



THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
2000 ANNUAL REPORT
OAKLAND COUNTY PROBATE COURT





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Circuit Court

for the County of Oakland

BUILDING 12 EAST
DEPT 404
1200 N. TELEGRAPH RD
PONTIAC MI 48341-0404

BARRY L. HOWARD
CIRCUIT JUDGE

SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF MICHIGAN
248-858-5284



The Honorable Barry L. Howard

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

We in the Circuit and Probate Courts have had our share of defining moments – major events wherein we mobilized our resources and modified our operations. Recent history points to the creation of the Family Division, instituting new procedures for receipting and distributing child support, and implementing a newly legislated Probate Code, to name but a few. Defining moments can influence our present state

and shape our destiny. They require careful planning, attention to detail, and teamwork. Three events occurred this past year that illustrate, to varying degrees, the Courts' commitment to continuous improvement.

The Family Division was created out of necessity, borne by legislation enacted in 1996. The Family Division has existed for three years, but it wasn't until 2000 that we administratively merged the Courts to reflect the organizational and financial reality that is the Circuit Court Family Division. A talented and dedicated judiciary and staff worked tirelessly to fulfill its mission to merge the Courts so that our form follows function. Today the Circuit Court administers a budget exceeding \$47 million, employs 419 people, and handles more than 33,000 new cases and complaints annually.

A worthy goal of the Courts is to implement creative and sound approaches to docket management. Just such an approach was employed in late 2000. Settlement conferences involving older civil cases were scheduled during a nine-week period before three visiting judges. Cases that did not settle were scheduled for immediate trial. Of the 414 cases scheduled, 331 settled for an astonishing 80% settlement rate. The program was successful, thanks to judicial support and participation, the contributions of our three visiting judges, and an incredible effort on the part of the Circuit Court's Case Management Office.

A third defining moment occurred in March when the county authorized the acquisition and installation of an integrated case management system known as JIMS. The new computer system will provide for the electronic exchange of case information between the courts, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Clerk's Office. Some 900 employees will use the system when we go live in 2002, not to mention countless attorneys and litigants who will have remote access to public docket and case information. This is a monumental effort that requires individual commitment to achieving collective success.

These defining moments will have enormous impact on the Courts' operations, responsiveness to constituents, and obligations to tax payers for years to come. As Chief Judge, I'm ever mindful of the effort required on the part of so many to realize the achievements we experienced in 2000. I'm also confident that we will continue to muster the resolve and dedication to bring to reality the defining moments that are yet to come.

Very truly yours,

Barry Howard
Chief Judge

State of Michigan



LINDA S. HALLMARK
JUDGE

The Circuit Court for the Sixth Judicial Circuit - Family Division Probate Court for the County of Oakland



The Honorable Linda S. Hallmark

Dear Reader:

It is with pleasure that we are presenting the year 2000 Annual Report for the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts. This edition of our Annual Report is a milestone, as it is the first year that our Circuit and Probate Courts have combined their efforts into one report. With the implementation of the Family Division of the Circuit Court in 1998, our courts quickly recognized the efficiencies and benefits of combining many of our court operations. After intensive efforts by our Circuit and Probate Court judges, administration, and staff, an administrative merger was completed in October of 2000. While we continue to provide Probate Court services through our Probate Court judges, and Estates and Mental Health areas, our Circuit and Probate Court administrations are completely merged, and all of our staff previously assigned to the Family Division have now been transferred as Circuit Court employees.

On April 1, 2000, the Estates and Protected Individual Act (EPIC) became effective. EPIC was the first comprehensive revision of Probate Law since 1979 and replaced the prior Revised Probate Code (RPC). Our dedicated staff has worked diligently to implement these massive statutory changes with the least amount of disruption to the Bar and the public. We are extremely proud of the Estates and Mental Health staff members for their hard work and professionalism during this difficult transition.

Year 2000 also saw the retirement of one of our most esteemed colleagues, the Honorable Sandra G. Silver. Judge Silver was appointed by Governor James Blanchard to the Probate bench in June of 1988. She had previously served as an Oakland County Public Administrator for 10 years prior to her appointment as well as a labor arbitrator. Judge Silver was an active and dedicated Probate Judge serving on both Probate Committees and Mental Health Committees of the Michigan Probate Judges Association. Judge Silver dedicated her career to the citizens of Oakland County and will be greatly missed.

Year 2000 also brought a national and state focus on volunteers. Oakland County is blessed with over 1,000 dedicated volunteers who help serve our citizens and families. Through our Youth Assistance program, volunteers are extensively involved in all aspects of our community organization activities. They identify the resources and factors in each community that may contribute to delinquency, abuse, and neglect. Our Youth Assistance, through their volunteer boards, has been successful in implementing and supporting these community-based programs. Typically, 30,000 to 35,000 youth and adults annually participate in programs offered by our Youth Assistance program. This is just one of our family focused approaches that our newly merged Family Division supports.

The year 2001 will continue to bring many changes and new challenges, including continued efforts to complete our administrative mergers. Our goal has always been to provide operations of a unified court system that are more efficient and better serve our children, families, and Oakland County citizens. I thank you for your continued support and interest in our courts and their services to the public.

Sincerely yours,

Linda S. Hallmark
Chief Probate Court Judge

Judges of the Circuit Court:

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



Early Justice in Oakland County

Territorial law once governed the region we now know as Oakland County. Justice was dispensed by judges of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territory on a rotational basis. By 1787, three of these judges were assigned to our district. In 1805, Congress passed an act creating the territory of Michigan, and district courts were temporarily established to resolve some local disputes.

County courts were established in 1815. At this time, laws were enacted by the governor and three judges stationed in Cincinnati, Ohio. They defined crimes and punishments, commanded the strict observance of Sunday as a day of rest, prohibited swearing, drunkenness, and regulated marriages. It is during this period that courthouses and jails were established.

In 1818, the governor and Supreme Court instituted the first probate courts for all counties. Justice in Oakland County was originally practiced from a primitive log cabin in the pioneer village of Pontiac, situated on the east side of Perry Street between Lawrence and Pike. According to Judge Crofoot, the crude cabin, built around 1820, lacked "door, floor, or chimney." Mercifully, this simple structure served the needs of the justice community for only a very brief time.

The first structure built specifically as a county courthouse was erected in 1823-1824 at the southwest corner of Saginaw and Huron Streets. By this time, three judges held annual sessions in the facility. No illustration of the original structure has been found. The site was donated by the Pontiac Company and was chosen because it overlooked the growing community and was near the Clinton River. The building housed both a courthouse and a jail under the same roof. The jail was located in the lower level and was constructed of squared logs, while the upper level was framed and accommodated a courtroom and the jailer's residence. The jail's first inmate was a Bloomfield Township resident charged with a gruesome double homicide in 1825.

This courthouse was ill-constructed from the start and, as the years passed, it became a disgrace to the county due to its dilapidated condition. In 1848, a local newspaper described the escape of two horse thieves and further commented: "Time after time the old courthouse has been presented by the Grand Jury as an unsafe, unhealthy, indecent, and inconvenient receptacle for prisoners – and indeed they have a number of times presented it as a nuisance, which ought to be abated."

During this period of escalating public ridicule, the old courthouse found itself cast as the setting for what many remembered as the "murder trial of the century." This case, tried in 1846, involved a handsome young doctor

Judges of the Probate Court:

Dr. William Thompson	1821–1823
Nathaniel Millerd	1823–1826
Smith Weeks	1826–1827
Gideon O. Whittemore	1827–1828
Williams F. Mosely	1828
Ogden Clarke	1828–1832
Stephen Reeves	1832–1844
M. LaMont Bagg	1845–1848
Michael E. Crofoot	1849–1856
Oscar F. North	1857–1861
Harry C. Andrews	1861–1863
Zephaniah B. Knight	1863–1868
Alfred Crawford	1869–1872
Junius Ten Eyck	1872–1873
Joseph C. Powell	1873–1876
James A. Jacokes	1877–1880
Joseph C. Powell	1881–1884
Thomas L. Patterson	1885–1900
Joseph S. Stockwell	1901–1909
Kleber P. Rockwell	1909–1918
Ross Stockwell	1917–1928
Dan A. McGaffey	1928–1937
James H. Lynch	1937–1938
Arthur E. Moore	1938–1963
Donald E. Adams	1960–1977
Norman R. Barnard	1963–1988
Eugene A. Moore	1966–Present
John J. O'Brien	1975–1988
Barry M. Grant	1977–Present
Sandra G. Silver	1988–2000
Joan E. Young	1989–1997
Wendy L. Potts	1997–1998
Linda S. Hallmark	1997–Present

accused of slowly poisoning his beautiful wife with arsenic. It is said that the defense team so thoroughly befuddled the jury that the trial resulted in a verdict of not guilty, which sent the townsfolk into a fury.

Meantime, in 1836, the first state constitution was framed. By March of the following year, three circuit courts had been established. Judges were appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate for seven-year terms. Chief Justice Fletcher was assigned to oversee Oakland County and the six "sister" counties under one of these circuits.

In 1850, a second Michigan constitution drastically altered the state judiciary by making all state officials' offices elective in nature. County courts were completely abolished, and the state was divided into eight circuit courts, each of which would elect one judge. The region that was originally defined as the Sixth Circuit included St. Clair, Macomb, and Sanilac, in addition to Oakland County. Circuit court judges at this time were expected to serve at the Supreme Court, however, the legislature was empowered by law to begin to construct an independent and elected Supreme Court, which became effective by 1858.

In April of 1856, after a thirty-year struggle to move the Oakland County Courthouse to the village of Auburn or raise funds to replace the rundown building, voters finally agreed to fund the construction of another courthouse. By that time, Pontiac was becoming an active trade center and housed 2,000 residents. The county was served by a judge of the Supreme Court, a judge of probate court, one prosecuting attorney, one circuit court commissioner, and seven lawyers.

In 1857, construction began for a new facility, later referred to as the "Civil War Courthouse," on the site of its predecessor at Saginaw and Huron Streets. It was an impressive size for its time, and measured 60 feet by 100 feet. Standing two stories tall, this facility was larger than Michigan's state capitol at the time. It was constructed of brick in Italianate style by a local carpenter, and cost over \$12,000. It housed the county clerk, a probate judge, register, and treasurer, and included a courtroom and rooms for judge and jury. Throughout the years, this building was not only the scene of many notable trials but also served as the focal point of numerous community activities including lectures, funerals, choral recitals, and farmers' meetings.

During the forty-six years that this third courthouse was in operation, it is estimated that the presiding judges sentenced approximately 2,000 criminals and heard roughly 4,000 civil cases. The Honorable George W. Smith also indicated that 1,200 couples were divorced in this building. In fact, the





1857 Civil War Courthouse

signing of a divorce decree was the last item of business conducted in the structure before it was closed.

In 1869, under Judge Smith, the Sixth Circuit was reduced in size to include only what we now know as Lapeer and Oakland Counties.

By the turn of the century, Pontiac's population had increased to 10,000 and Oakland County's to almost 45,000. Once again, the community began to see the need for a new courthouse. One local newspaper described the situation as follows:

"...Oakland County, one of the largest counties in the state, one of the most wealthy, and in fact, the third richest agricultural district in the United States, is compelled to put up with perhaps the most antiquated and antediluvian courthouse in the state of Michigan, if not in a dozen states."

Some local politicians wanted to demolish the courthouse and sell the site for retail development. A number of alternative locations were proposed and examined. In 1903, a decision was made to erect another structure on the grounds of the retiring facility. The cornerstone of this newest courthouse was laid on August 30, 1904, and was attended by huge fanfare. It was estimated that 12,000 to 15,000 people attended the cornerstone laying event. Dignitaries called this their future "temple" of justice. By newspaper accounts, the event became a "day to be remembered" in Oakland County. There was a mile-long parade, music by local bands, and a program that called for "short speeches" by several dignitaries. The first speaker, D. L. Davis, rambled on for so long in the hot August sun that the officials called a halt to the program and several dignitaries went home with their speeches still in their pockets.



Courthouse at Saginaw and Huron Streets (the laying of the cornerstone 1904)



The new courthouse was designed by Joseph Mills. Some observers thought it looked more like a fortress than a temple. The architectural gem was covered in gray sandstone and measured 100 feet by 900 feet. It was intended to house the county clerk, probate and circuit judges, courtrooms, supervisors, and several county departments. In addition, the school commissioner and superintendent of the poor were also housed there, as well as an auditorium for meetings and school examinations. The courthouse was completed in 1905 and took 17 months to construct. This courthouse would also become the home of the first probate court in the state to handle juvenile matters in 1909.

Shortly after the construction was completed, the statue of "Lady Justice" was installed at the apex of the courthouse dome 104 feet above street level. In 1913, a courthouse bell was secured from Meneely & Company. Daniel L. Davis, a prominent Pontiac attorney, donated a giant clock. This timepiece was synchronized with the courthouse bell to ring at the passage of hours. In 1945, the 500-pound weights that powered the courthouse clock were replaced with an electric mechanism to ensure greater accuracy.

By the mid-1900s, this courthouse also became seriously overcrowded. Due to its location in the downtown district, there was no room for expansion. Former Oakland County Probate Judge Donald Adams recalled that parking in the vicinity of this court was a nightmare. Ultimately, a new site was selected at one of the highest elevations in the village for the construction of a new building. A large tract of farmland was selected to accommodate the growth Oakland County was experiencing. Local businessmen and residents were deeply concerned and expressed loud condemnation, as they felt the court's departure would gut Pontiac's core. Even so, the cornerstone was laid on June 27, 1960, and was attended by much less fanfare than in 1903.

In August of 1962, just prior to demolition of the 1905 Courthouse, workers gingerly lifted Lady Justice from her perch and placed her in an Oakland County storage facility. Twenty-one years later the necessary funds were raised for eventual return. Lady Justice was unveiled to the public in front of the Oakland County courthouse on April 30, 1983, where she resides today.

The original Oakland County courthouse tower, built on the present site, has served as the axis for several wings, as well as a magnet for other buildings housing important functions of Oakland County government. In 1994, the west wing extension was added with energy-efficient glass, precast brick, and concrete panels.

The current courthouse would certainly seem to be a marvel of form and function, even with its variations in style, to the inhabitants of the very first log cabin courthouse of 180 years ago. The pride of those early settlers, who made a fervent commitment to truth and justice in a challenging environment, is reflected today in the evolving edifice we call our court home. Here we continue the pioneers' legacy of devotion to the truths embedded in the laws of our land.



The Honorable Steven N. Andrews

- Circuit Court Judge for over 20 years, with three terms as Chief Judge and three terms as Chief Judge Pro Tempore
- Selected one of the Most Respected Judges of Michigan in a lawyers poll in *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* and listed in Oxford's *Who's Who Among American Judges*
- Rated "Outstanding" both by the Oakland and South Oakland County Bar Associations
- One Man Grand Juror and Presiding Judge for the Oakland County Citizens' Grand Jury
- Received an Honorary Juris Doctorate from the New England Law School in 1986
- Served on Adrian College's Board of Trustees and Providence Hospital's Advisory Board; currently Chairman of the Oakland County Library Board; Past President, American Inn of Court
- Guest Lecturer and Instructor at Detroit College of Law at Michigan State University; author of articles and periodicals on the First Amendment and the Public Trial Concept



The Honorable David F. Breck

- Circuit Court Judge since 1982; District Court Judge, 1977 to 1982
- Awarded the State Bar's most coveted citation, "Champion of Justice," and Cranbrook School's "Distinguished Alumnus" award; rated "Outstanding" by the OCBA, its highest rating; voted one of the best judges in the tri-county area in a *Detroit Monthly* poll
- Life member of NAACP; recipient of its Presidential Award for Judicial Service; received the Leon Hubbard award by the OCBA for "Fostering Awareness of Cultural Diversity and Enhancing the Quality of Life for all People"; Director, Horizons Upward Bound, a program for underprivileged high school students to attend college
- Past chairperson of Henry Ford Hospice; twice elected as Mayor of Birmingham; Graduate of University of Michigan Law School, Michigan State University; awarded Certificate of Achievement from American Academy of Judicial Education at Harvard



The Honorable Jessica R. Cooper

- Elected to the Circuit Court in 1986
- Judge of the 46th District Court, Southfield, 1978-1986; two years as Chief Judge
- Founder, National Association of Women Judges - former national publication editor
- Member, National Task Force on Gender Bias in the Courts
- Adjunct Professor of Law, Detroit College of Law at Michigan State University
- Guest Lecturer, Emory Law School
- Instructor: National Institute for Trial Advocacy, National College of Trial Advocacy, and Institute of Continuing Legal Education
- Board member: Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County, Forgotten Harvest
- Elected to the Court of Appeals in 2000

The Honorable Alice L. Gilbert

- Circuit Judge for 23 years and served as Chief Judge Pro Tempore, Court of Appeals by assignment, 48th District Judge for eight years and served as Chief Judge
- Graduate: Northwestern University School of Law, Wellesley College; postgraduate work at Harvard University, University of Michigan, Wayne State University School of Law, University of Detroit School of Law, University of Kansas, National Judicial College, and University of Nevada
- Member: State of Michigan Board of Ethics; American Hospital Association Task Force; President, Michigan District Judges Association; Chair: Oakland County Corrections Advisory Board, and Providence Hospital Advisory Board
- Director: Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, Board of Trustees Vice Chair; National Crime Foundation; Lyric Chamber Ensemble; Trustee, United Health Organization
- Recipient of several honors and special recognitions



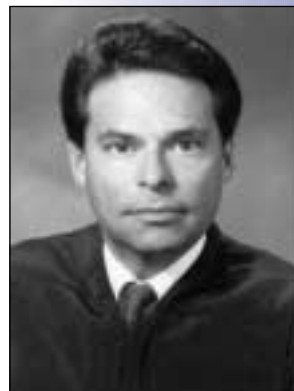
The Honorable Nanci J. Grant

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



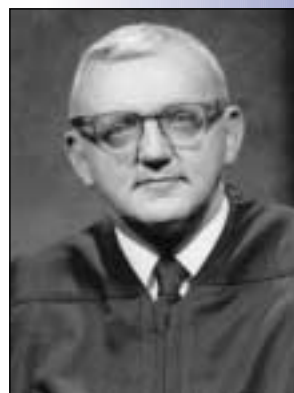
The Honorable Barry L. Howard

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



The Honorable Richard D. Kuhn

- Oakland County Circuit Judge since 1973
- Chief Judge in 1979 and for two subsequent two-year terms
- Delegate, 1961 Constitutional Convention
- Past President, Detroit College of Law Alumni Association
- Graduate: Michigan State University, Detroit College of Law
- Member: State Bar of Michigan, Oakland County Bar Association, American Judges Association, and the American Judicature Society





The Honorable Denise Langford Morris

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



The Honorable John J. McDonald

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



The Honorable Fred M. Mester

- Recipient: Earl W. Kintner Award, Federal Bar Association; Michigan Corrections Association Judicial Award; John N. O'Brien Memorial Award for Distinguished Community Activities; Centennial Award; Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, Central Michigan Univ.; NAACP 1997 Humanitarian Award; CMU ROTC Hall of Fame
- President: CMU Alumni Association; Interim President, Pontiac Alumni Foundation; Board of Directors, William Booth Legal Aid Clinic (Salvation Army)
- Chairman: Oakland County Community Corrections Board; National Council on Alcoholism, Detroit Board; Multiple Sclerosis Board
- Founder: Reading to Reduce Recidivism; Member, Board of Selection, RARE Foundation
- Adjunct Professor: Oakland University, Madonna University, and Oakland Community College
- Military service: Captain, United States Army; Former Chief of the Civil Division, United States Attorney's Office; Former Assistant United States Attorney



The Honorable Rudy J. Nichols

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

The Honorable Colleen A. O'Brien

- Sixth Judicial Circuit Judge since 1998
- Graduate: University of Michigan, 1978; Detroit College of Law, 1981
- Private practice attorney specializing in civil litigation for 17 years; also experienced in family law, probate, and criminal defense
- Member, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan (WLAM), Board of Directors of WLAM in 1992 and 1993; Board of Directors, Crossroads for Youth
- Past President of the Oakland County Women's Bar Association in 1993 and 1994
- Served as the Attorney Discipline Board as a hearing panel member, Rochester Hills Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Oakland County Bar Association Task Force to Improve the Justice System; currently serving on the Oakland County Family Court Task Force
- Received the Oakland County Bar Association "Pro Bono" award



The Honorable Wendy Potts

- Appointed to Oakland Circuit Court, January 1998; elected November 1998 and 2000
- Judge, Oakland County Probate Court, March 1997 - January 1998
- Secretary, State Bar of Michigan, 1996-1997; Commissioner, State Bar of Michigan, 1990 -2000; ABA House of Delegates - 2000 to current
- President, Oakland County Bar Association, 1994 - 1995
- Magistrate, 48th District Court, 1984 -1995
- Current Board Member, Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland; Co-Chair, State Bar of Michigan's Children's Justice Committee, 1995; Governor's Task Force on Domestic Violence, 1994; Chair, Natural Resources Trust Fund, 1994; Trustee, Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society; Fellow: Michigan State Bar Foundation, American Bar Foundation
- Member, Supreme Court Advisory Committee On The Rules of Evidence
- Chair, Circuit Court Criminal Assignment Committee



The Honorable Gene Schnelz

- Oakland Circuit Judge, 22 years; District Judge, 4 years; also served as Chief Judge
- Graduate: Alma College, MSU-Detroit College of Law, and National Judicial College
- Former attorney for Walled Lake, Wixom, Wolverine Lake, Milford, Milford Township, and Walled Lake School District
- Recipient: Michigan State Bar's two highest awards for service to public and profession, OCBA's Memorial Award for public service, Jewish Association for Retarded Citizens' Civil Rights Award, NAACP Presidential Award for Judicial Service, Alma College distinguished Alumni Award, Lutheran Attorneys in Witness first Award for positive leadership in the church and community; Honored by Michigan Legislature for public service
- Selected one of Michigan's Most Respected Judges by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* poll





The Honorable Edward Sosnick

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



The Honorable Deborah G. Tyner

- Elected to a ten-year term on the Oakland Circuit bench in 1990
- Graduate: University of Michigan and Wayne State University Law School, with honors; National Judicial College
- Former Wayne County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
- Former Partner, private law firm specializing in commercial litigation
- Member: Michigan Judges Association Executive and Legislative Committee, State Bar of Michigan; Board of Trustees of MS Society, Advisory Board, Kadima; Former Member, State Bar Representative Assembly
- Former Co-Chair: Joint Bench/Bar Committee Re: Criminal Attorney Appointment System, and 1997 Bench/Bar Conference
- Fellow, Adams Pratt Foundation



The Honorable Joan E. Young

- Appointed Circuit Judge, March 1997; assigned to Family Division, 1998 - present; Circuit Court Chief Judge Pro Tempore 2000 - 2001; Probate Judge, January 1989 - March 1997; Probate Court Chief Judge 1994 - 1997; Chief Judge, 52nd District Court, 1996 - 1997
- Recipient: Oakland County Bar Association Distinguished Service Award, Women's Survival Center Wonder Woman Award, John N. O'Brien Leadership Award, Congressional Coalition on Adoption 2000 "Angel in Adoption" Award; Honored by the Oakland County Women's Bar Association
- Member: Oakland County Bar Association, American Bar Association, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Michigan Judges' Association
- Michigan Opera Theatre Trustee; Advisory Board of Parents of Murdered Children, Inc., Metro Detroit Chapter; Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit Advisory Board



The Honorable Barry Grant

- Probate Judge since 1977; served as Chief Judge in 1992-1993 and Chief Judge Pro Tem in 1999
- Graduate, Wayne State University with post-graduate work at Northwestern University and Harvard Law School
- Past president: National College of Probate Judges, Michigan Probate Judges Association, Oakland County Judges Association
- Former: Assistant Prosecuting Attorney and Clerk for Probate Court; Chairperson, Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission and Beaumont Hospital Research Institute; Trustee, Beaumont Hospital; Secretary, Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission; Editor-in-chief, secretary, and treasurer of the National Publication for Probate Judges
- Served on the State Strategic Planning Committee for Mental Health
- Wrote a weekly column for *The Detroit News* and *The Detroit Free Press*



The Honorable Linda S. Hallmark

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



The Honorable Eugene Arthur Moore

- Elected Probate Judge in 1966; served as Chief Judge 1989-1992 and 1998-1999
- Presiding Judge of the Family Division of the Oakland County Circuit Court, 2000
- Graduated from University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts and law degree
- Authored numerous articles on juvenile delinquency; co-authored several legal texts
- Past President: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the Michigan Probate Judges' Association; past Vice Chair, Michigan Trial Court Assessment Commission
- Instructor of Juvenile and Probate law: Detroit College of Law, for over 20 years; National College for Juvenile Court Judges in Reno, Nevada; Michigan Judicial Institute
- Member: Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference of Michigan; Board of Fellows, National Center for Juvenile Justice in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Trustee: Kingsbury School, Crossroads for Youth; Past trustee, STARR Commonwealth; Governor, Cranbrook Schools. Serves on Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect



The Honorable Sandra G. Silver

- Appointed by Governor James Blanchard to the Probate bench, June 1988; elected to fill the vacancy, November 1988
- Recipient: B.A., University of Michigan; Juris Doctor Cum Laude, Detroit College of Law
- Served as a County Public Administrator ten years prior to her appointment, as well as labor arbitrator
- Served on the State Officers Compensation Commission
- Investigator and member of a discipline panel for the Attorney Grievance Commission
- Member: Discipline Panel of Attorney Grievance Commission; Probate Committee and Mental Health Committee, both of the Michigan Probate Judges' Association
- Former director, Children's Charter for the Courts of Michigan





KEVIN M. OEFFNER
COURT ADMINISTRATOR

The Circuit Court
for the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court

LISA SYMULA, ESQ.
FAMILY DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR

ELIZABETH A. EVANS
GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR

JOHN L. COOPERRIDER
COURT BUSINESS DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR



MESSAGE FROM THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Judges of the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts
Oakland County Board of Commissioners
Oakland County Executive
Citizens of Oakland County

History is a subject that has captured my interest since childhood. I remember receiving a book from my parents covering all of the U.S. Presidents – George Washington through, at that time, Lyndon B. Johnson. I fondly recall reading and re-reading all of the facts, anecdotes, and accomplishments of our chief executives. The book's spine has been repaired and some of the pages taped, nevertheless, it is still in reading condition. I recently gave the book to my 8-year old son who appears to have acquired his father's interest in history.

As a kid and in the years since, I've learned a lot – sometimes more than I wanted to know – about our founders, presidents, statesmen, and military leaders. In the last few months, as we've assembled this Annual Report with an intentional historical bent, I've learned a lot about the history of the Circuit and Probate Courts in Oakland County. And I've discovered that two issues we face today – not enough space and high caseloads – have been characteristic of each era of the Courts' existence. History really does repeat itself.

On a more reflective note, I've discovered another common characteristic – the Courts' ability to adapt on one hand and be innovative on the other, regardless of the influences. Whether it's a burgeoning population, increasing complexity of legal issues, financial and special constraints, or federal and state requirements, the judges and staff of the Circuit and Probate Courts have demonstrated their mettle and met every challenge. And challenges we've had. From creation of the Family Division, to implementing an overhaul of the Probate Code, to effectuating an administrative merger of the Probate and Circuit Courts, judges and staff have risen to the occasion and turned challenges into accomplishments.

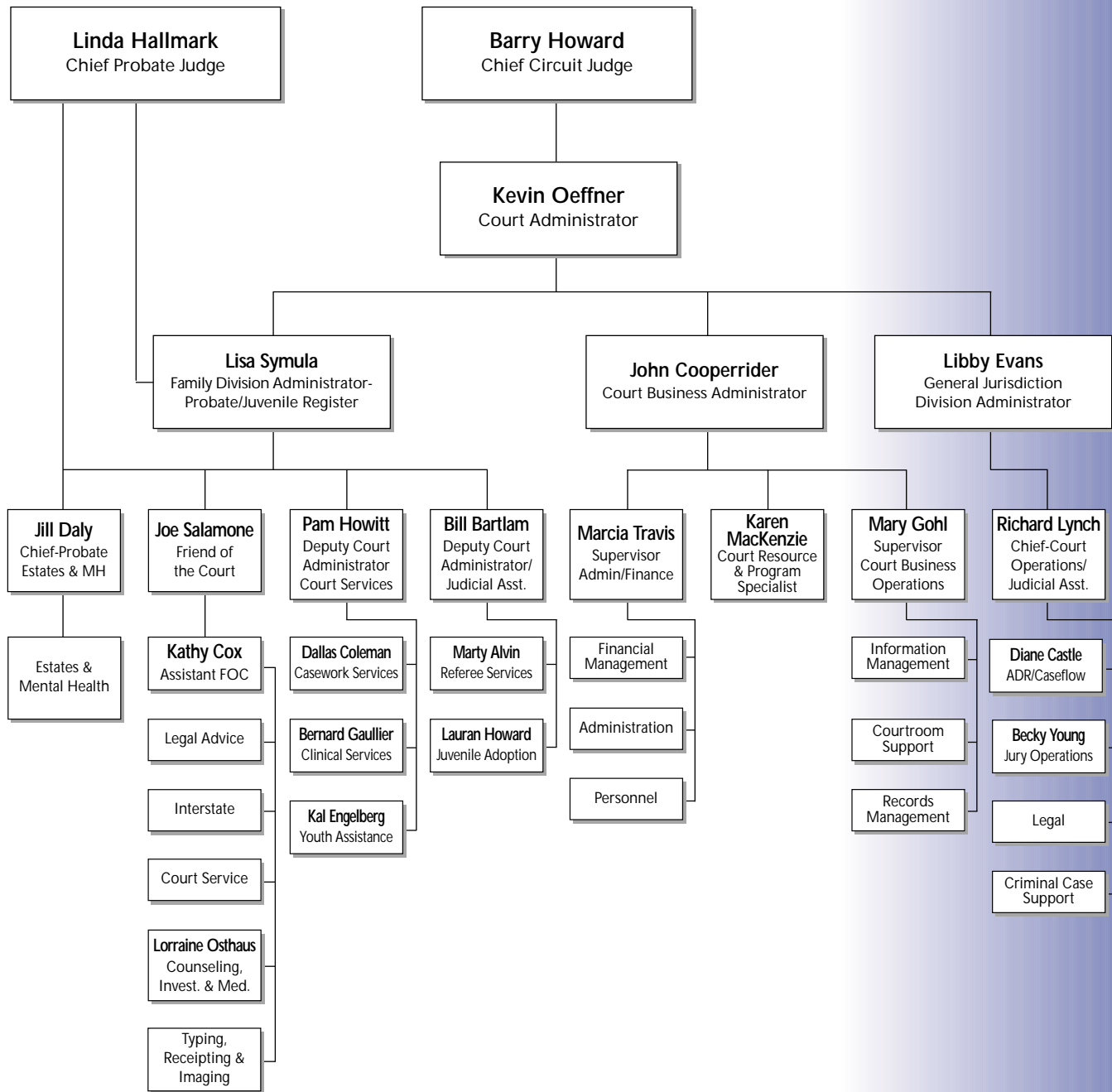
The administrative merger was undoubtedly the highlight of 2000. The issues, ranging from the procedural to the political, were handled thoughtfully and intelligently by all who had a part. Perhaps the best barometer of our success occurred the day after our merger when it was business as usual with no disruption. Yet, somehow I think the groundwork was laid with our predecessors who, in their day, met difficult challenges with the same resolve and commitment to excellence.

We've been entrusted with a splendid legacy. I am confident we will employ the determination characterized by our predecessors as new issues and influences emerge. To that end, we will work to ensure that history repeats itself.

Very truly yours,

Kevin M. Oeffner
Kevin M. Oeffner
Court Administrator

Circuit/Probate Court Administrative Structure



Elizabeth A. Evans

General
Jurisdiction
Administrator



“MILLENNIUM MILESTONES”

With the new millennium came several new projects such as:

- Merging of the Probate Court and Circuit Court Assignment Office
- Developing a plan incorporating the new and amended court rules governing alternative dispute resolution (ADR)
- Applying for a grant and developing an adult therapeutic drug court
- Implementing of technological improvements in jury operations
- Participating in JIMS training and functional specification review
- Conducting the intensive settlement conference program

Although all of these initiatives are of great importance to the Court, the intensive settlement conference program is deserving of special recognition.

During the months of October through December, more than 400 civil cases were set for settlement conferences before visiting judges. The expectation was that if the case did not settle, it immediately proceeded to trial. Of the cases set, 80% resulted in final disposition, thus reducing the number of older civil cases from the Court's docket by over 300.

I commend the General Jurisdiction staff for their outstanding efforts and dedication to public service this past year, and look forward to many more successes in the years to come.

General Jurisdiction Division Management Team: (From left to right) Diane Castle, Caseflow/Alternate Dispute Resolution Supervisor; Deb Fahr, Deputy Jury Clerk; Becky Young, Jury Clerk; Karen Agacinski, Chief Court Operations, Judicial Assistant; Andrea McGinnis, Caseflow Coordinator; and Lisa Czyn, ADR Coordinator.

GENERAL JURISDICTION OVERVIEW

The General Jurisdiction Division of Circuit Court handles civil cases, criminal cases involving felonies and high misdemeanors, and hears appeals from courts of lesser jurisdiction and administrative agencies. The division consists of 13 sitting judges and six visiting judges, one who tries drug cases exclusively and five who hear civil matters. The administrative functions of the General Jurisdiction Division are divided into four primary areas – the Jury Office, the Case Management Office, Legal Operations, and Criminal Case Support.

Under the direction of Becky Young, Jury Clerk, the Jury Office is responsible for coordinating jury operations and obtaining jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts.

The Case Management Office schedules and tracks cases through disposition and coordinates alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for the Circuit and Probate Courts. Diane Castle serves as the Caseflow/ADR Supervisor, and is assisted by Lisa Czyn, ADR Coordinator, and Andrea McGinnis, Caseflow Coordinator.

The Chief-Court Operations/Judicial Assistant supervises the criminal case support and legal operations for the division. Karen Agacinski served in this capacity until September 2000, at which time she transferred to Corporation Counsel.





Judge Mester explains the jury process during orientation.

JURY OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Jury Office is responsible for obtaining jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts in Oakland County. Jurors are mailed a summons/questionnaire scheduling them for jury selection. Jurors must be available for selection for two days. The courts have a two-day/one-trial jury system. If selected to serve as a juror on a trial, their jury service is finished when the trial is completed. Except for persons exempted from jury service by statute, the courts expect all persons, regardless of status or occupation, to serve when summoned. The only persons legally exempt from jury service are those who do not reside in Oakland County, are not a citizen of the United States, have served as a juror within the past 12 months, are not physically able to serve, or are serving a sentence for a felony conviction. Persons over the age of 70 are exempt upon request.

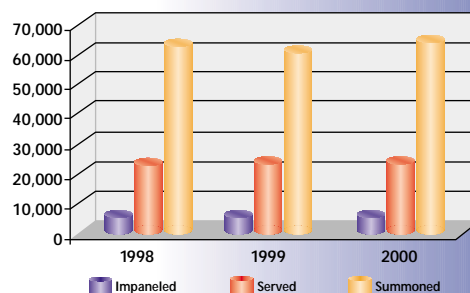
An orientation is conducted each morning for new jurors, that explains what to expect throughout their stay. Several of the judges participate in the orientation by saying a few words to welcome jurors and explaining courtroom procedures.

The Jury Office is in the process of implementing an interactive voice response call-in system. This system will allow the juror to call in, enter a nine-digit participant number to access his or her record in order to check their status, request postponement, or to determine if their attendance is required the following day.

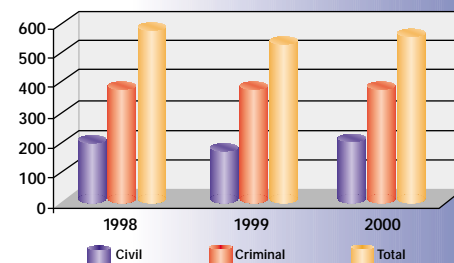
HIGHLIGHTS

- Processed all jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 181 civil trials, with an average trial duration of 5.5 days.
- Processed all jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 333 criminal trials, with an average trial duration of 3.5 days. Of those trials, 87 were capital offenses.
- Assisted in the coordination of two highly publicized cases tried in the Circuit and Probate Courts during 2000.
- Of the 65,156 citizens who received a summons this year, 25,505 actually reported. Of that number, 5,981 were selected to sit as jurors.

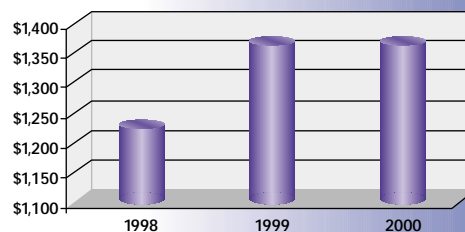
Citizen Involvement



Juries Selected



Average Cost Per Jury



Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Responsibilities

The Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Unit is responsible for the case evaluation and mediation programs, both of which avoid some of the costs of a lawsuit.

The Oakland Circuit Court's mediation (formerly Facilitation Project) continued to grow and evolve during 2000, and the Court anticipates greater growth and other "evolutionary changes" during 2001. During the mediation process, the parties meet with a neutral mediator to discuss their conflict. With the help of the mediator and their attorneys, the parties fashion an acceptable solution to their dispute.

Because the Facilitation Project has already been in operation for several years, Oakland Circuit Court is well prepared to fully incorporate ADR into its case management practices. In 2000, well over 100 cases entered the Facilitation Project. The list of qualified facilitators/mediators continued to grow and currently numbers 139. In addition, thanks in part to the work of Facilitation Project staff, both judges in our Court and attorneys who practice here have already had ample opportunity to learn about and develop a greater appreciation for the usefulness of ADR in many types of cases. Alternative Dispute Resolution has finally come of age in Michigan.

Case Evaluation is used as a method of settling disputes before going to trial. A panel of three attorneys reviews a case and decides how much money the case is worth.

CASE MANAGEMENT OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Case Management Office is responsible for scheduling and tracking cases from initiation through disposition. They also are responsible for coordinating alternative dispute resolutions for the Circuit and Probate Courts.

As a result of the new and amended court rules governing alternative dispute resolution enacted in 2000, the Assignment Office has undergone a restructuring with the following name changes:

Case Management Office (formerly the Assignment Office)

- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
 - Case Evaluation (formerly Mediation)
 - Mediation (formerly Facilitation)
- Caseflow Office

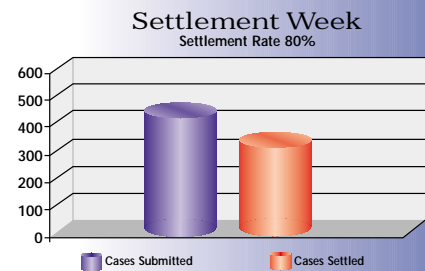
Highlights of the new court rules include a requirement that courts using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) adopt a written plan, which must be approved by the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO). As this annual report is being written, the Circuit Court, collaborating with members of the local bar, is hard at work seeking community input and writing its ADR plan. Each plan must include provisions for making information about ADR available to the public, methods for ensuring that people of modest means can also use ADR as a settlement tool, and methods for qualifying and updating the Court's list of qualified mediators. Once approved by SCAO, our plan will be available in the Case Management Office, the Court Administrator's Office, and on our Web site. The court rules also require courts to standardize the use of several ADR terms, so what we have referred to as "facilitation" is already being called "mediation" and what we referred to as "mediation" is already being called "case evaluation."

Many of the already-implemented and soon-to-be-introduced changes stem from the Michigan Supreme Court's decision to adopt new court rules that promote, encourage, and support the use of alternative dispute resolution in lawsuits filed in Circuit (and District) Court. The new and amended court rules took effect on August 1, 2000.



ADR UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

- Implemented an intensive settlement program utilizing three visiting judges. Cases that did not settle were sent to trial. A total of 414 cases were submitted to the program, with an 80% settlement rate.
- Began preparation of the ADR Plan for submission to the State of Michigan. A committee, comprised of judges, attorneys, and staff from various divisions within the Court, as well as representatives from interested outside agencies, provided insight from all aspects of the process.
- Executed name change procedures for the Assignment Clerk and Mediation Office, now known as Caseflow and Case Evaluation. This process included changing forms, reports, and signs, as well as educating staff, attorneys, and the public.
- Distributed \$168,900 to the Law Library from late fees assessed to case evaluation.

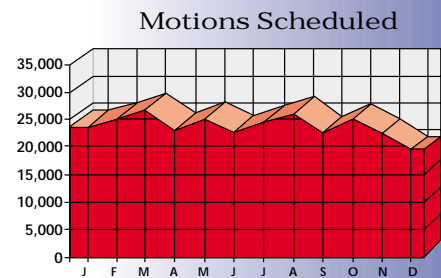


CASEFLOW UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Caseflow Unit tracks cases from initiation through completion. Within that function, cases are scheduled for hearings, trials, and sentencings. The Caseflow Unit also docket miscellaneous motions.

CASEFLOW UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

- Through the court merger, added many of the functions of the Probate Assignment Clerk, to a position now known as Caseflow Coordinator.
- Coordinated the trial dockets for all visiting judges.
- Involved in JIMS training and functional specification review.



Lisa Symula

Family
Division
Administrator
Probate/
Juvenile
Register



"NEXT GENERATION MODEL TRIAL COURT PROJECT"

We were pleased to be selected by the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) to take part in the Next Generation Model Trial Court Project. The project is designed to test the local application for delivery of trial court services and administrative consolidation within the judicial environment, including such areas as caseload management, alternative dispute resolution, finance, personnel, records management, and court service programs. The Next Generation Model hopes to build on the experiences of several counties in Michigan, including Barry, Berrien, Iron, Isabella, Lake, and Washtenaw, which have been part of a trial court project. The goal of these earlier projects was to assist other counties in establishing new processes and locally customize their courts for the benefit of those receiving judicial services.

In order to effectuate an administrative merger in Oakland County, several workgroups were formed which made recommendations to both the Circuit and Probate Court benches. While our administrative merger was formalized in October of 2000, we welcomed the assistance of the project consultants to strengthen our internal recommendations. It is our joint goal to finalize a plan of operation which would create a fully merged court system.

While we are extremely pleased to have been awarded a grant, we know that the true work lies ahead. In working with the SCAO, we anticipate completion of this project by September 1, 2001, at which time we will have completed the planning phase of this project and move on to a complete and full implementation of a merged court system.

FAMILY DIVISION OVERVIEW

The Family Division for the Oakland County Circuit Court underwent dynamic changes in the year 2000. With the successful continuation of our newly created Family Division, our courts took the next step in fully merging our Probate and Circuit Courts' operations. Our Family Division Administrator merged functions with the Probate and Juvenile Register. Included within the Family Division Administrator's supervision are the Estates and Mental Health unit of Probate Court, Friend of the Court, Judicial Support, and Court Services.

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

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

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

Ancillary to the Family Division, but also administered by the Family Division Administrator, is the Probate Court. The unit is headed by the Chief of Probate Estates and Mental Health, Jill Koney Daly. The Estates and Mental Health areas of the court deal with decedents' estates, adult and minor guardianships, and mental health issues.

Oakland County's newly created Family Division serves as a model division within the State of Michigan as well as nationally.

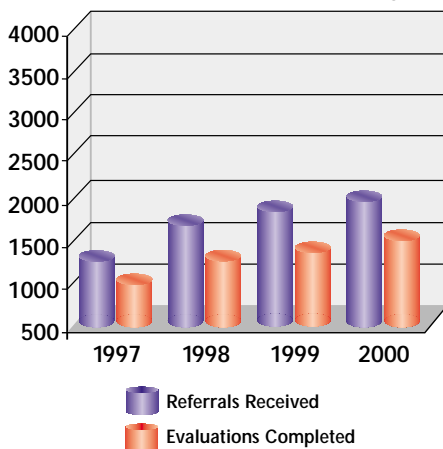
Family Division Management Team: (Front row from left) Joe Salamone, Friend of the Court; Pam Howitt, Deputy Court Administrator/ Court Services; and Bernard Gaulier, Chief, Clinical Services. (Back row from left) Dallas Coleman, Chief, Casework Services; Kathy Cox, Assistant Friend of the Court; Bill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



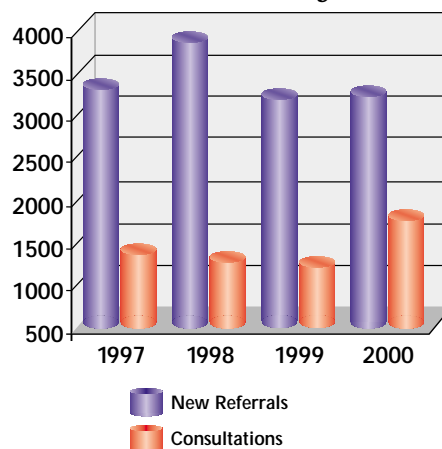
SUMMARY OF FAMILY DIVISION ACTIVITY

<u>Filing Activity</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<u>Juvenile/Adoptions</u>			
Authorized Delinquency Petitions	2,135	2,225	1,973
Authorized CPP Petitions	281	299	328
Unofficially Closed Delinquency Complaints	3,607	3089	2,845
Unofficially Closed CPP Complaints	41	48	36
Supplemental Delinquency Complaints	291	296	296
Supplemental CPP Petitions	21	7	11
Juvenile Traffic Tickets	648	645	531
Authorized Adoption Petitions	451	453	497
SUBTOTAL	7,475	7,062	6,517
<u>Domestic Relations</u>			
No Children	2,870	2,809	2,805
With Children	2,898	2,887	2,891
Paternity	905	848	913
URESAs	430	398	409
Support	654	589	831
Other	177	220	200
SUBTOTAL	7,934	7,751	8,049
<u>Personal Protection Orders</u>	3,987	4,060	4,102
TOTAL NEW FILINGS	19,396	18,873	18,668

Psychological Clinic Activity



Youth Assistance Activity





SMILE (Start Making It Livable for Everyone) celebrated its tenth anniversary in February 2000. Participating in the festivities were co-founders Richard Victor (left front) and Judge Edward Sosnick (right front). They were joined by Judge Joan Young (seated), and (left to right) Joe Salamone, Nancy Ellis, Lorraine Osthaus Randolph, Scott Bassett, Roger McPhail, Janice Tracht, Henry Gornbein, and Susan Paletz.

FRIEND OF THE COURT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

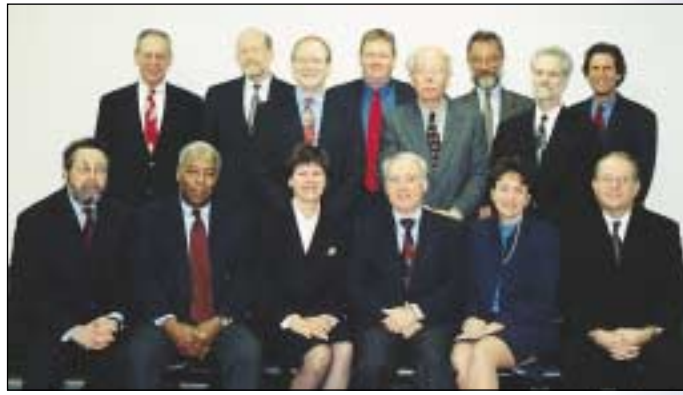
Friend of the Court offers free programs to persons involved in family law cases such as SMILE (Start Making It Livable for Everyone), an educational workshop designed for divorcing parents, and Forget Me Not, an educational program for never married parents. The office also provides speakers to local groups.

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- Assisted the State Court Administrative Office in the production of two videotapes to orient new FOC staff and domestic relations clients about parenting time issues and enforcement.
- Participated in the development of the *Michigan Parenting Time Guideline* for use by employees and domestic relations clients in addressing many of the challenges associated with establishing and maintaining parenting time schedules.
- Collaborated with the Fathers Resource Center at Oakland Family Services to involve single parents in education and skill-training for enhanced parenting.
- Coordinated efforts with Jewish Family Services to provide a training program for domestic relations clients in high-conflict situations to parent more cooperatively.
- Presented information to over 3,500 parents through the SMILE divorce education program and 300 parents at the Forget Me Not paternity education program, to help them create a positive environment for their children while living separately.
- Rewrote the *Friend of the Court Handbook* that is given to each party in a domestic related case with children.
- Completed connection with the state Data Warehouse to gain access to new-hire employment information for use in collecting child support.
- Partnered with HAVEN to obtain federal grant money for providing increased services for parenting time in special and difficult circumstance cases.
- Completed a major change to its child support distribution system to assure families first receive all current and past due child support before any past due payments are sent to the state.
- Collected over \$172 million in support payments, \$900,000 in statutory fees, and \$60,000 in court costs.

Friend of the Court Referees include: (left to right, rack row) Philip Ingraham, Arthur Spears, David Hoffman, Vincent Welicka, Gerald Gavette, Robert Kief, Kenneth Tolbert, Ronald Foon. (Front row) Mark Sherbow, Adrian Spinks, Suzanne Bolton, Patrick Cronin, Michelle Barry, and Roy Jones. Not pictured: William Posey, Kittie Fairbrother, and Martha Anderson.



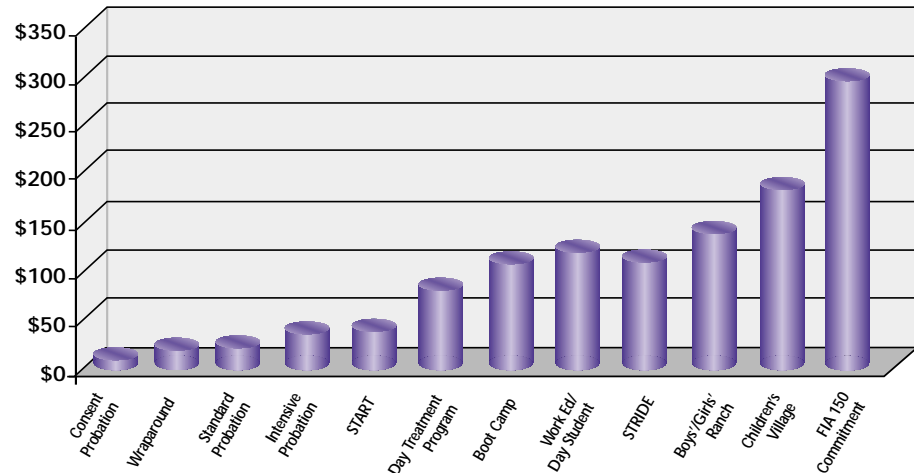
FRIEND OF THE COURT REFEREES

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

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

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

Continuum of Care Cost of Dispositional Program Alternatives



COURT SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Court Services operation is comprised of Casework Services (Juvenile Probation), Psychological Clinic, and Youth Assistance. The 108 staff are responsible for providing direct client services, case management, research and program development, community resource development through volunteer coordination, and education/public awareness. Services include individual and family assessment, prevention, status offender services, juvenile probation, group therapy for adjudicated youth, and parent guidance programs.

CASEWORK SERVICES RESPONSIBILITES

The Casework Services operation is responsible for all delinquency cases authorized for court by Intake. We assist the case through the adjudicating process, when necessary. Once a case has been adjudicated, we prepare a social history report, including corroborative information that recommends to the court a disposition, which takes into account both the needs of the child and the protection of the community. During post-disposition, we assist in implementing court orders, including the monitoring of probation and restitution, community service, parental education, counseling, etc. We monitor clients' compliance or noncompliance with court orders. We report to the court on a regular basis, making further recommendations when necessary.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Obtained a \$10,000 grant award from the State Court Administrative Office to develop a proposal for a juvenile drug court. The funds were used to send an interdisciplinary team to a national training conference on planning drug courts.
- Deputy Court Administrator was a featured speaker on "The Continuum of Juvenile Services" at the Family Division Summit, presented by Michigan Judicial Institute in March 2000.
- STRIDE and START, grant funded programs, successfully met their goals in the first year of operation.
- Compiled and printed a comprehensive booklet describing every service program offered by the Court.
- Recruited and selected a new chief of Casework Services.
- Instituted a female-only Jail Tour, which allows for a more realistic experience for our female court wards. Also, developed a tool to assess the effectiveness of the Jail Tour experience.
- Began development of on-line access to Youth Community Service placement information.

CLINICAL SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- Reviewed and streamlined intake procedures in order to handle the continued increase in the number of referrals to the clinic and to improve efficiency.
- Played an active role in developing Focus on the Children, an eight-week educational and skills-training program designed to address post-divorce disputes regarding child custody and/or parenting time.
- Continued to participate in a variety of committees and task forces. For example, this year the clinic provided unit representation on a committee reviewing the use of a substance abuse screening instrument. Also, participated in a community presentation on parenting issues, offering a seminar on parenting and discipline techniques for young children.
- Coordinated in-service training for court staff with the following seminars: "Adolescent Suicide Prevention," "Risk Assessment for Juvenile Offenders," "Cultural Diversity Needs of the 21st Century," "The Gift of Being Welcomed," "Adolescents and HIV/AIDS," and "Personal Safety and the Use of Pepper Spray."

YOUTH ASSISTANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

As the primary prevention segment of the Court's continuum of services, the mission is to strengthen youth and families and prevent and reduce delinquency, abuse, and neglect through volunteer involvement. Utilizing a decentralized approach, staff work in 30 different locations with a cadre of volunteers to identify and address each community's needs. Community-based programs include parenting and family education, skill and self-esteem building, mentoring, recreation programs, and youth recognition. Staff also provide family-focused casework services. Each of the 26 local programs is co-sponsored by the school district, the municipalities therein, and the Court.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Received over \$100,000 from local sponsors in Community Development Block Grant Funds to support activities for low-income, at-risk youth in eleven Youth Assistance areas.
- Mentoring matches for adjudicated youth increased by 40% with the promotional assistance of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan's *2000 for 2000 Campaign*, the support of the Attorney General of Michigan, our county Prosecutor's Office, Crossroads for Youth, and Children's Village.
- A powerful, national award winning video, *As Doors Close: A Drinking Driving Story* was produced by Novi Youth Assistance with the cooperation of Novi Community Schools, the city's police and EMS departments, O'Brien Funeral Home, Novi Community That Cares Coalition, MADD, and the 52nd District Court.
- Developed a new Web site, <http://comnet.org/oaklandkids>, in collaboration with United Way Community Services that identifies after-school programs available throughout the county.
- Our monthly Parenting Calendar of upcoming events is distributed to over 800 recipients with over 100 parenting program providers supplying information, thanks to the assistance of the Oakland County Parenting Awareness Coalition, Meijer, Inc., and AAA of Michigan.
- Six YA areas have implemented a Restorative Justice approach to group conferencing that involves the perpetrator, their parent(s), and the victim. High victim satisfaction with the process and the results, and high perpetrator compliance are being reported.
- Over 1,200 youth received scholarships to improve or enhance a skill, including areas such as reading and math accomplishment, instrument, dance, and karate performance.



JUDICIAL SUPPORT RESPONSIBILITIES

This operation supports the “judicial” functions of the Family Division Judges through scheduling, file preparation, record maintenance, and order production services. Support staff receive, maintain, and act upon documents which are presented to the court each day, and update the computer records on all cases within each Court’s jurisdiction. Juvenile referees assist the judges by conducting many of the hearings and recommending decisions to the judges in these cases. PPO (Personal Protection Order) interviewers assess each petition and make a recommendation to the judge.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Consolidated the two groups doing adoptions work – the Casework/Confidential Intermediary staff and the Adoptions Office staff – into a single entity with one supervisor.
- Merged the Probate Court Assignment Clerk with the Circuit Court’s Assignment Office and reallocated the responsibilities among the Business Division, Court Administration, and Juvenile Intake.
- Collaborated with the Personal Protection Order Steering Committee and smoothly incorporated the new PPO laws and procedures into our operations, which continue to show a steady increase in volume for the fifth straight year.
- Facilitated the third annual orientation program for new police officers/new juvenile officers. Nearly sixty officers attended, and the evaluations indicated a very positive experience by attendees.
- Following the retirement of the Chief of Juvenile and Adoptions Services, Charles Ludwig, we recruited his successor, Lauran Howard, who began at year’s end. Three of the first-line supervisors also assumed new responsibilities during the year: Julie Fabrizio moved to the Business Division, Teresa Castiglione moved to the Deputy Register/File Room/Order Clerk area, and Patricia Payton moved to Juvenile Intake.
- Completed review of the Juvenile Intake process, initiated in 1999, and provided recommendations to the Family Division judges.
- Collaborated with many others in implementing locally the Trial Court Case File Management Standards issued by the State Court Administrator. This ongoing project will continue in 2001 and beyond.
- Worked with the 52nd District Court in Novi and the State Court Administrator in structuring a proposed district court-administrated Tobacco and Alcohol Prevention Program (TAPP) for juvenile offenders. Collaborated with other units of the Family Division in assessing the key ingredients of TAPP for implementation county-wide by the district courts.
- Two supervisors, Teresa Castiglione and Julie Fabrizio, became certified on the SCT computer system and will be responsible for training others.

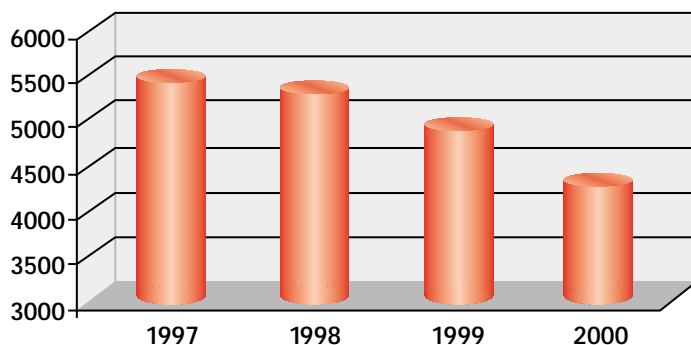
Juvenile Court referees include
(left to right, back row)
Michael Hand, Joseph Racey,
Robert Martin, Scott Hamilton.
(Front row) Jean Dohanyos,
Marty Alvin – Referee
Supervisor, and Twila Leigh.
Not pictured is Karla Mallett.



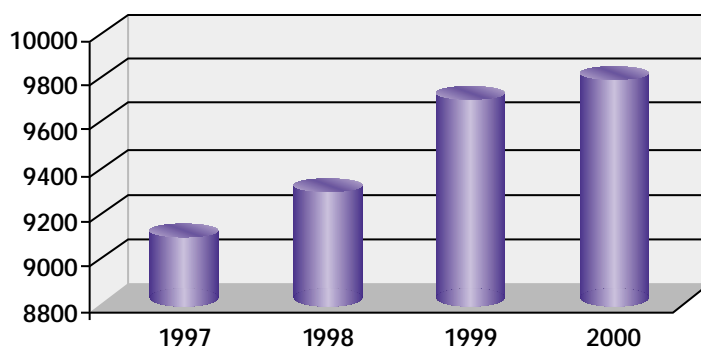
REFEREES RESPONSIBILITIES

Juvenile Court referees represent the Court 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. They authorize the detentions of juveniles and removal of children due to risk of harm. Referees review all complaints and petitions referred to the court. They evaluate each matter and make decisions involving diversions or authorizations of petitions. Referees conduct more than 10,000 preliminary inquiries and hearings each year. Unless one of the litigants demands a judge or a jury, referees hear matters, and make recommended findings and orders for the assigned judge. All referees are experienced attorneys and bring special expertise in child welfare law to their profession.

Preliminary Inquiries



Juvenile and Adoption Hearings Held



John L. Cooperrider

Court
Business
Administrator



“WHAT IT TAKES TO EFFECTUATE AN ADMINISTRATIVE MERGER”

This past year has been a learning experience for all of us within the Probate and Circuit Courts and, in particular, our new consolidated Business Division. In an effort to effectuate an administrative merger, many different functions, tasks, and work products had to be analyzed as we tried to consolidate like areas of responsibilities. As you can imagine, some issues are substantial and complex, while others are minute and detail-oriented. Nevertheless, each issue must be addressed if we want to be successful in serving our judges, staff, and citizens of Oakland County effectively.

The following list gives you a flavor of some of the issues we've addressed and will continue to address during the coming years resulting from the merger:

- Budgets
- Professional Service/Union Contracts
- Annual Report/Brochures
- Judicial Assignments
- Business Cards/Letterhead
- Job Classifications/Job Descriptions
- Work Schedules/Workload Balance
- Court Tours
- Court Web Site
- Policies and Procedures
- Performance Appraisals
- Structure & Reporting Relationships
- Petty Cash Accounts
- Annual Awards
- Office and Staff Workstations

One thing I knew prior to the merger was that we have a tremendous staff, who I know will successfully meet the challenges ahead.

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

BUSINESS DIVISION OVERVIEW

This division was created as a direct result of the administrative merger of the courts. Positions were consolidated of like-administrative functions from both the Circuit and Probate Courts into one division. This division, now named the Court's Business Division, is responsible for the development and delivery of business and administrative support services for both the Circuit and Probate Courts.

In order to more effectively manage the diverse and complex responsibilities of this division, it was divided into two primary units of operation. The Administrative/Financial Unit is supervised by Marcia Travis. Responsibilities of this unit include the development and monitoring of the Court's \$51.5 million budget, including a \$22 million Child Care Fund Budget, Family Independence Agency commitments, and processing all payments for service, including court appointed attorney payments. Other responsibilities include processing personnel transactions, recording attendance and mileage, managing courthouse and satellite office facilities, managing capital improvement and special project requests, and managing the equipment needs of the courts.

The Data/Technology Unit is supervised by Mary Gohl. Responsibilities of this unit include the advancement of court automation, managing day-to-day computer and network issues, and implementing new court technology initiatives. This would include the development and implementation of the Court's new Judicial Information Management System (JIMS), a new case management system. This unit also provides word processing support, which includes the typing of court documents necessary for the functioning of the court (i.e., court, psychological, and referee reports). Finally, this unit provides court reporter services for the Court's juvenile referees, creating records of courtroom proceedings and producing transcripts.

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

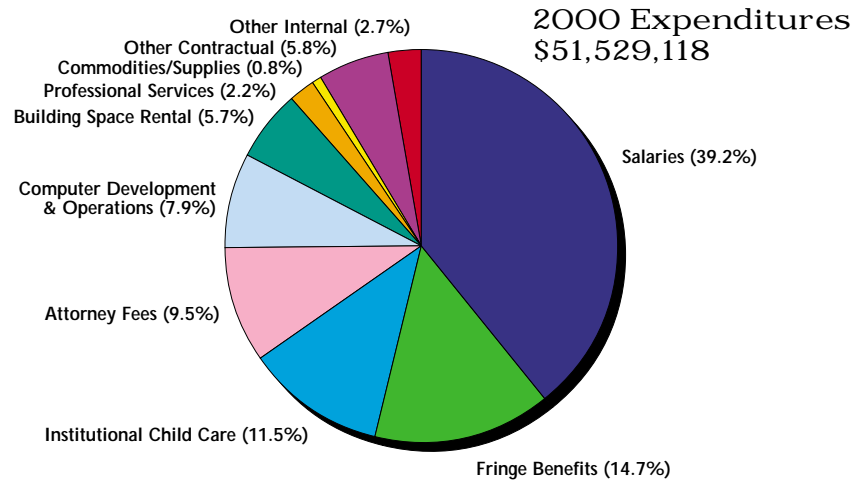


the development of the Court's new Web site, press releases and media relations, developing court brochures and other publications, supervising court tours, producing the Human Resource Directory, acquiring alternative sources of funds, and directing and coordinating other special projects and events.



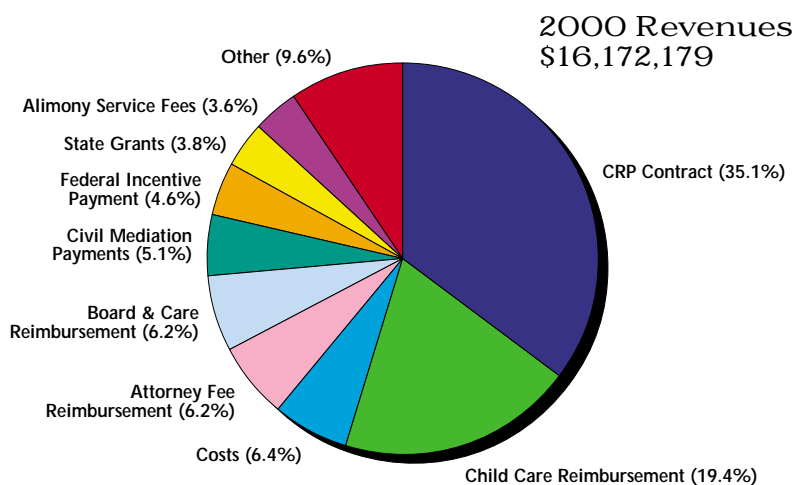
HIGHLIGHTS

- Successfully merged the administrative staff of Probate Court with the administrative staff of Circuit Court to create the new Business Division serving both Courts. This involved merging staff both physically (office and workstations), as well as merging functional areas of responsibility.
- With the assistance of Fiscal Services, on October 1, 2000, successfully merged the Probate and Circuit Courts' budgets in conjunction with the new fiscal year 2001. This involved salaried positions as well as budgeted line items and resulted in a new organizational cost accounting structure and program cost accounting structure.
- Continued participation in planning and implementing an integrated judicial information management system (JIMS) including Probate, Circuit, 52nd District, County Clerk, Reimbursement, and the Prosecutor's Office. Current efforts have been centered on getting staff trained and certified on the SCT system, planning to convert data from existing systems, and analyzing functional specifications, which would modify the existing SCT baseline case management system. Ultimately, benefits derived from the new system would include elimination of redundant data entry, increased flexibility, better integration and sharing of information, greater access for the Court's constituents, and ad-hoc report writing capabilities.
- Planned for the design, acquisition, and implementation of an imaging system for Probate Estates and Mental Health. Implementation is scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2001.
- Planned, designed, and constructed, with the assistance of the Department of Facilities Management, four new courtrooms for our visiting civil judges to reduce our civil docket backlog.
- Embarked on an ambitious project, with the assistance of the Department of Information Technology, of redesigning the Probate and Circuit Courts' Web site. We hope to make suitable upgrades that will make the site more interactive, with the overall goal of improving our service delivery to the legal community as well as the community at large.
- Successfully applied for grant funding including: State of Michigan Drug Court Planning Grant, Federal Drug Court Planning Grant, Next Generation Model Trial Court Grant (\$10,000), JAIBG (Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant) for juvenile crime prevention programs START (\$116,077) and STRIDE (\$75,000). Also, submitted applications for the Michigan Justice Training Grant and VOCA Grant.
- Purchased a new portable video system to be used primarily in visiting judge courtrooms in an effort to provide coverage, create verbatim records of courtroom proceedings, and reduce our reliance on outside court reporter services.
- Made over 13,000 payments to court appointed attorneys/guardians ad litem, representing over \$4.5 million.



CIRCUIT COURT AND PROBATE COURT FINANCIAL REPORT

Expenditures	2000	1999	%Change
Salaries	\$20,194,069	\$19,382,439	4.2%
Fringe Benefits	\$7,549,358	\$6,915,090	9.2%
Institutional Child Care	\$5,926,767	\$4,358,754	36.0%
Attorney Fees	\$4,884,194	\$4,770,099	2.4%
Computer Devel & Operations	\$4,071,150	\$3,579,471	13.7%
Building Space Rental	\$2,964,982	\$2,513,015	18.0%
Professional Services	\$1,116,238	\$366,468	204.6%
Jury Fees & Mileage	\$744,176	\$692,979	7.4%
Mediator Fees	\$679,050	\$670,450	1.3%
Telephone Communications	\$434,218	\$363,714	19.4%
Commodities/Supplies	\$403,921	\$290,742	38.9%
Visiting Judges	\$342,061	\$248,925	37.4%
Indirect Costs	\$325,289	\$310,529	4.8%
Postage	\$290,287	\$207,036	40.2%
Transcripts	\$241,691	\$207,441	16.5%
Mileage/Leased Vehicles	\$219,520	\$204,755	7.2%
Software Rental/Lease	\$134,662	\$0	
Insurance	\$127,489	\$127,489	0.0%
Printing	\$94,216	\$81,165	16.1%
Overtime	\$92,816	\$50,651	83.2%
Equipment Rental	\$82,724	\$78,885	4.9%
Court Reporter Services	\$81,456	\$58,594	39.0%
Copiers	\$76,703	\$46,937	63.4%
Micrographics/Reproductions	\$59,611	\$59,579	0.1%
Interpreter Services	\$29,205	\$30,254	-3.5%
Other	\$363,265	\$419,786	-13.5%
Total	\$51,529,118	\$46,035,247	11.9%



CIRCUIT COURT AND PROBATE COURT FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenues/Sources of Funds	2000	1999	%Change
FOC Cooperative Reimbursement Program Contract	\$5,670,291	\$6,316,947	-10.2%
Child Care Fund Reimbursement	\$3,140,376	\$2,352,264	33.5%
Court Costs	\$1,041,539	\$1,051,650	-1.0%
Attorney Fee Reimbursement	\$1,003,790	\$997,835	0.6%
Board & Care Reimbursement	\$1,002,734	\$1,098,828	-8.7%
Civil Mediation Payments	\$816,715	\$961,378	-15.0%
Federal Incentive Payment	\$722,051	\$568,912	26.9%
State Grants	\$606,272	\$543,246	11.6%
Alimony Service Fees	\$576,675	\$619,726	-6.9%
Prior Years Revenue	\$0	\$456,242	-100.0%
Probate Estate Fees	\$278,106	\$262,178	6.1%
Probation Service Fees	\$204,043	\$224,621	-9.2%
Mediation Fines	\$162,405	\$162,245	0.1%
ADC Incentive Payment	\$138,373	\$215,761	-35.9%
Family Counseling Fees	\$121,305	\$126,930	-4.4%
Probate Certified Copies	\$102,806	\$107,649	-4.5%
FOC Filing Fees	\$100,440	\$107,700	-6.7%
Psychological Clinical Eval Fees	\$94,820	\$58,671	61.6%
Other Probate Filing Fees	\$80,710	\$80,849	-0.2%
Processing Fees	\$64,917	\$73,711	-11.9%
FOC Judgment Fees	\$30,080	\$32,130	-6.4%
Probate Will Deposits	\$25,125	\$23,675	6.1%
Other	\$188,606	\$85,870	119.6%
Total	\$16,172,179	\$16,529,018	-2.2%



PROBATE ESTATES AND MENTAL HEALTH OVERVIEW

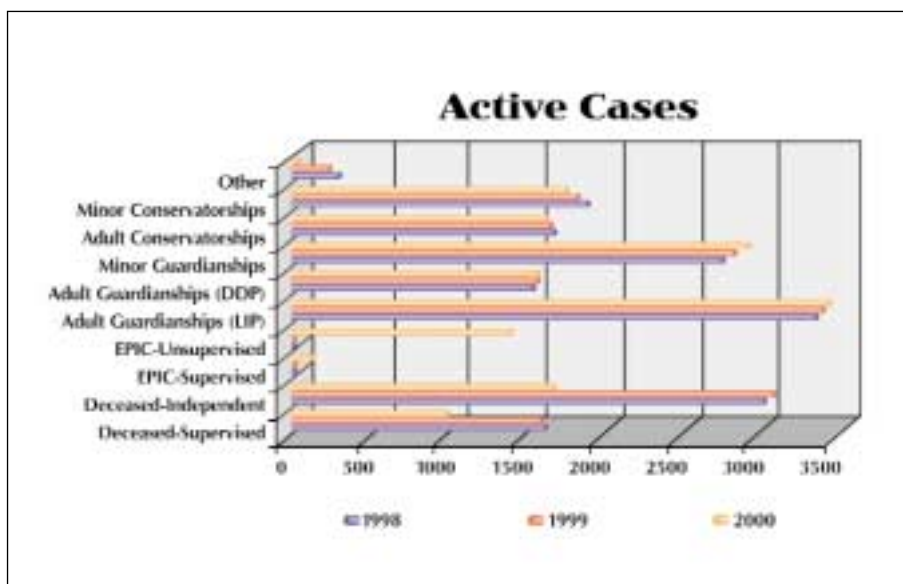
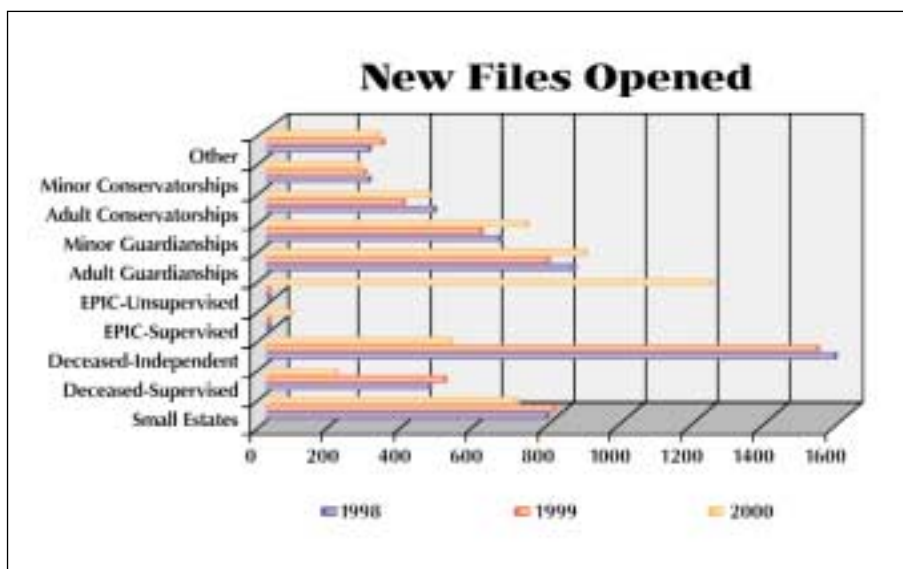
Probate Courts perform important functions in our society, one of which is to make a formal record of the status of property of decedents. The Oakland County Probate Court, under the Estates and Protected Individuals Code (EPIC), which took effect April 1, 2000, handles the “probating” of wills and the administration of estates of deceased persons by personal representatives. It is the Court’s task to interpret last wills and trusts in the event of uncertainty or conflict, and to determine the heirs in “intestate” (without a will) estates. The Estates “counter” is the bustling center of activity as staff process the necessary paperwork, set court hearings, and direct files into court for motion call. Besides estates and trusts, this unit also handles the paperwork and oversight of guardianships and conservatorships of adults and minors (including arranging for guardianship reviews), and also files wills for safekeeping. All legal records of the department are a matter of public record and are available for review by the general public.

Another important function performed by Probate Court is to handle proceedings under the Mental Health Code, including involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill persons, and judicial admission and guardianships of developmentally disabled persons. The Mental Health Unit also handles cases involving minors in need of substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services. Staff processes the paperwork for all of the above, and is called upon frequently to assist petitioners who are requesting emergency court orders to transport a qualifying individual immediately to a preadmission screening unit for examination and possible hospitalization.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The year 2000 brought tremendous change to the Estates Unit of Probate Court. On April 1, 2000, it was out with the 20-year-old Revised Probate Code (RPC) and in with the new Estates and Protected Individuals Code (EPIC). The change necessitated new procedures, new forms, much training, and a new way of thinking about processing estates.
- Probate Court is on tap to be the first court in the county to be converted to a new Judicial Information Management System (JIMS), which will result in widespread county-wide changes to information management. Much staff time has been devoted to studying the new system, bringing expertise to the development of the system, and fine-tuning specifications. This change should take place in early 2002.
- The Probate Court continues to be at the forefront of technology, having developed the “Image Track” bar coding system to locate court files, and in Fall 2001 “Imaging” of court documents will be instituted so they can be accessed by computers.
- The Probate Court saw a change in management. While Lisa Symula remained Probate Register, she assumed the title of Family Division Administrator and Juvenile Register as well. Jill Koney Daly became Chief of Probate Estates and Mental Health, Mary Batchelor became a supervisor of the Deputy Probate Registers, and Mary Jo Best and Mary Phelps continued in their supervisory roles.

The Oakland County Bar Association's Probate, Estate, and Trust Committee presented a seminar entitled "Estate Administration in Oakland County Under EPIC" on April 18, 2000. The presenters were (from left), Jill Koney Daley, Chief-Probate Estates and Mental Health, Oakland County Probate Court; Nancy A. Downie, Attorney, from Dickinson Wright, P.L.L.C.; Lisa Symula, Family Division Administrator, Probate/Juvenile Register, Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts; Kenneth F. Silver, Attorney, from Hertz, Schram and Saretsky, PC; Mary Ann Zito, Attorney at Law; and Deborah Lacasse Grace, Attorney, from Dickinson Wright P.L.L.C. The Probate Court was pleased to be able to send its representatives to train the multitude of practitioners on the nuances of probate procedure in Oakland County and under the new law (EPIC) which took effect April 1, 2000.



A SPECIAL THANKS

The Courts recognize that people from other state agencies and county offices make valuable contributions to the Courts. Their efforts have earned them special respect and admiration. These people have spent many hours assisting the Courts in matters related to facilities, budget and collections, personnel, information technology, courthouse security, case management and record keeping, legal assistance, and others. Their expertise, knowledge, and cooperation is greatly appreciated by the judges, administration, and staff of the Circuit and Probate Courts.

Adams-Pratt Law Library	Oakland County Department of Information Technology
CASA	Oakland County Department of Management and Budget
Circuit Court Probation	Oakland County Executive Offices
Citizen's Alliance for the Circuit Court	Oakland Family Services
Common Ground / Sanctuary	Oakland County Health Division Office of Substance Abuse
Crossroads for Youth	Oakland County Human Services Coordinating Council
Family Independence Center	Oakland County Human Services Department
FISH of Oakland County	Oakland County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney
HAVEN	Oakland County Personnel Department
Havenwyck	Oakland County Purchasing Division
Healthy People / Healthy Oakland	Oakland County Reimbursement Division
Legal News	Oakland County Sheriff's Department
Lutheran Social Services	Oakland County Support Services
National Council of Jewish Women	Oakland County Treasurer's Department
Oakland County 52nd District Court	Oakland Intermediate School District
Oakland County Bar Association	Office of Substance Abuse
Oakland County Board of Commissioners	Oakland Mediation Center
Oakland County Children's Village	Pontiac Historical Society
Oakland County Clerk-Register of Deeds	United Way of Oakland
Oakland County Community Corrections	Women's Survival Center
Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority	Youth Assistance Coordinating Council
Oakland County Coordinating Council Against Domestic Violence	
Oakland County Corporation Counsel	
Oakland County Department of Facilities Management	

Citizen's Alliance expanded their volunteer support to include all of Circuit Court. Members shown here are (left to right, back row) Lisa Symula – Family Division Administrator, Bill Penner, Anya Aisner, Jill Koney Daly, Phil Roller – CA Chair, Michael Hughes, Carol Gitler, Phil Fabrizio, Sandy Plumer, Christine Piatkowski, and Karen MacKenzie. Front row includes Tom Trainer, Jan Dolittle, Lillian Molitz, Renee Mahler, and Beverly MacDonald.



The Youth Assistance Coordinating Council provides funding and other guidance to the local Youth Assistance Boards. Pictured here are Board members Bob Kowalski, Betty Smith, and Robert Zigler.



CITIZEN'S ALLIANCE FOR THE PROBATE COURT: Enjoyed its tenth year of activity supporting the Court in 1999-2000. Members, representing a cross-section of the community, actively supported the Circuit Court in carrying out its mission. Under the distinguished leadership of Philip Roller, retired Senior V.P. of Operations from Midwest Benefit Corporation, the Alliance created or supported the following activities:

- The distribution and sale of the award-winning video *Juvenile Court: A Reality Check*, to schools, municipalities, and law enforcement agencies across the country.
- The expansion of the court tour initiative to include juvenile, adult felony, and drug court proceedings. Plans were also initiated to develop informational materials for tour participants and to train docents to support staff in conducting tours.
- The institution of two specialized Focus Groups intended to gather public feedback regarding court services. The Senior Focus Group had 27 participants representing 21 different senior service agencies, including hospitals, nursing centers, service providers, and associations. The Juvenile Focus Group had 25 participants representing various Oakland County human service agencies, school districts, and private law practices. Results from both forums were shared with judges and court administrators for review, with the intent of using the information as a prompt for potential court improvements.
- The continuation of the "Removing The Mysteries of Probate Court" series. Informational workshops were held in a record number of communities, including Novi, South Lyon, Oxford, Royal Oak, Lake Orion, Highland, Bloomfield Hills, Troy, Southfield, Waterford, and Walled Lake.

YOUTH ASSISTANCE VOLUNTEERS: Over 1,000 volunteers contributed more than 42,000 hours of their time to Youth Assistance programs in 2000. The 26 community-based Boards of Directors, under the guidance of the Youth Assistance Coordinating Council, provided services to more than 43,000 county residents. Service highlights included:

- 8,000 youth and adults received family education classes
- 4,000 youth received skill-building scholarships for activities such as voice, dance, karate, and academics
- 215 youth matched with caring adults through the Mentors PLUS Program
- 1,591 youth honored in Youth Recognition events
- 3,500 youth educated in retail fraud (shoplifting) prevention
- 6,000 youth participated in Youth Involvement activities
- 7,000 youth participated in recreation or after school programs



GUARDIANSHIP VOLUNTEERS: The Probate Court is mandated to conduct periodic reviews of adult and minor guardianships. Reviews involve a home visit and an interview, culminating in a written report containing findings and recommendations. Sometimes a court appearance is also required. Of the 1,508 guardianships reviewed in 2000, almost 40% (602) were completed by volunteers. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are specifically trained to manage such guardianship reviews. The National Council of Jewish Women - Legal Guardianship Committee, provides the Court with CASA volunteers. This year, 50 CASA reviewers handled 92 minor guardianship cases for the Court.



Judicial Information Management System (JIMS) is an integrated case management system that will enable the Prosecutor’s Office, County Clerk’s Office, County Executive Offices, Reimbursement Division, 52nd District Courts, Probate Court, and Circuit Court to electronically share and transfer case information. This system will also provide interfaces to facilitate the rapid exchange of information with other county and state agencies. In addition, court staff, attorneys, and the public may query the case management system for cases associated with a person or company name, parties, case activities, calendar and scheduling information, case and person judgment information, and links to related cases. This new case management system will enable court staff to more rapidly track case data, eliminate redundant data entry, maintain data integrity, process information and, ultimately, improve the delivery of justice in Oakland County.

Systems & Computer Technology Corporation (SCT) is the vendor selected to deliver and install our new case management system known as SCT Courts. SCT serves more than 200 courts worldwide and has earned an international reputation for stability, product quality, and effective service and delivery.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Phase I - Gap Analysis:** In January, all departments involved in the JIMS project participated in a gap analysis study to determine the custom modifications that may be necessary to accommodate the county’s business processes.
- **Phase II - Implementation:** In May, SCT Courts was installed and several processes began including: system certification training, functional specification review, conversion analysis and data mapping, technical training, and many other activities.
- **Future Phases:** Phase II of the JIMS project lays the foundation for Phase III – the electronic filing (E-filing) component. E-filing provides a mechanism for the Court to send and receive case information electronically. We also anticipate that, with proper security in place, images of the pleadings will pass directly into the Court’s case management system and will allow for the indexing and retrieval of the digital image. It is also expected that users of the system will be able to electronically pay filing fees.



Tommy Fern, Vice President of Sales with SCT, presented Chief Judge Barry Howard with a print of the Keeneland Race Course in Lexington, Kentucky entitled “Will to Win” at the May 10, 2000, JIMS Kick-off Meeting

The second team to graduate from the JIMS training celebrated in Judge Barry Howard's courtroom. Grads included (left to right) Kim Noble, Vicky Nellis, Terry Castiglione, Bill Hamilton, Porki Mellado, Deb Bachman, Joyce Raczka, Missy Neff, Helen Soehren, Lorna Skipworth, Jennifer Rowden, and Carol Esher.



- **Live Implementation:** We anticipate that Phase II of JIMS will be implemented during 2002, and that Phase III (E-filing) will follow shortly thereafter.
- **Project Manager:** Libby Evans, the General Jurisdiction Division Administrator for the Circuit Court, serves as the JIMS Project Manager for Oakland County. She is responsible for the day-to-day operations and oversees the implementation of the JIMS project. She is the central point of contact for the vendor and works closely with the SCT Project Manager.
- **JIMS Committee:** The JIMS Committee consists of two representatives from each of the participating departments and serves as the oversight committee for the project.
- **JIMS Training Team:** The JIMS Training Team consists of 30 representatives from the participating departments. Some of the responsibilities of the Training Team members include: reviewing functional specifications, data mapping, coding and letter setup, curriculum development, and conducting end-user training for the nearly 1,000 county employees who will be using the SCT Courts application. The members of both the JIMS Committee and the JIMS Training Team are extremely committed to the success of this project and are to be commended for their outstanding efforts this past year.
- **SCT Courts Certification:** The JIMS Training Team members completed almost 300 hours of classroom instruction, consisting of daily exercises, quizzes, and a final examination. All 30 Training Team members successfully passed their coursework and final examination and have received certification as authorized trainers on the SCT Courts application.

Special Recognition

Thanks to Dick Johnston, Bob Larkin, and Chuck Lester from FM&O for providing the special training facility to accommodate the needs of the JIMS Training Team.

We also want to thank the Department of Information Technology for providing the hardware and installing the SCT Courts software in the training facility.

Access to Justice

"On-line" instead of "in-line" – that is the direction the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts are moving in the 21st Century. In the coming years, we hope to provide attorneys, litigants, and the public with secure, on-line access to the courts' public information.

JIMS Training Team

Circuit & Probate Court

Terry Castiglione
Karla Early
Carol Esher
Julie Fabrizio
Mary Gohl
Bill Hamilton
Dave Leslie
Porki Mellado
Karen Tiernan

52nd District Court

Mary Columbo
Jennifer Marlinga
Missy Neff
Victoria Nellis
Lorna Skipworth
Helen Soehren
Linda Thiery

County Clerk's Office

Jenny Clark
Kim Noble

Prosecutor's Office

Brenda Coppens
Debbie Sims
Gwynne Starkey

Reimbursement Division

Deb Bachman
Judi Lockhart
Joyce Raczka

Information Technology

Janet Brinker
Charlie Covetz
Carol Howden
Deb Nolen

JIMS Committee

Circuit & Probate Court

John Cooperrider
Libby Evans
Mary Gohl
Kevin Oeffner

52nd District Court

Jennifer Marlinga
Jim VerPloeg

County Clerk's Office

Bridget Balzerini
G. William Caddell

Prosecutor's Office

Mary Larkin
Gwynne Starkey

Reimbursement Division

Linda Spiekerman-Harvey
Jeffrey Pardee

Information Technology

Lori Jansen
Joe Maletta

Kristy Slosson guides another group of student visitors through the courthouse. Students visit juvenile, adult criminal, and drug court proceedings. This year courthouse tours increased by 100%.



Jill Koney Daly, Chief of Estates and Mental Health, takes command of her South Lyon audience in another installment of the "Removing the Mysteries of Probate" series.



Judge Linda Hallmark and nephew/godson James Saoud place court mementos into the Oakland County 2000 time capsule. Court items included a Circuit Court bench photo, a Juvenile Justice Centennial Scrapbook, Probate and Circuit Court Annual Reports, the video "Juvenile Court: A Reality Check," and an SCT frog.



Attorney and Master of Ceremonies George Googasian expresses warm wishes to departing Circuit Judge Jessica Cooper at her installation for the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Sherry Robinson finds humor and adventure in the chaos of moving day. Fifteen employees were affected by the redistribution of duties and space within the courthouse.





Each year, the Circuit Court, in collaboration with the Oakland County Bar Association, co-sponsors the New Lawyers Admission Ceremony at the Commissioner's Auditorium. This year, 72 inductees were recognized.



Much court activity was devoted this past year to the development of therapeutic drug courts to serve both juvenile and adult offenders. Members of the Adult Drug Court Team included (standing, left to right) Judge David Breck, Attorney Martin Reisig, Lieutenant Michael Johnson, Community Corrections Manager George Miller, Prosecutor David Gorcyca, and Probation Chief Ken Aud. Seated (left to right) are participants Circuit Court Administrator Kevin Oeffner, Chief of Legal Operations Richard Lynch, Office of Substance Abuse Services (OSAS) Director Sandra Kosik, and Deputy Prosecutor Ronald Covault.



"Juvenile Court: A Reality Check" received national honors this year for best entry in the "Public Interest/Public Safety" category of the National Institute of Corrections 21st Annual Correctional Video Festival. The Court received numerous requests to purchase the video from agencies across the United States.



Citizen's Alliance members met regularly this year to develop plans for the Juvenile and Senior Focus Groups. Attending this session were (left to right) Dave Wolf, Lillian Moltiz, Phil Roller, Marge Huggard, Mary Schusterbauer, Christine Piatkowski, and Armethyst Lucius.

On December 13, the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts held the first consolidated awards ceremony honoring outstanding employees for 2000. Colleagues and supervisors nominated fellow employees who have demonstrated service far beyond their written job description and who have made significant contributions to their respective departments. Following is a brief description of this year's winners and reasons for their selection.

Annette Agazio – General Jurisdiction Employee of the Year: Annette is a court clerk working with several visiting judges. Annette was nominated for her tireless, enthusiastic, and adaptable efforts. She is described as always having a smile on her face, despite dealing with the frustration of a constantly changing work setting.

Julie Berz – Court Services Employee of the Year: Julie has been a child welfare worker for her entire tenure with the Court. Her nominator spoke of her genuineness, honesty, openness, and integrity. She has been very instrumental in initiating and overseeing many creative programs and has been dubbed "Worker of the World."

Kathleen Cox – Friend of the Court Employee of the Year: As Chief Assistant of the Friend of the Court, Kathy has worked on many significant projects. Kathy has been instrumental in facilitating numerous initiatives to improve child support collections and enforcement, and was commended for her excellent communication and motivational skills.



This year, the Employee of the Year awards were expanded to include representatives from each work area. Certificates were presented by Judge Nanci Grant and Chief Judge Barry Howard (back row, center) to the following employees: (left to right, back row) Phillip DeBarr, Estates and Mental Health; Karen MacKenzie, Business Division; Joseph Racey, Judicial Support; and (front row) Annette Agazio, General Jurisdiction; Kathleen Cox, Friend of the Court; Kathleen Morton, Judicial Staff; and Julie Berz, Court Services.

Many worthy nominees were also recognized for their dedication to court service. Pictured (left to right, back row) are Nichole Bennett, Mary Gohl, Patty Payton, Deborah Hyde, Debby Bevan, and (front row) Jim Windell, Carol Esher, Mary Jo Best, Julie Ritter, and Dr. Pamela Howitt. Not pictured are nominees Karen Allen, Deborah Beer, Cindy Brown, Annette Himmelspach-Collins, Scott Kozak, Gabrielle Osooli, Dick Stasys, Marcia Travis, and Rodney Yeaker.



Phillip DeBarr – Estates and Mental Health Employee of the Year: Phil is a Clerk III in the Probate Court and is described as a “Lovable Mr. Fixit” by his peers. He is known to take on technical challenges which have been abandoned in frustration by others and has created and installed new forms stemming from the recent changes in Probate law.

Kathleen Morton – Judicial Staff Employee of the Year: As Judge Nanci Grant’s judicial secretary, Kathy was recognized for her efforts of going beyond the traditional responsibilities of a secretary. She is a vital member of the staff, always willing to help the public, attorneys, and colleagues, and going the extra step to enable a situation to be effectively resolved.

Karen MacKenzie – Business Division Employee of the Year: As a resource and program specialist in the Business Division, Karen has been instrumental in procuring funds to support court programs. She organized the 100-year anniversary dinner commemorating the development of Juvenile Court, and is known for her exceptional creativity and relentless work ethic.

Joseph Racey – Judicial Support Employee of the Year: As a Family Division referee, Joe is known as a stern taskmaster who believes in the sanctity of the legal process and who insists that families be treated with dignity. He has been a referee for 11 years, an ambassador for Juvenile Court for over 15 years, and a champion for children’s rights forever.

**SERVICE AWARD
RECIPIENTS****Circuit Court:****25 Years**

Margaret Birch
Robert Kief
Hon. Fred Mester
Hon. Gene Schnelz
Rebecca Young

20 Years

Jeanette Bedard
Joanne Bridson
Irene Bush
Cheryl Clark
Gwendolyn Dillworth
Virgie Ford
Hon. Alice L. Gilbert
Hon. John J. McDonald
Don Slagle
Hon. Joan Young

15 Years

Diane Castle
Mary Gemoets
David Hoffman
Mildred Marion
Bonita McMillan
Lonna Portwood

10 Years

M. Sheila Garin
Michelle Gaskell
Artricia Hunt
Henry Kwiatkowski
Bonnie Moore
Viola Newman
Kevin Oeffner
Rebecca Reyes

Probate Court:**30 Years**

Shirley Bauman
Kalvin Engelberg
Charles Ludwig
James Smith

25 Years

Cheryl Boyle
Patrick Breen
Gregory Prokopp
Palmer Sesti

20 Years

Julie Fabrizio
Hon. Linda Hallmark
Deborah McAleer
Sherry Miller
Douglas Quinn
Joseph Racey, Jr.
Amy Skewes

15 Years

Karen Allen
William Bartlam
Susan Friedl
Patricia Hays
Naomi Leach

10 Years

Jennifer Bartley
Annette Collins
Michael Hand
Gail Innis
Vicki Spicer

PAST EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR RECIPIENTS**Circuit Court:**

- 1999 Laila Azzouz, Judicial Secretary for Judge Barry Howard
Jeff Allsteadt, Court Clerk for Judge Edward Sosnick
- 1998 Bruce Brakel, Judicial Staff Attorney for Judge Edward Sosnick
- 1997 Mary Jane Rigonan, Assignment Clerk
Kenneth Tolbert, Friend of the Court Referee
- 1996 Linda Hallmark, Friend of the Court Referee
Kelly Collins, Court Clerk for Judge David Breck
- 1995 Barbara Wernet, Probation Department Clerical Supervisor
Richard Lynch, Law Clerk for Judge Hilda Gage
- 1994 Dave Bertucci, Friend of the Court Referee
- 1993 Joan Hutchinson, Judicial Secretary for Judge Richard Kuhn
- 1992 Nancy VanCamp, Court Administration Records Clerk
- 1991 Kim Bateman, Friend of the Court Chief Assistant
Kathy Huber, Clerk's Office Legal Division Trainer
- 1990 Janet Lindsey, Jury Clerk
Lorraine Osthaus, Friend of the Court Family Counseling Director
- 1989 Gloria Rose, Court Administration Office Supervisor
- 1988 Carolyn Chavez, Assignment Clerk
- 1987 Randy Matkin, Court Reporter for Judge Steven Andrews
- 1986 Margaret Williams, Secretary to Judge Templin
- 1985 Anne Moore Hadden, Secretary to Judge Ziem
- 1984 Ann Dennen, County Clerk's Office

Probate Court:

- 1999 Charles Ludwig, Chief Juvenile/Adoption
Mary Batchelor, Estates and Mental Health
- 1998 Cynthia Harper, Accountant II, Administrative Support
- 1997 Robin Zapinski, Technical Assistant, Clinical Services
- 1996 Lorie Willing, Child Welfare Worker II, Youth Assistance
- 1995 Bill Bartlam, Deputy Court Administrator, Judicial Support
- 1994 Mary Jo Best, Officer Supervisor II, Estates and Mental Health
- 1993 Jill Daly, Attorney II, Estates and Mental Health
- 1992 Paul Scobie, Child Welfare Worker II, Youth Assistance
- 1991 Joan Connelly, Case Management Coordinator, Estates and Mental Health
- 1990 Allen Kaczowski, Child Welfare Worker Supervisor, Youth Assistance
- 1989 Ruth Szabo, Psychological Clinic
- 1988 Jack Haynes, Psychological Clinic
- 1987 Helen Andrews, Officer Supervisor II, Estates and Mental Health
- 1986 Ray Sharp, Chief of Casework Services
- 1985 Thomas (Ed) Gorney, Juvenile Court Referee

RETIREES FOR 2000**Circuit Court:**

Jeanette Bedard, Friend of the Court
Frances Harper, Case Management
Richard Herderich, Friend of the Court
Charles Ludwig, Juvenile/Adoptions
Gabriel Martinez, Psychological Clinic
Don Slagle, Friend of the Court

Probate Court:

Ronald Auten, Casework Services
Jon Clapp, Youth Assistance
Carol Dault, Estates & Mental Health
Susan Gorney, Casework Services
Cathryn Harrison, Adoptions
Pat Peck, Estates & Mental Health

JUDGE DAVID F. BRECK

In December 2000, the Honorable David F. Breck retired after 18 years as Circuit Judge. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Breck served as a District Judge and mayor of the City of Birmingham.

In a *Detroit Monthly Magazine* poll, he was voted among the best judges in the tri-county area, and in 1998 was given the prestigious "Champion of Justice" award by the Michigan State Bar Association.

Judge Breck has been instrumental in developing legal principles in Michigan in the areas of assisted suicide, handicapped rights, civil rights, and the "drug lifer" law. Believing in the concept of therapeutic jurisprudence, Judge Breck is a member of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and is very active in the formation of the Adult Drug Treatment Court. He is also the founder and chairperson of the Henry Ford Hospice Program.

He is the father of three grown children and has nine grandchildren. Judge Breck plans to continue working with the Oakland County Circuit Court as a visiting judge assigned to the drug court.



JUDGE SANDRA G. SILVER

After 12 years as an Oakland County Probate Court Judge, Judge Sandra Silver retired from the Probate bench in July 2000.

Judge Silver was appointed in June 1988 by Governor James Blanchard and later was elected to fill the vacancy in November of 1988. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Silver served as a County Public Administrator for ten years and also as a labor arbitrator. She served on the State Officers Compensation Commission, and is a long-time member of the Women Lawyers Association as well as a member of the National Association of Women Judges.

During Judge Silver's tenure on the bench, she was a member of the Probate and Mental Health Committees of the Michigan Probate Judges Association, and was honored by the Salvation Army and HAVEN for her dedication to community issues.

Judge Silver is married and has three children and eight grandchildren.



ANNUAL REPORT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Cooperrider

Karen Koshen

Karen MacKenzie

Marcia Travis



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