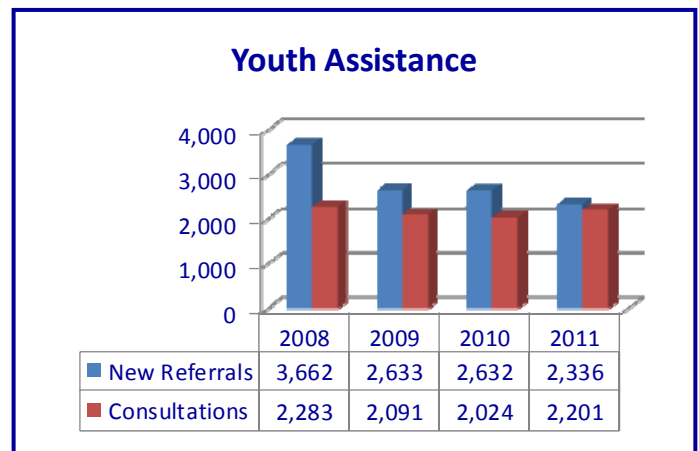
CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION

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. 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.

YOUTH ASSISTANCE - As the prevention arm of the Court's continuum of service, 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 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.



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. In 2011, the Psychological Clinic received 638 referrals.

FAMILY-FOCUSED JUVENILE DRUG COURT PROGRAM - The 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 (ATC) 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.

CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION

COURT SERVICES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Began a cooperative effort with Youth Assistance, Oakland County Children's Village, and Crossroads for Youth to implement a Youth Re-Entry process in Oakland County. This process was designed to assist youth who have been placed in residential treatment at Oakland County Children's Village and Crossroads for Youth and their families to successfully re-integrate to the community upon release from residential treatment. This project is funded by Oakland County Children's Village via the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention's Second Chance Re-Entry Grant and the Oakland County Circuit Court Family Division via the Michigan Department of Human Services Child Care Fund.
- Relocated staff from the Walled Lake office to the courthouse and reorganized the unit into three casework groups. This required a shift in how cases are assigned, the elimination of the traditional one worker/one school district assignment pattern, and the communities served by each casework group. It was also an opportunity to reassign staff to different groups and/or responsibilities in order to enhance the delivery of services by the Court.
- Restructuring of the Mentors Plus program has served to centralize services, standardize delivery, and increase one-to-one matches of caring adults with at-risk children. We are pleased that one of our mentors was recognized as one of the top five mentors in the state and presented with a Governor's Service Award. One of the children served in our program was given recognition for outstanding growth and development through mentoring and was given a "Lloyd Carr Scholarship" through Mentor Michigan.
- Youth Assistance is grateful for ongoing collaboration with the Oakland County Bar Association. Through this partnership, we have been able to offer free legal aid clinics to families throughout Oakland County.
- In June and August of 2011, the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) and the Adult Treatment Court (ATC) programs, respectively, celebrated their 10th year of operation.
- In partnership with Crossroads for Youth, the Juvenile Drug Court began "hybrid" programming that encompasses not only the strict supervision of the JDC but also the daily structure of the Crossroads for Youth Day Student Program. This was designed especially for participants who do not have a school plan and are in need of more structure than their home can provide.
- The JDC began collaboration with local Al-Anon representatives to provide "open" meetings to the participant's parents at the courthouse to make this community support group even more readily available for the parents.
- The Juvenile and Adult Drug Treatment Courts were awarded \$40,000 and \$36,000 in grant money, respectively, from the State Court Administrative Office's Michigan Drug Court Grant program. With funding for specialty court programs greatly diminishing over the past few years, this award speaks to the unwavering commitment of the drug court teams to make Oakland County Circuit Court programs successful.
- On July 13, 2011, at the 29th Adult Treatment Court commencement, the ATC had its 100th graduate commence from the program.
- Despite losing over two-thirds of its workforce over the past two years to county budget cuts, the Circuit Court's Psychological Clinic completed 638 evaluations in 2011; 268 delinquency, 366 neglect, and four guardianship matters. This speaks volumes to the level of commitment that the remaining staff and contractors have to serving the Circuit Court's Family Division.

PROBATE COURT ESTATES AND MENTAL HEALTH



*The Honorable
Daniel A. O'Brien
Presiding Judge -
Probate Estates*

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 resolves issues regarding 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 2011, the Probate Bench included: Probate Court Chief Judge Linda Hallmark; Probate Court Chief Judge Pro Tempore Elizabeth Pezzetti; Judge Daniel A. O'Brien, Presiding Judge - Probate Estates; and Judge Kathleen Ryan.

Within the Probate Court, much of the activity takes place in the Clerk's Office as staff process paperwork, set court hearings, and direct 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 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 approximately fifty employees.



Mary Jo Best retired from the Oakland County Probate Court on October 21, 2011, after an official 33 years and four months of service. She started her career with the county as a Typist I and retired as an Officer Supervisor II. The Probate Court fondly acknowledged her many "Mary Joisms" on her retirement banner and it was agreed by all that the Probate Court was better off because of Mary Jo's faithful, loyal, and excellent service.

(Pictured at left) Probate Court Chief Judge Pro Tempore Elizabeth Pezzetti (left) congratulates Mary Jo on her many years of service to the Oakland County Probate Court.

PROBATE COURT ESTATES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Oakland County Probate Court has for many years used volunteers to assist in accomplishing mandated reviews of adult and minor guardianships. Four of the longest-serving volunteers were recognized for their dedicated service at the April 21, 2011, Board of Commissioners meeting. Each honoree had volunteered for more than 15 years.

PROBATE COURT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Continued presenting the free program “Removing the Mysteries of Probate Court.” This informational series, which is 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. Probate Register Jill Koney Daly joins with a local attorney and trust officer to educate attendees on various probate proceedings.
- With the support of the Citizens Alliance for the Oakland County Probate and Circuit Courts, updated and continued to present 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 volunteer attorneys and public administrators.
- Increased utilization of the Court’s electronic document management system through the automatic routing of documents. Specific document types are now routed to the particular individual responsible for them as soon as the documents are scanned into the system. This eliminates the need to manually process each of the documents, creating a savings in staff time.



Probate Court Administrator Rebecca Schnelz, Judge Kathleen Ryan, and Judge Daniel A. O'Brien, Presiding Judge - Probate Estates, (back row) recognized four volunteers for their loyal work for the Probate Court. The four volunteers are: (front row, left to right) Case Management Coordinator Carol Esher, Earl Wild, Helen Clark, and Dawn Duerr.



Kathleen Ann Ryan became the 36th Oakland County Probate Court Judge at an investiture held on January 11, 2011. Judge Kathleen Ryan was sworn in by her brother, Judge Daniel P. Ryan of the Wayne County Circuit Court. Her father, Judge James L. Ryan of the U.S. Court of Appeals, shared remarks with her family, friends, and colleagues in attendance. She was welcomed and introduced to the bench by Probate Court Chief Judge Linda Hallmark.

Judge Ryan is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and obtained her law degree from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. Prior to joining the Probate Court, she served in private practice for 15 years. Judge Ryan takes over the probate docket of retired Probate Court Judge Eugene Arthur Moore who retired at the end of 2010. Reflecting on the past year, Judge Ryan states: “It has been immensely rewarding serving the public over the last year. I am truly grateful for the professionalism and collegiality of all my colleagues .”

PROBATE COURT ESTATES AND MENTAL HEALTH

SUMMARY OF PROBATE COURT ACTIVITY

NEW FILES OPENED	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Small Estates	675	611	638	651
Supervised Estates	14	21	17	21
Unsupervised Estates	1,738	1,713	1,762	1,767
Trust - Inter Vivos	225	270	206	228
Adult Guardianships	844	873	939	969
Minor Guardianships	732	607	671	612
Adult Conservatorships	350	351	392	396
Minor Conservatorships	153	134	127	100
Mentally Ill	2,507	2,733	2,802	3,058
Guardianships (Developmentally Disabled)	360	329	353	352
Reopened Estates	238	217	217	205
Protective Orders	42	39	39	47
Civil and Other Matters	95	94	86	87
Total	7,973	7,992	8,249	8,493
ACTIVE CASES AS OF DECEMBER 31				
Estates & Trust Cases	3,908	4,063	4,124	4,463
Adult Guardianships	3,400	3,497	3,666	3,869
Adult Conservatorships	1,643	1,620	1,669	1,733
Minor Guardianships	2,765	2,571	2,521	2,459
Minor Conservatorships	1,509	1,436	1,266	1,138
Developmentally Disabled	1,694	1,682	1,728	1,729
Civil & Other Matters	65	57	61	63
Total	14,984	14,926	15,035	15,454

BUSINESS DIVISION OF THE COURTS

The Business Division, under the supervision of John Cooperrider, is responsible for the development and delivery of business and administrative support services for 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, the Administrative/Financial unit is responsible for developing and monitoring the Courts' \$60 million budget, processing payments for services (such as court-appointed attorney payments), processing 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 - The Data Technology unit is responsible for all aspects of court technology and automation, acting as the Circuit and Probate Courts' liaison to Oakland County's Department of Information Technology, various vendors, as well as other state and local government agencies. Christina Bujak oversees the team who assist both staff and litigants with court programs such as eFiling, Judge On-Line, and video conferencing initiatives. The unit manages 23 video courtrooms and 8 video referee hearing rooms, overseeing viewing and long-term storage of court records in compliance with state requirements. They also support specialized software, produce statistical reports for the State Court Administrative Office, manage the content of the Courts' websites, produce multimedia presentations, coordinate mobile equipment, and create court forms. The unit's goal is to assist departments with initiatives that increase accuracy and efficiency while expanding citizens' access to court programs and information.

COURT RESOURCE AND PROGRAM SPECIALIST - Another area of general responsibility in the Business Division is that of the Court Resource and Program Specialist. Marcia Travis directs the Circuit and Probate Courts' efforts in this regard. Responsibilities include 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.



After 26 years with Oakland County, Marcia Travis, Court Resource and Program Specialist in Court Administration, retired on October 21, 2011. A farewell party was given in honor of her hard work, dedication, and many years of service. Marcia was wished well by many judges, department heads, and colleagues throughout the courthouse. As part of her responsibilities, Marcia has managed the annual report for the past 12 years.

(Pictured at left) Marcia Travis is congratulated on her well-deserved retirement by her supervisor, John Cooperrider, Manager of the Business Division.

BUSINESS DIVISION OF THE COURTS

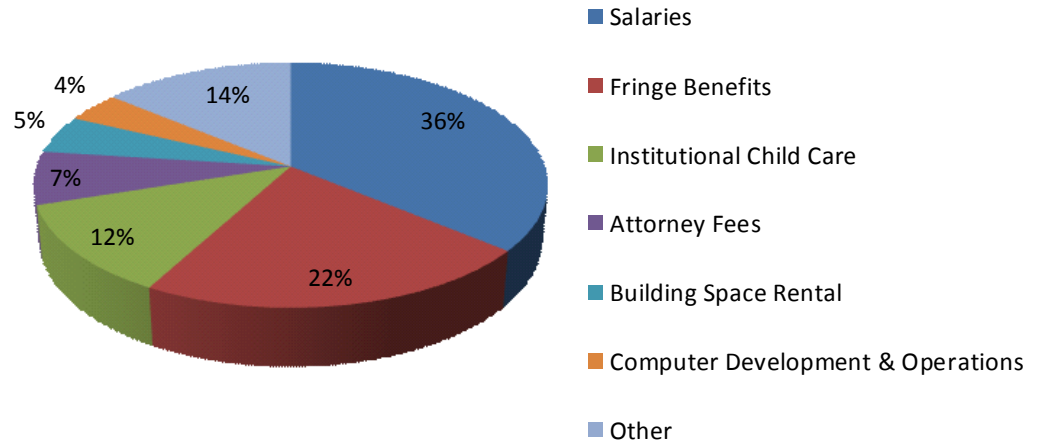
BUSINESS DIVISION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Expanded eFiling pilot program so that all 13 Civil/Criminal Division judges have civil eFiling dockets and five out of seven Family Division judges have eFiling dockets on DO case types (divorce without children). Also expanded the program to include a small sampling of Family Division DM case types (divorce with children). In November of 2011, also began a pilot for Probate Court as well as allowed for the eFiling of case initiation documents on a voluntary basis for civil cases, following the signing of a contract amendment and extension.
- In collaboration with Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations (FM&O), implemented a new security initiative throughout the courthouse which involved re-keying all courtrooms and judicial offices. Also, along with FM&O, completed courthouse facility and courtroom inspections for work to be done in 2012.
- Secured and installed new systems for five video courtrooms, including complete replacement systems, new PA systems, and new autolog 7 release for three other systems. Installed a complete new video system in one courtroom. Only one judicial courtroom is not on video.
- Held a second Technology Open House at the courthouse on July 27, 2011, under the auspices of the Data Technology unit.
- Began work on an enormous project to participate in the statewide Judicial Data Warehouse following judicial approval at the end of 2010. Staff worked in conjunction with state and county IT personnel in determining data specifications for transferring to the data warehouse.
- Prepared and submitted FY2011, FY2012, FY2013, and FY2014 budgets, which included budget tasks of \$100,653, \$126,490, \$140,367, and \$140,367, respectively, for a total of \$507,877 in cuts over the next three years.
- Developed, prepared, submitted, and monitored five different grants for the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court and Adult Treatment Court in the amount of over \$150,000.
- In conjunction with the Juvenile/Adoptions Support Services unit, developed, prepared, and submitted the Adoption Incentive Grant application. This grant was approved in August 2011 in the amount of \$191,498 to be used over the next two years to help achieve quicker permanency for adoptive youth.
- Developed, prepared, submitted, and monitored five different JAG grants in the amount of over \$40,000 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, a judicial investiture, annual Dunk Tank for Charity Fundraising event, Champion of Children Award Ceremony, Circuit and Probate Courts' Annual Picnic, Annual Holiday Luncheon, Family Division Summit, Take Your Child to Work Day, New Lawyers Admission Ceremonies, and many other events.
- Reconciled outstanding credit adjustments with the State of Michigan Department of Human Services so that Oakland County will remove from their receivables and receive a lump sum credit adjustment of \$129,518. These are for discrepancies in Stateward chargeback report charges for youth committed to the State of Michigan either as an MCI ward (abuse or neglect) or PA 189 ward (delinquent).

BUSINESS DIVISION OF THE COURTS

Circuit Court and Probate Court Financial Report

2011 Expenditures:
\$67,942,463



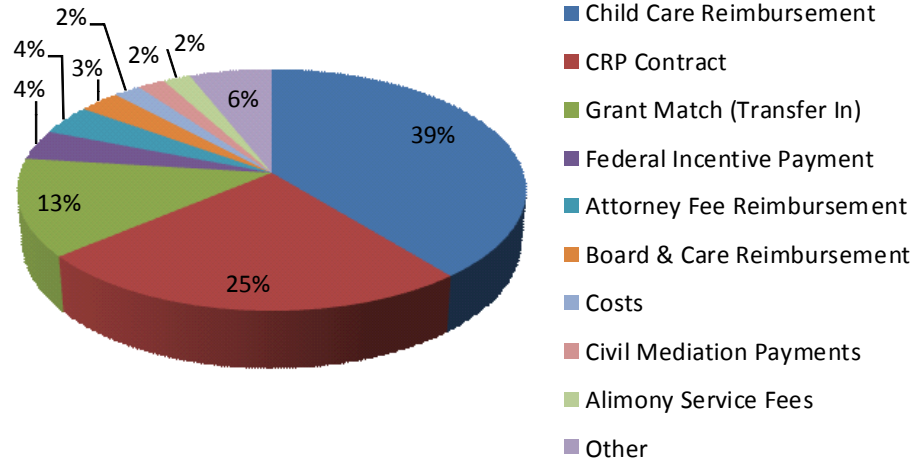
Expenditures

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010-2011</u> <u>% Change</u>
Salaries	\$27,610,514	\$25,689,527	\$24,248,356	-5.61%
Fringe Benefits	\$14,304,448	\$15,263,905	\$15,119,562	-0.95%
Institutional Child Care	\$9,555,651	\$9,786,889	\$8,136,513	-16.86%
Attorney Fees	\$5,259,250	\$4,902,812	\$4,682,832	-4.49%
Transfers Out	\$4,306,231	\$4,329,799	\$4,610,691	6.49%
Building Space Rental	\$3,336,155	\$3,024,365	\$3,225,702	6.66%
Computer Development & Operations	\$2,953,083	\$2,763,638	\$2,919,818	5.65%
Indirect Costs	\$1,179,238	\$912,824	\$947,680	3.82%
Professional Services	\$679,738	\$852,100	\$694,093	-18.54%
Jury Fees & Mileage	\$614,569	\$632,481	\$638,305	0.92%
Mediator Fees	\$544,900	\$579,900	\$540,912	-6.72%
Telephone Communications	\$386,748	\$346,360	\$313,159	-9.59%
Postage/Mailroom	\$242,021	\$242,021	\$163,300	-32.53%
Commodities/Supplies	\$212,651	\$208,158	\$189,439	-8.99%
Transcripts	\$201,969	\$229,401	\$203,242	-11.40%
Printing	\$194,624	\$130,463	\$94,319	-27.70%
Visiting Judges	\$173,828	\$125,502	\$89,545	-28.65%
Other	\$167,404	\$176,300	\$193,955	10.01%
Mileage/Leased Vehicles	\$212,478	\$178,919	\$189,483	5.90%
Equipment Rental	\$110,687	\$135,186	\$177,484	31.29%
Library Materials	\$104,071	\$99,785	\$109,780	10.02%
Maintenance Charges	\$107,264	\$71,796	\$80,491	12.11%
Interpreter Services	\$91,586	\$70,924	\$77,497	9.27%
Transfers In	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	100.00%
Furniture/Equipment Purchase	\$58,239	\$20,898	\$45,561	118.02%
Computer Legal Research	\$57,470	\$57,782	\$29,952	-48.16%
Copiers	\$64,677	\$58,939	\$53,943	-8.48%
Insurance	\$58,220	\$46,812	\$46,815	0.01%
Overtime	\$65,088	\$52,331	\$63,267	20.90%
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$8,199	\$0	-100.00%
Court Reporter Services	\$3,775	\$6,052	\$5,477	-9.50%
Operating Transfer/Adjust Prior Years	\$0	\$0	\$1,290	100.00%
TOTAL	\$72,856,577	\$71,004,068	\$67,942,463	-4.30%

BUSINESS DIVISION OF THE COURTS

Circuit Court and Probate Court Financial Report

2011 Revenues:
\$33,708,148



Revenues/Sources of Funds

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010-2011</u> <u>% Change</u>
Child Care Reimbursement	\$13,425,433	\$12,551,986	\$13,013,584	3.67%
CRP Contract	\$8,158,717	\$8,120,203	\$8,350,148	2.83%
Grant Match (Transfer In)	\$4,306,231	\$4,257,269	\$4,400,475	3.36%
Federal Incentive Payment	\$1,554,267	\$1,539,549	\$1,479,384	-3.91%
Attorney Fee Reimbursement	\$1,298,167	\$1,385,070	\$1,309,941	-5.42%
Board & Care Reimbursement	\$1,153,946	\$1,184,679	\$1,151,062	-2.84%
Costs	\$1,000,712	\$948,753	\$772,524	18.57%
Civil Mediation Payments	\$563,117	\$579,850	\$562,912	-2.92%
Alimony Service Fees	\$543,192	\$530,111	\$552,951	4.31%
Jury Fees	\$284,715	\$342,618	\$286,845	-16.28%
FOC Judgment Fees	\$262,980	\$315,660	\$325,360	3.07%
Probate Estate Fees	\$232,840	\$307,010	\$221,735	-27.78%
Reimbursement State County Agent	\$180,533	\$180,533	\$180,533	0.00%
Probation Service Fees	\$176,232	\$177,736	\$187,126	5.28%
Other	\$142,334	\$201,256	\$195,545	-2.84%
Probate Certified Copies	\$116,927	\$121,283	\$124,683	2.80%
Family Counseling Fees	\$100,635	\$99,910	\$102,225	2.32%
Mediation fines	\$96,750	\$95,444	\$118,150	23.79%
Other Probate Filing Fees	\$80,407	\$84,083	\$82,867	-1.45%
Psychological Clinical Evaluation Fees	\$75,566	\$51,864	\$66,889	28.97%
Processing Fees	\$69,321	\$67,887	\$71,360	5.12%
CRP State Supplement	\$66,507	\$0	\$0	0.00%
e-Filing Fees	\$25,848	\$64,969	\$142,349	119.10%
Probate Will Deposits	\$11,325	\$10,775	\$9,500	-11.83%
TOTAL	\$33,926,702	\$33,218,498	\$33,708,148	1.47%

2011 YEAR IN REVIEW

ADOPTION DAY



Michigan Supreme Court Justice Stephen Markman joined Probate Court Chief Judge Linda Hallmark and several of her colleagues as they celebrated Adoption Day 2011. Adoptions were finalized for eight children and their families at a ceremony held just in time for Thanksgiving. Pictured above is Gotti Highlen with his new family, Mark Highlen and Tracey Cooke-Highlen.

TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY



Forty-three children spent the day with their parents at the Courts' Take Your Child to Work Day this year. The children and their parents were welcomed by Circuit Court Chief Judge Nanci Grant and Probate Court Chief Judge Linda Hallmark and observed courtroom proceedings, K-9 demonstrations and many other fun activities throughout the morning. Jill Adkins, Circuit Court Records Specialist, shown with her daughter, Ava, was one of several courthouse employees who participated in the proceedings with their children.

SPLASH FOR CASH



The Circuit and Probate Courts 3rd Annual Splash for Cash took place on a warm September day. Bobby McLaughlin (Data Technology Unit), Jill Koney Daly (Probate Court), and Paul Walton (Prosecutor's Office) were three of the nine dunkees who participated in the fundraiser. Each dunkee chose a charity of their choice who benefited from the event. The fundraiser brought in more than \$1,600 for the worthwhile charities.

ARTHUR EUGENE MOORE CHAMPION OF CHILDREN AWARD



Jody Romero-Perez, court liaison for the Michigan Department of Human Services and Oakland County's Family and Probate courts, was honored with the Arthur Eugene Moore Champion of Children Award. Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti, Presiding Judge - Family Division, presented the award to Jody Romero-Perez during the Adoption Day program.

2011 YEAR IN REVIEW

TYLER PUBLIC SECTOR EXCELLENCE AWARD



In October 2011, Lisa Czyz accepted the Tyler Public Sector Excellence Award on behalf of the Court in recognition of the eFiling program. The award ceremony was held at Tyler's National User Conference in Long Beach, California.

U OF M / MSU RIVALRY



Judge James Alexander and Judge Mary Ellen Brennan share a friendly rivalry with a luncheon for all U of M and MSU fans before the big game.

CONSTITUTION DAY PROGRAM



Talk Radio 1270 Morning Host and Fox 2 Legal Analyst Charlie Langton emceed the popular Quiz Bowl portion of the annual Constitution Day program. Over 300 local high school students took part in the program which was co-sponsored by Judge Michael Warren and Judge Edward Sosnick.

NEW LAWYER ADMISSION CEREMONY



The New Lawyers Admission Ceremony was held in the Board of Commissioners Auditorium in November in conjunction with the Oakland County Bar Association. Over eighty new admittees were sworn in to the practice of law. The admittees and their families were congratulated by Circuit Court Chief Judge Nanci Grant and Probate Court Chief Judge Linda Hallmark on behalf of the Circuit and Probate Courts.

EMPLOYEES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The courthouse can be an intimidating place for the general public who is unfamiliar with the legal procedures of the judicial system. Circuit Court and Probate Court employees consistently go out of their way to assist the public in navigating the legal system. Court employees are recognized throughout the year for their dedication to the Courts and the public through Standing Ovation cards that are submitted by an individual who has received exemplary service while conducting business in the courthouse. The following excerpts are a small portion of the Standing Ovation cards received during 2011 for employees who have gone above and beyond in assisting the public they serve.

Chris Cook
Probate Court

"For being a friend and helping a friend's family in their time of need. Thank you for making something (paperwork) that seemed like a mountain into a small ant hill. You are amazing! Thanks again for help in getting my dad's Trust filed in probate court."

Sarah Spencer
Probate Court

"She was very friendly and professional."

Barbara Henderson
Probate Court

"Barbara has been so helpful and always cheerful when helping me navigate the complex paperwork associated with conservatorships. Barbara is a real asset!"

Claudia Walter
Youth Assistance

"... you have helped us tremendously. Thank you for your counsel and out-of-the-box thinking in this case. We have gratitude beyond words."

Case Management Office

"... being awesome and doing a great job every day."

Diana Meredyk
Friend of the Court

"She was polite, professional, and went above the 'call of duty' to resolve my problem."

Jeni Edens
Circuit Court

"Due to personal hardships in her co-workers court chambers, Ms. Edens not once, twice, or several times, but many, many times generously and selflessly gave of her time, talent, and energies to provide a seamless continuation ... she deserves a standing ovation."

Heidi Pawley
Probate Court

"She is very helpful and patient with our questions. She is working hard on our case and we truly appreciate her help."

Tom Swieboda
Youth Assistance

"Thank you for sponsoring me for Camp Wanna Have Fun. I had a blast."

Elissa Fogel
Youth Assistance

"I want to thank you for everything you did for us at the most horrible time of our lives. You made a huge difference in all of us. I don't know what we would have done without you. "

Jenna and Becky
Jury Office

"Both have been extremely patient and understanding among other kind of qualities."

Cheryl Macias
Court Administration

"She is always so pleasant, with such a warm demeanor. Requests are never a hassle and she does everything she can to assist people who come to her office. A very efficient, welcoming, and helpful employee."

Anna Shaw
Friend of the Court

"Took care of my case information very quickly and was very polite. Excellent job!"

Jan Warren
Friend of the Court

"Going above and beyond her job duties. Not only did Jan give me pleasant customer service, she offered additional assistance when my back was against the wall. I am very happy that she was the one who assisted me today. We need more exceptional workers like her."

Kristy Bills
Juvenile

"Polite, professional, and prompt assistance. Researched and directed us with compassion!"

EMPLOYEES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Courts recognize outstanding service by its employees who have characteristically performed their jobs at a high level and have demonstrated service that far exceeds their written job descriptions. Every quarter county employees are nominated as MVPs for their hard work, commitment, and enthusiasm in the jobs they perform. These talented employees go above and beyond in their positions and have been recognized by their supervisors, peers, and the citizens they serve for their outstanding service. The Courts salute the following MVPs for 2011:

First Quarter 2011

Mary Catherine Viviano—FOC
Stacy Pasini—Youth Assistance
Terry Castiglione—Data Technology Unit
Julie Fabrizio—Data Technology Unit

Second Quarter 2011

Brenda Kelly—Adoptions
Julie McKenzie—FOC
Cathy Womack—Youth Assistance
Jury Office
(Deb Fahr, Michelle Glover, Jenna Smith,
Teresa Williams, and Becky Young)

Third Quarter 2011

Mary Jo Best—Probate Court
Katherine Siebenaler—Court Administration
Traci Pence—Casework Services
FOC Interstate Unit
(Debbie Beck, Lori Case, Julie Gorman, and
Rita Whiting)

Fourth Quarter 2011

Laura Roman Christman—Adoptions
Pam Hamway—Court Administration
Justin Quick—FOC
Probate Court Deceased Estates & Trust Unit
(Colleen Bagazinski, Chris Cook, James Hill,
Ryan Horvath, and Laura Nick)

Acknowledgments

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